

Neonatal Wildlife Foster Application

We are seeking fosters for Virginia Opossums, Eastern Gray Squirrels, and Mourning Doves.

Fostering requires a dedicated time commitment to raise babies successfully. Please read this application in its entirety to ensure fostering is the right volunteer activity for you prior to submitting it.

Virginia Opossum (Joey)



Eastern Gray Squirrel (Kit)



Mourning Dove (Squab)



What fostering requires:

- Your schedule needs to be flexible enough to allow for availability for multiple feedings throughout the day, typically every 3 hours starting early in the morning and ending late in the evening. Ideally, foster parents work either from home, are retired or only work part-time.
 - Permitting prohibits babies from being anywhere other than at the foster home or CROW, so they cannot be transported to/from your workplace.
- We are asking for fosters to commit to volunteering for an entire season (spanning a few months this spring/summer). Each foster parent will raise multiple litters during that time. We will schedule brief breaks in between litters. If you have a schedule conflict such as a planned vacation, please let us know in advance and we can adjust the schedule accordingly. Babies grow up quickly, so you may have a litter for 1-3 weeks before they come back to the clinic for the next phase of rehabilitation.
- On-site training with staff in the clinic will occur prior to sending babies into your home for foster. Training will consist of a minimum of 2 shifts per week for 2-3 weeks.
- Typical feeding schedules:
 - Fostering squirrels requires feeds from 5am - 11pm. They are usually fed every three hours up to 7 times a day.
 - Fostering doves requires feeds between 5:30am - 11pm. They are usually fed every 3.5 hours up to 6 times a day.
 - Fostering opossums requires feeds between 6am-9pm up to 6 times a day.
 - As babies grow, the number of daily feeds will decrease. Feeds are a minimum of 3 hours apart (feeding too frequently can lead to GI upset).
- Virtual checks with staff will occur 1-2x per week for your babies to ensure they are developing appropriately, make recommendations to adjust the feeding schedule as they grow, and

trouble-shoot any issues that may arise. A photo of each baby and chart will be sent to rehab staff, and a vet will be alerted if any medical issues arise.

Patient Handling Protocols:

- Florida Fish and Wildlife (FWC) provides our rehabilitation permit, and fosters will be listed as sub-permittees. This means the rules we abide by in the clinic must also be strictly adhered to in the foster home. Failure to abide by these rules will result in immediate termination of foster duties.
 - Photographs of patients are only to be taken for the purpose of vet checks. Under no circumstances are photos/video to be taken for personal use and are prohibited from being shared or posted on social media.
 - Handling is limited strictly to the purpose of feedings and cleaning. Excess handling can be detrimental to their development and can even affect their ability to be released. No petting, cuddling, or baby-talking is allowed as it will result in habituation to humans. Habituated animals are non-releasable and would have to be humanely euthanized.
 - Guests at your home are not permitted to photograph or handle the babies.
 - Pets should be kept entirely separate from wildlife for several reasons – to avoid accidental injury, to prevent increased stress, and to prevent transmission of disease.
 - We recommend housing your foster babies in a spare bedroom, bathroom, or home office – anywhere that is quiet with no audiovisual disturbances (no phone/TV/radio/conversation/pets).

Frequently Asked Questions:

- What if I have a friend visiting who wants to see the foster babies?
 - They can observe you taking care of the babies only during their designated treatment times (excess handling is prohibited to reduce stress and prevent habituation). Your friend cannot handle the babies nor take any photos/video.
- My kids love animals and I want them to learn about wildlife. Can they help me take care of the foster babies?
 - Only people 18 years and older can handle patients, and they must have undergone on-site training with our staff. Kids can help you indirectly by preparing the supplies you need before each feeding and can observe you doing the feedings as long as they can remain quiet and calm. We are happy to share other educational materials with you so your kids can learn more about wildlife – check out our Visitor’s Education Center.
- Can I still be a foster parent if I can’t commit to the earliest and latest feeds (5am or 11pm?)
 - Maybe, if we have older babies that require less feedings per day. However, the babies that need to be in foster care typically are the smallest and require those feeds.
- I have no prior animal-handling experience but really want to help, can I still be a foster parent?
 - Absolutely! Most of our students and volunteers start the program with minimal experience and we give them all full training. We will not ask you to do things independently until you are 100% comfortable.

