

Animal Lovers Coming Together

By Nicole Doucette

Animal loving individuals, along with their fellow animal loving staff, have come together to gain meaningful volunteer experience while supporting local animal shelters, helping animals in need, and making new friends.

How did it start?

While searching for volunteer opportunities for individuals BACI supports, staff in the Options 1 program discovered that *Rabbitats for Humanity* was in need of helpers. Several individuals had set goals related to working with animals, and were also looking for more opportunities to interact with the community.

What is a Rabbitat and what do the volunteers do?

Rabbitats for Humanity is a rabbit rescue organization that creates “rabbitats,” which are safe and humane habitats for rescued rabbits. On Tuesdays, BACI volunteers go for a couple of hours to the larger and newer rabbitat located at Urban Safari Rescue Society in South Surrey. Urban Safari houses and cares for many rescued animals, including huge tortoises, iguanas, chinchillas, and a pig! The volunteers from BACI feed tasty greens to the rabbits and change the rabbits’ water. On Wednesdays, the same group heads to the Richmond Auto Mall where they volunteer at another rabbitat by feeding both rescued and wild rabbits.



Over many months, the experience has evolved along with the people involved. One enthusiastic staff member took the initiative to connect with local farms and stores to donate better greens for the rabbits. Thanks to Valeri’s efforts and dedication, the volunteers have secured vendors – Choices in South Surrey and Richmond Country Farms – to supply multiple crates of fresh greens, fruits and vegetables to feed to the rescued rabbits every week (for free!).

Many other staff members and individuals at Options 1 have directed their time and effort towards fundraising for *Rabbitat for Humanity* – through baking cupcakes, cookies and cakes to sell at bake sales, and by collecting donations when selling their homemade crafts and bracelets.

Rabbitats for Humanity has been very thankful for the contribution individuals and staff at BACI have made as volunteers, fundraisers, and supporters. They stated that the BACI group has provided the most desirable and meaningful contributions.

As for the individual volunteers, they have made new connections, new memories, and gained new skills. The positive impression made by the original group of volunteers – Andrew, Rosie, Judy, and Shelley – has led to more volunteer positions being developed and opportunities for more individuals to join in this rewarding experience.

The group has been very successful as volunteers and as representatives of BACI. Many have expressed their passion for continuing to help and connect with animals, and the experience has opened them to more opportunities to be involved in the community.



Check out [a video](#) of the animal lovers in action.