



Thank you for making the decision to foster or adopt!
Welcome to the Derby City Dog Rescue family!

Derby City Dog Rescue (DCDR) was founded in early 2011 by a group of friends who bonded over our love of dogs and a desire to help shelter animals. We are a small, non-profit group of volunteers who work together to achieve a common goal of saving hearts, one paw at a time.

Our initial aim was to bridge the gap between local animal shelters in Louisville, Kentucky, and other rescues outside the state to pursue placement of local dogs in urgent situations in our area. To ease some of the difficulties that can arise when dealing with a government shelter, we provide quality photos of the animals, quality communication between the rescue and shelter, temporary foster (in some cases), pulling assistance, and help with getting dogs to their transports.

DCDR also serves as a small rescue within the community, pulling dogs from our local shelters and placing them into foster homes and handling adoptions. Most of our foster dogs are rescued from the shelters when they are out of time or in need of treatment. They live in fosters' homes, with their own dogs, learning the basics of house life and receiving any veterinary treatment they may require.

Within the community, DCDR assists our local animal shelter by taking better photos of animals in need and marketing them through Facebook for rescue, foster, or adoption. We are a founding member, along with Slugger City Bully Buddies and Tails Pet Photography, of the Rescue Me! Pet Photography project. Rescue Me! connects professional photographers and rescues/shelters to produce professional photographs of their animals for marketing across Facebook and Petfinder—as well as in area businesses.

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Derby City Dog Rescue

...saving hearts one paw at a time.

Frequently Asked Foster Questions

What is fostering?

Foster parents provide temporary homes for dogs prior to adoption. Providing foster care is a wonderful way to contribute to saving homeless pets. DCDR is in need of temporary and long-term fosters. Some dogs are pulled from shelters and only need a small amount of time in a foster home until another rescue has an opening and the dog can be transported to them. Other dogs need long-term foster homes where they can learn, grow, and (sometimes) heal until they find their forever homes.

Why do animals need foster care?

There are several possible reasons:

- Foster care can help save a dog's life when a shelter is full.
- Newborn and very young dogs might need to be bottle-fed or receive more care than a shelter can provide.
- Some dogs need time to recover from an illness or injury before adoption.

Finally, long-term shelter residents often find the shelter environment stressful and can become depressed, anxious, or fearful. Moving animals into private homes allows them to relax and blossom, as well as learn how to become good "house dogs" through training and socialization, increasing the chances for adoption. In medical cases, fostering allows the animal to receive treatment or recover in a quiet, stress-free environment. With fostering, everyone benefits: The foster gets to spend time with a special dog; the kennel gains space, which will most likely save another dog's life; the foster dog gets a second chance at becoming a cherished pet; and the adoptive owners get a dog that is better adapted to home life and, therefore, has a better chance of remaining in the new home permanently.

How much time will it take?

The specific needs of the dog will determine how much time is involved. Newborn and orphaned puppies require round-the-clock feedings. Older puppies require housetraining, socialization, and behavior training for puppy issues such as jumping, nipping and chewing. Frightened, abused and un-socialized dogs need extra patience and training time. Older dogs might require additional medications, vet visits, and patience.

What skills are needed?

It's best to have some knowledge of companion dog behavior and health, but DCDR will help you learn anything you need to know to become a wonderful foster. Some dogs in need of foster care require a little extra help or training to overcome past experiences. Dogs often benefit from obedience training. We have included multiple basic training handouts in this

packet that will help you learn some techniques so that you can play an active role in preparing your foster dog for a new home.

What about my own pets?

It is very important that your pets are up to date on **vaccines**, including Rabies, Distemper/Parvo combination, and Bordetella (aka “Kennel Cough”). Your foster dog might have been in a shelter or around other dogs that could have been exposed to viruses that could be passed to your dogs if they are not current on vaccines.

It is also important that your dogs are on **monthly, veterinarian approved, heartworm and flea preventative**. Your foster dog might have been exposed to fleas, ticks, intestinal parasites, and/or mites. DCDR screens our foster dogs for all of the above but, depending on when the dog is exposed, a screening may not reveal the parasite before placement in the home. Keeping your dogs on their monthly preventatives will help decrease their risk of exposure.