- What do I do if the babies aren't doing well in foster care?
 - You will be provided with resources and training for common issues that may arise. You will also have staff contact numbers so you can reach out to a staff member as soon as you realize something is wrong.
- What if I realize I don't want to work with the species I signed up for and want to try a different one?
 - Just remember that not all baby seasons are at the same time so if you try opossums first and don't like it, you will have to wait a few months before the next animal comes along. We encourage you to stick to one species for a couple groups before deciding one way or another.
- Do I keep my foster babies all the way until release? What if I get really attached to my babies and don't want to give them back?
 - In the state of Florida, you must have certain permits through Florida Fish and Wildlife to own wildlife and in most cases, it is illegal to do so. Any animal that is admitted through CROW Clinic, is not legally allowed to be kept as a pet and must be returned to the clinic at a certain point of development to ensure proper growth, foraging skills, environmental introductions, and more.
- Do I need to worry about getting any diseases from the foster babies? What about my pets?
 - Wildlife can carry a variety of diseases, some of which can be transmitted to people and to other animals. Your foster animals should be kept in a separate part of your home away from your pets. You should always wear the appropriate PPE (personal protection equipment) such as exam gloves when handling wildlife, even though they are babies. We will provide you with the appropriate disinfectants that are safe for you and for the wildlife. Always wash your hands after finishing a feeding or treatment.

Foster position you are applying for (circle one):

Squirrels

Opossums

Doves

Applicable Previous Experience

Are you a current or former CROW volunteer (circle one)?

Yes

No

If yes, what area did you volunteer in?



Volunteer Application

Date Rec. _____
Orientation _____
Position _____
Schedule _____

Contact Information

Name (Mr /Mrs /Ms) _____
circle *Last* *First*

Local Street Address _____

City, Zip _____

Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email: _____

Alternate Address: _____

Alternate Phone: _____

Availability

Months Available: (*circle*) January February March April May June July August September October November December

Days/Shifts Available: (*circle*) Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday AM PM

Coverage Area (for VERTs): _____

Due to the amount of training involved, volunteers are asked to commit to one shift per week for at least three consecutive months. Morning shifts are 8am to 1pm. Afternoon shifts are 1pm to 5pm. Gift Shop/VEC shifts are 10am to 1pm and 1pm to 4pm.

I agree to show up for my shift on time or give 24 hours' notice if I cannot work my scheduled shift. I will stay for the duration of my scheduled shift unless dismissed by my supervisor. Please initial: _____

Other Required Information

Are you a member of CROW? _____

Date of Birth: _____ Occupation: _____
Must be 18 or older

Allergies: _____

Date of last Tetanus shot: _____ Have you had a pre-rabies vaccination? _____ Date: _____

Emergency Contact

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Relationship: _____

Volunteer Positions that you are interested in: (please check)

Please refer to the *Volunteer Opportunities* list online for a full description of each position:

<http://crowclinic.org/articles/become-a-volunteer>

<input type="checkbox"/>	Rescue	<input type="checkbox"/>	Opossums
<input type="checkbox"/>	Transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gopher Tortoise
<input type="checkbox"/>	Admission Desk	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buildings and Grounds
<input type="checkbox"/>	Clinic Upstairs (<i>pre-approval or experience required</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gift Shop
<input type="checkbox"/>	Baby Room	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visitor Education Center
<input type="checkbox"/>	Laundry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Administrative Help
<input type="checkbox"/>	Rehabilitation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Education/Presentation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Raccoons (<i>complete Rabies vaccination required</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Events

Do you have a boat? (*circle*) Yes No

I would like to volunteer at CROW because: _____

Special skills/background (i.e. background in wildlife or animal care, educational programs, etc.): _____

I understand that volunteer services will be provided to the Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW) with no monetary or material compensation. Volunteers are not considered employees of CROW, and as such are not covered by Workers' Compensation. Volunteers are held to the same high standard of conduct as employees and other rules and regulations as stated in the Volunteer Handbook.

Signature

Date

Please sign and return the following policies along with your application:

Volunteer Acknowledgement and Release of Liability, Non-Disclosure Agreement, Code of Conduct Agreement, Standards of Dress and Appearance, Use of Devices on Hospital Property, Volunteer Photo Policy, Wildlife Photo Policy, Social Media Policy, and Zoonotic Diseases.

Return this completed application to:

CROW Volunteer Administrative Assistant

PO Box 150

Sanibel, FL 33957

Or fax to 239-472-2334

Or email to volunteers@crowclinic.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY

THE UNDERSIGNED, in consideration of benefits received from working at CROW, Inc. as a volunteer and for other good and valuable consideration, receipt and sufficiency of which is acknowledged, does hereby for themselves, their heirs and personal representatives, release and discharge of CROW, Inc. board of directors, officers and members and each of them from all liability for loss, injury or damage arising from injury to the person, property or resulting in death of the undersigned, whether caused by negligence or otherwise while engaged in any activity whatsoever in relation to CROW, its officers, directors and members.

THE UNDERSIGNED further assumes all responsibility for and risk of bodily injury, death, property damage or otherwise while working for and on behalf of CROW.

THE UNDERSIGNED does, for themselves, their executors, administrators, heirs and assigns, release and forever discharge CROW, Inc., its officers, directors and members, together with their heirs, administrators; executors and assigns, from any and every claim, demand, action or right of action, of whatsoever nature, either in law or in equity, arising from or by reason of any bodily injury death and/or property damage resulting from any acts or incidents which may occur as a result of the undersigned's participation in any activities of any nature whatsoever associated with CROW, Inc.

THE UNDERSIGNED does, for themselves, their executors, administrators, heirs and assigns, acknowledge that working with wildlife, chemicals, tools and medications is inherently dangerous, that the undersigned is not and will not be covered by any form of insurance, including worker's compensation or other medical insurance, and does further assure CROW, Inc., that they will not commence or continue working should the undersigned become aware of any physical condition, including pregnancy, which would increase the undersigned's risk of injury or death.

THE UNDERSIGNED does hereby confirm to CROW, Inc. that they have received a tetanus-diphtheria (Td) vaccine inoculation within (10) years of date of this Acknowledgement and Release and further agree to receive subsequent inoculations required to protect the undersigned from tetanus infection while performing student work on behalf of CROW, Inc.

THE UNDERSIGNED acknowledges that they have carefully read the above release and executes this Release as their own free act and deed.

This Release contains the entire agreement between the parties and this Release is contractual and not merely recital.

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

It is the policy of CROW that all information concerning any current, past or potential CROW patient and employee is considered confidential, whether it be written, spoken or otherwise communicated or obtained. All said information, i.e. photos, files, records, personal information or personnel matters, etc., on any patient, employee, finder, treatment, etc. constitutes privileged information and is to be treated in a strictly confidential manner. Any discussion concerning the status of any current, past or potential patient or employee will be handled solely by the Executive Director or designee.

Questions from media sources will be handled solely by the Marketing and Public Relations Manager, Executive Director, Hospital Director, or their approved designee. No photographs will be taken on the CROW property without prior consent of the Executive Director or designee. Any printing, copying or operation of electronic media, which includes phone texts and messages, internet web sites and/or blogging, in order to release confidential information or photographs to any outside party, entity or organization is strictly prohibited and is a violation of the confidentiality policy. This would result in immediate dismissal.

By signing your application on the designated line, you confirm acknowledgement and agreement of the above stated policy. Your signature will be required upon application and annually thereafter, or at any other time deemed necessary by the Executive Director. Please read carefully the statement below:

*I fully understand and agree that **I am not, at any time**, to disclose, communicate or reveal **ANY** CROW related business, people, and patient information, records, files, photos, etc., or any other matters contained therein, to any unauthorized individuals or organizations outside of CROW.*

Also, any knowledge or witness of said breach of the above Confidentiality Policy by any party or parties shall be reported immediately to your immediate supervisor.

I understand that I am not to use the CROW logo or any other CROW animal depiction on a business card, document, etc., nor purport to represent myself as an agent of CROW to the public. I further understand that any violation of this agreement shall be sufficient grounds for immediate termination.

I have read and understand the CROW Acknowledgement and Release of Liability and Non-Disclosure Agreement and agree to these rules and releases as described above.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

CODE OF CONDUCT AGREEMENT

CROW is a nonprofit organization committed to saving lives through compassion, care and education. Participation in CROW's volunteer program is subject to the observance of our organization's rules and procedures. **The activities outlined below are strictly prohibited.** Any volunteer who engages in any of these behaviors is subject to discipline, up to and including termination and dismissal from the student program.

- Any acts of intentional or active cruelty towards animals.
- Abusive language toward staff members, students, volunteers or the public.
- Discourtesy or rudeness to any individual or group.
- Verbal, physical or visual harassment of another individual or group.
- Actual, threatened or implied violence toward any individual or group.
- Conduct endangering the safety, well-being or health of others or any animal in our care.
- Bullying or taking unfair advantage of any individual.
- Failure to cooperate with the staff.
- Possession of or use of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs on CROW property, or, reporting to CROW while under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol.
- Bringing dangerous or unauthorized materials onto CROW property. These include firearms, explosives, other weapons or similar, potentially dangerous items.