You will also want to consider how your current pets will adjust to having a foster dog in your household. Some animals do very well and will be a big help in socializing your foster dog and other animals might have a harder time adjusting. You are the best judge of your pet’s personality.

Will I have to find a home for my foster myself?

No, DCDR will take full responsibility in finding your foster a forever home. We do ask that you bring your foster to as many adoption events as you can. We will let you know when an event is taking place and provide you with an “adopt me” bandana/visor to help highlight the dog for potential adopters.

You can help by telling friends, family, and co-workers about your foster dog. You can also promote your foster dog by posting flyers, sending emails, posting his or her picture on Facebook for your friends to see, and even just walking him/her dog through your neighborhood and local parks.

The most effective thing you can do to help your foster’s chances of adoption is to do your best to socialize him/her and teach him/her good manners. This will make your foster more appealing to potential adopters and get him/her prepared for a new home.

How long are dogs in foster homes?

It ultimately depends on the dog and the situation. It may be anywhere from a few days or a few months. Some dogs are adopted quickly and others take more time and patience to find the right home. Some dogs may also be recovering from injury or illness and need a longer stay to fully recover before moving into a permanent home. At DCDR, we strive to find the best fit for each of our dogs. We want to ensure that they never end up homeless again.

Can I adopt my foster dog?

ABSOLUTELY! As long as you are approved by DCDR, you can make your foster dog a permanent family member.

What is the process of adoption?

- Potential adopters must first submit an application for adoption. They can do this at www.derbycitydogrescue.org.
- DCDR will contact the potential adopter to discuss certain aspects of adopting a dog.
- DCDR requires a vet reference and 3 personal references from people that live outside of the home.
- DCDR also requires a home visit. At the home visit, we evaluate the pets currently in the home, fencing, and the overall home environment. We want to make sure that our dog is the right fit for the potential adopter and vice versa.
- The meet-and-greet will be scheduled. The potential adopter, all family members in the household, and their current pets will need to be present to ensure everyone is on board and the pets will get along. We will sometimes combine the home visit and meet-and-greet into one visit and will leave the dog in its new home and collect the fee on the spot.
- Once approved, the adopter will be contacted and adoption fees will be processed. The usual adoption fee for any DCDR dog is \$150-200. If the foster parent decides to adopt their foster dog, their adoption fee will be equal to the amount of money DCDR has spent on the dog, not to be less than \$50 but not to exceed \$200.
- The foster dog will go to its new forever home. 😊



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Foster Requirements

A foster dog belongs to Derby City Dog Rescue, and any decisions regarding the dog and the dog's future will be made by Derby City Dog Rescue.

The foster parent -

- Provides adequate food, shelter, exercise, grooming, monthly veterinarian approved preventatives (flea, heartworm and/or tick), transport to authorized DCDR veterinary care, and attention for the foster pet;
- Agrees to a home visit by DCDR at any time;
- Agrees to return the foster to DCDR if the foster parent cannot keep the pet for any reason or at DCDR's request;
- Agrees to attend scheduled "adoption day" events with the foster dog whenever possible;
- Acknowledges that DCDR cannot guarantee any foster animals against parasites, diseases, or destructive behavior;
- Will not hold DCDR responsible, nor seek any compensation for damages, medical fees or other liabilities incurred by the foster;
- Understands that any bites or injuries caused by the foster are to be reported immediately to DCDR;
- Agrees to be personally responsible for the humane housing and care of the foster;
- Agrees that all DCDR foster dogs should remain on a leash or tie-out at all times when outside unless in a secure fenced in area.
- Understands and accepts that it is DCDR's prerogative to decide which home is most appropriate for the individual dog and, therefore will not take issue with the decision.

DCDR will be hosting regular Foster Orientation sessions. It is strongly recommended that you attend at least one session. These sessions are provided to help you feel comfortable fostering and supply you with information needed to become a successful foster parent. It will also be a great opportunity to meet other foster parents and exchange tips and ideas. We will release dates, times and locations of the foster sessions through postings on Facebook and email distribution, as well as at the "Upcoming Events" page at www.derbycitydogrescue.org.