STANDARDS OF DRESS AND APPEARANCE

CROW is an organization that maintains a professional work environment and strives to maintain its positive public image. Volunteers are often on camera in the Visitor Education Center while working at the clinic and have increased interaction with donors, outside groups and news agencies.

Accordingly, established standards of dress and appearance are essential. These rules are:

- **Name badge and CROW volunteer shirt must be worn whenever at work.**
 - Acceptable bottoms are knee length shorts, pants or any color scrub pants. No "short" shorts or midriff baring tops.
- Rubber soled, closed shoes or sneakers should be worn at all times while working with patients. **Open toes, sandals and flip-flops are not permitted in the hospital or grounds areas.**
- High top, sturdy "hiking boot" type of shoes are recommended for working outdoors around the enclosures.
- Avoid wearing jewelry that could be entangled, pulled, swallowed or grabbed by an animal. Examples include dangling earrings, necklaces, large rings, loose bracelets, piercings and visible dermal implants. If in doubt, take it off.
- No excessive perfumes, colognes or other strong scents (e.g. soaps, powders, oils).

USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES ON HOSPITAL PROPERTY

CROW is a wildlife hospital where great focus and attention to detail is critical in performing all job functions. **To avoid unnecessary distractions and noise while working in patient and office areas, refrain from carrying personal electronic devices (cell phones, ipods, mp3 players, etc.)** If a situation requires you to carry your cell phone, please inform the Staff Veterinarian or Hospital Office Manager and ensure it is placed on silent or vibrate only. Additionally, CROW's office computers are limited to CROW business use.

I have read and understand the CROW Code of Conduct Agreement, Standards of Dress and Appearance, and Use of Electronic Devices on Hospital Property rules and I agree to abide by these standards and rules as described above. I understand that I may be terminated as a volunteer if I violate any of these rules.

Signature

Printed Name

Date

PHOTO POLICY OF VOLUNTEERS

CROW may take and use photographs of volunteers with or without their name and for any lawful purpose, including, but not limited to, such purposes as publicity, illustration, advertising, and Web content, without compensation. Furthermore, you consent that such photographs are CROW's property and they shall have the right to sell, duplicate, reproduce, and make their lawful uses such photographs as they may desire, free and clear of any claim whatever on your part.

WILDLIFE PHOTO POLICY

Wildlife in our care is not on exhibit; they are patients receiving treatment. CROW has a special license to take photographs for use in and with our educational media and are the exclusive property of CROW. **For all patients, regardless of the current stage of their capture, transport, admission, examination, treatment or release: PHOTOS are prohibited other than for use exclusively in the official record.**

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

You should be aware that CROW may observe content and information made available by You through social media. You should use Your best judgment in posting material that is neither inappropriate or harmful to CROW, its officials, employees, interns, students, volunteers, associates, customers, members, suppliers, or other people who work on behalf of CROW.

You are ultimately responsible for what You post online or for what others with permission to access and/or control your social media accounts post online. Keep in mind that any conduct that adversely affects Your job performance, the performance of fellow associates or otherwise adversely affects members, customers, suppliers, people who work on behalf of CROW or CROW'S legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Inappropriate postings may include patient/animal photos (with the exception of Animal Ambassadors), discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject You to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Always be fair and courteous to fellow associates, customers, members, suppliers or people who work on behalf of CROW. Statements, photographs, video, or audio that could be reasonably viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage customers, members, associates, fellow employees, interns, volunteers, or suppliers may constitute harassment or bullying.

All rules regarding confidential information apply in full to social media and You must maintain the confidentiality of CROW's private or confidential information. Do not post any private or confidential information, which includes, but is not limited to, internal reports, policies, procedures, or other internal business-related communications. All written or electronic communications furnished to You or provided by You to associates, customers, members, suppliers or people who work on behalf of CROW are strictly the property of CROW and may not be released or used without prior written permission by CROW.

Refrain from using any social media while on work time or on equipment CROW provides for work or business purposes, unless it is work-related as authorized by CROW.