There is a Derby City Dog Rescue Foster/Adopter Forum on Facebook. If you have not been invited to join this group, please let us know so that we can invite you. The Forum was started so that you always have someone to contact with general questions about your foster dog. Please use this to inquire about meet-and-greets, events, or general care questions such as crate training, behavioral issues, or even minor illnesses. If there is a **true emergency** with your foster dog, please contact DCDR by phone. We cannot guarantee that the Forum is monitored closely enough to respond to an emergency in a timely manner.



Preparing for your DCDR Dog

After being approved, we suggest you prepare yourself, your family, and your home for a new canine companion.

Be physically and mentally prepared

- *If you are part of a family, fostering/adopting a dog will be a team effort.* Some adults and children might have a hard time adjusting to a new dog and may also have a difficult time “giving up” a foster dog when it is time for them to go to their new home. Make sure that everyone is prepared for the new dog and, if fostering, that everyone understands what fostering means.
- *Be realistic about your time commitment.* Don’t over extend yourself. Puppies and young dogs and ill or injured dogs require more time when fostering. If you are just starting out or worried about your time commitment, please let DCDR know so that we can help find the perfect foster dog for you. Many believe that a shelter is a terrible place and any home environment would be better for a dog. While the shelter can be stressful, so can a home if it is not prepared.
- *Be prepared that the dog might need some basic house training and obedience training.* We have supplied multiple handouts to help you with your training needs. The orientation session and Facebook Foster/Adoption Forum are other great avenues to help with any training needs. Please review all training and behavior handouts so that you get started off right with your dog. We want this to be a wonderful experience for you, your family, and your foster or adopted dog.

Where to keep your dog

Planning where you will keep the dog before you bring him/her home will make the process much easier for everyone.

- When you bring the dog home, you will want to confine the dog in a single room, such as a kitchen or living area so that the dog can get used to you, your current pets, and your home environment. You can use a baby gate to block off other areas of your house during the first part of the dog’s stay.
- In the beginning, the dog might have accidents in the house due to stress or adjusting to your routine. If the dog is not housetrained, confining it to a smaller area of your house where you can closely monitor will help get off to a right start.
- Have a crate ready for when you are away from your home. Crate training is the best method to housetrain a dog and also provide the dog with a safe place to stay out of trouble while you are away. Please review the behavior and training section in this handbook to help with crate training, house training, and behavior issues such as destructive chewing.

- If the dog is coming straight out of a shelter, we strongly recommend that you keep the dog separated from your pets for a few days (up to a week). There are viruses that a shelter dog might have been exposed to that have a longer incubation period than others. Even though the dog has been vaccinated and evaluated by a veterinarian and the DCDR members, he/she might still be incubating an illness. We want to do everything that we can to prevent your dogs from becoming ill.
- We also strongly recommend that you pick up the dog's feces as soon as it defecates to prevent your pets from being exposed to intestinal parasites. Please review the medical section of this handbook for information on illnesses that shelter dogs may have been exposed to, vaccinations, and intestinal parasites that shelter dogs might be carrying.

The "Do"s

- Do keep the dog indoors in a location with a crate available.
- Do keep the dog in a warm/cool (depending on season) and dry location.
- Do keep the dog on a leash or tie-out at all times when outdoors unless you have a secured, fenced yard. When in a secured yard, you must monitor your dog closely. It is very common for shelter dogs to try and escape, so always supervise the dog when outdoors.
- Do keep the dog indoors in a kitchen, bathroom, mudroom, or laundry room when they are not being closely monitored. You can use baby gates to help keep the dog in certain locations of the house. It is very important for the dog to be around people and to be properly socialized, but it is also important for your dog to be in a safe and secured location in your house so that he/she stays out of trouble. They are very curious and can quickly get themselves into trouble.

The "Don't"s

- We recommend that you socialize the DCDR dog with other dogs but **do not** place her/him around other strange dogs that you do not know. We might not know a lot about the DCDR dog's history and want to prevent your foster dog from getting into an altercation with a strange dog.
- Never let the dog off leash unless you are in a secure, fully fenced in location; he/she might not have any off leash training and could get lost, hit by a car, or get into an altercation with another dog.
- Do not let the DCDR foster dog stay with anyone else unless you approve that through DCDR. Contact us if you are planning on going out-of-town or need your dog to stay elsewhere for any other reason. A volunteer might be able to help you, or we can suggest an approved boarding facility for your foster dog while you are away. If you have a family member or friend willing to watch your foster dog, this must be approved through DCDR first.

How to dog-proof a room

Walk into the room in which you are going to confine the DCDR dog and ask yourself:

1. Is there room for a dog crate (your foster's safe place)?
2. Is there quick and safe access to outside for quick potty breaks?
3. Is there anything that can be chewed or destroyed such as drapes, couch, rugs, or keepsakes?
4. Are there exposed electrical cords within reach? Check behind easily moved furniture such as a desk or end table.

5. Is there any place the dog can hide? Will you be able to get the dog out, if hidden?
6. Are there coffee tables or other stands with objects that can easily be knocked off by a happy, wagging tail?
7. Are there plants in the room? If so, are the plants toxic? Check our toxic plant list in the medical section of this handbook.
8. Where will I set up the crate once hazardous objects are removed? The crate should be in a well-lit, quiet, and comfortable area. The crate should not be in a dark, hidden room or area.
9. Is there a blanket or crate pad in the crate? Your foster dog will need comfortable bedding in his crate.

Transporting

The safest way to travel with the DCDR dog is to put it in a secure crate in the back of a car, wagon, or SUV. If that is not an option, you can purchase a seat belt harness that will keep your dog localized while in the car. Some dogs are very excited or nervous in the car. If loose in the car, they could obstruct your view or get in the way of your driving. They could also be seriously injured if you have to brake quickly or are involved in a car accident. NEVER allow a dog to ride in an open truck bed, even in a crate.

Supply List

- Food and water bowls
- Quality collars and leashes
- High-quality dog or puppy food. We recommend feeding a mostly dry diet but if the dog is nervous in the beginning or recovering from illness or injury, you might need canned food to encourage a healthy appetite.
- Chew toys. We recommend quality toys like the Kong brand toys. Some dogs, especially puppies, have a tendency to destroy toys and ingest pieces. This can pose a serious health risk if your foster dog develops an intestinal blockage due to ingesting parts of a toy. Rawhides and certain bones are an option but you have to pick these carefully and always monitor the dog when chewing. Hard bones are now posing a serious health risk with dogs. The FDA has recently released a statement about these health risks. Owners and fosters should use caution when selecting appropriate bones for their dogs. You can read more about this warning later in this handbook.
- Crate or kennel. We recommend that you crate your foster dog while you are away to keep him/her safe and out of trouble and also to help with house training. The crate should **never** be used as punishment. Please review the multiple training and behavior handouts in this handbook.
- Dog beds, blankets, or towels to give your foster dog a comfortable place to sleep.

Becoming a Foster Home

How you can save a life by giving a temporary home to a shelter animal.

► **By Faith Maloney**

Being a foster home is not easy. Taking animals into your own home, loving them, and then letting them go requires a very particular kind of ability.

Fostering isn't for everyone, but for Chaz and Jean Blackmore it's the only way to go. They decided that, along with their own dogs Jasper and Cody, they would provide a temporary home to one foster dog at a time.

"The dogs do everything with us," says Chaz. "They go jogging with us and they go for car trips. In the case of Tika, a black lab mix, she went with us on our honeymoon. She got to meet moose, deer, and mountain goats, and she found her new family while we were in Aspen. Her new people were vacationing there at the same time as us. They really connected with Tika, so when we got home, we arranged for her permanent adoption.

Every day, thousands of dogs just like Tika don't ever make it into a new home simply because there is no room in shelters and humane societies to take them all. Foster homes offer a vital alternative to this sad situation.