If You post or publish content during non-work hours that involves Your work with CROW, a personal opinion of CROW, a political opinion of CROW, or the term "CROW" or Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife and an opinion regarding CROW'S actions, a disclaimer must be posted and may specifically state the following: "The posting on this site is my own opinion and not the opinion or position of CROW."

CROW encourages all employees, interns, and volunteers to contemplate the speed and manner in which information posted on social media can be relayed and often misunderstood by readers. Thus, subject to the limitations above, while an employee's, intern's, or volunteer's free time is generally not subject to any restrictions by CROW, CROW urges all employees to not post information regarding CROW or their jobs which could affect work-place conditions or which could affect CROW'S mission and/or business.

I have read and understand the CROW Volunteer Photo Policy, Wildlife Photo Policy and Social Media Policy and I agree to abide by these standards and rules as described above. I understand that I may be terminated as a volunteer if I violate any of these rules.

Signature

Printed Name

Date _____

Zoonotic Diseases *Information for students, staff, and volunteers*

Diseases contracted by humans from animals (zoonoses) should be a continuous concern for everyone involved in animal care. The vast majority of zoonotic disease risks that may be encountered at CROW can be eliminated or greatly minimized by two things: **common sense and good hygiene.**

- **No food should be eaten in ANY patient care area** (this includes the gopher tortoise grazing area)
- **Wash hands thoroughly and often - this includes after handling each patient, between groups of babies, after cleaning a cage, etc.**
- **No open-toed or open-sided shoes are allowed while administering patient care.**
- **If bitten, wash area thoroughly and notify a staff veterinarian immediately.**

Information about relevant zoonotic diseases:

Rabies

Rabies is a viral disease carried by mammals. Although all mammals are potential reservoirs for the virus, animals are categorized according to risk of potential transmission. For example, raccoons, skunks, and bats are considered high risk rabies-vector species. Rabbits, squirrels, and opossums are considered low-risk. Handling of high-risk rabies-vector species is limited to those who have received pre-exposure rabies vaccinations. Cleaning the cages of high-risk species, as well as handling of medium and low-risk species is left to the discretion of the staff veterinarians. Transmission to humans usually happens via a bite by an infected animal. Non-bite exposure (exposure of infected tissue to open wounds, scratches, or mucous membranes) is considered rare, but should not allow for negligence.

Intestinal parasites

Mammals, birds, and reptiles may shed organisms or eggs in their feces, and shedding may increase in a stressful situation, such as captivity. Most zoonotic transmissions occur from a fecal-to-oral route (accidental ingestion of eggs or organisms), although some can cause disease by penetrating skin via infected soil or water. Some parasites may cause GI disease in humans (*Salmonella*, *Giardia*, etc.); others may cause neurologic, ocular, or skin disease (hookworms, roundworms, etc). Again, use good sense and good hygiene when handling animals or cleaning cages.

Salmonellosis

Many animals may carry *Salmonella* species that may or may not be harmful to them; however, stress may increase shedding of the bacteria and may pose a risk to other animals or humans if transmitted. Transmission is via the fecal-oral route; symptoms in humans may include GI discomfort, diarrhea, nausea, etc.

Cutaneous, ocular, and visceral larva migrans

These diseases occur in humans as nematodes migrate through skin, eye tissue or internal organs. Infection in humans occurs either by ingestion of infected fecal material or by penetration of skin. Infection with *Baylisascaris procyonis*, a roundworm of raccoons, may have life-threatening significance in humans. However, this parasite is in low prevalence in the Southeastern United States.

Leptospirosis

Leptospira bacteria are found in urine of infected animals, and may be present in moist soil or water that has been contaminated by infected carriers. Leptospirosis is not specifically a disease of rats, as many mammals (including raccoons and opossums) can become infected or transmit the bacteria. Bacteria may penetrate the skin through prolonged contact or through open wounds. Initial symptoms in humans may include flu-like symptoms, such as fever, chills, and headache.

Psittacosis

Some birds may carry a bacterium called *Chlamydophila* that (like *Salmonella*) may be shed more often during times of stress. Infected birds may range from having few to no symptoms to having inflamed eyes and difficulty breathing. Bacteria are shed in feces and ocular and nasal discharge. Infection in humans is from direct contact (including inhalation) of infectious material.

The CROW medical staff works hard to remain current on emerging diseases and their significance. If you have a question regarding any zoonotic disease or its implications, please speak with a staff veterinarian.

I have read and understand the risks for diseases that can be contracted by being involved with animal care and I agree to abide by the standards and rules as described above.

Signature

Printed Name

Date