Barbara Conrad of Salt Lake City has been a foster mom to hundreds of cats and dogs over the years. She volunteers her services for the Humane Society of Utah. This year, Best Friends honored her as Person of the Year at our awards ceremony here in our home state of Utah.

Barbara, a modest woman, shrugs off her achievements, pointing out that there are many other people like her who enable precious lives to be saved.

"Fostering is very important to each animal, but especially to cats," said Barbara. "They get so depressed in a shelter, and consequently often get really sick. They seem to be more sensitive than dogs. And their anxiety, known as "cage depression," can make things worse for them because they then don't look good to potential adopters.

"Being able to have them spend time in a foster home before going up for permanent adoption can mean the difference between life and death for a lot of cats."

In California, Linda and her husband Mike provide a foster home for animals from their local rescue group. In three years, they've placed about 150 animals.

“When they're adopted, he pouts for days. Then he's delighted when the next foster arrives and we go through it all again!”



Chaz and Jean at home with their foster pals

But, however good the new homes, there's always a potential problem when you're fostering an animal. In Linda and Mike's case, Mike falls in love with them all and never wants to let them go!

"With every animal that comes through the door, he begs me to keep it and add it to our own brood. If it's with us for longer than two weeks, he gets really upset when I find it a home. He pouts for days, even when I tell him how happy our own cats are when the interloper is finally gone. Then he's delighted when the next foster arrives and we go through it all again!"

While many people can't let go, others are reluctant to foster in the first place, thinking that it is somehow unfair to take in a dog or cat, establish a bond, and then allow the animal to be adopted out into another home. Isn't that a second abandonment?

I used to feel like that myself. But once I saw how being in a foster home helped a dog or cat find a quality permanent placement, I changed my mind. Taking a stray or frightened animal and showing him or her that people can be kind, that food is available, and that there is a warm place to sleep, creates a marvelous bridge to a new home. And those of us who provide foster space know that there is never a shortage of animals that need this preparation time before finding their own people.

Letting them go isn't easy. Often, a foster home turns into a permanent home. This is why all rescue, shelter, and humane societies are always on the hunt for new foster homes.

Are you ready to give fostering a try? Then contact your local humane society or rescue group and talk to them about it. Maybe there will be some training involved, some papers to sign, and then it's back home with a new temporary family member.

If we are going to make a difference in the number of animals killed each year because there is not enough space to house them, then becoming a foster parent is a priority. It is important, valuable work and, best of all, it saves lives. 🐾

You can download the Best Friends manual about foster care from the No More Homeless Pets section of the Best Friends Web site at www.bestfriends.org. Or write to Best Friends for a copy. (Please send a large self-addressed, stamped envelope.)

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Introducing a Dog to Other Pets

The Humane Society of the United States



From "the leader of the pack" to "the top dog," plenty of simplistic metaphors come from the canine world. But relationships between canines can be pretty complex, beginning with the very first meeting.

Like most animals who live in groups, dogs establish their own social structure, sometimes called a dominance hierarchy. This dominance hierarchy serves to maintain order, reduce conflict and promote cooperation among pack members.

Dogs also establish territories, which they may defend against intruders or rivals. Of course, dogs' social and territorial nature affects their behavior whenever a new dog is introduced to the household.

Choose a neutral location

Introduce the dogs in a neutral location so that your resident dog is less likely to view the newcomer as a territorial intruder. Each dog should be handled by a separate person. With both dogs on leashes, begin the introductions in an area unfamiliar to each, such as a park or a neighbor's yard. If you frequently walk your resident dog in a nearby park, she may view that area as her territory, too, so choose a less familiar site. If you are adopting your dog from an animal shelter, you might even bring your resident dog to the local shelter and introduce the two there (some shelters may even require that a new dog meets the resident dog before the adoption is complete).

Use positive reinforcement

From the first meeting, help both dogs experience "good things" when they're in each other's presence. Let them sniff each other briefly, which is normal canine greeting behavior. As they do, talk to them in a happy, friendly tone of voice; never use a

threatening tone. (Don't allow them to investigate and sniff each other for too long, however, as this may escalate to an aggressive response.)

After a short time, get the attention of both dogs and give each a treat in return for obeying a simple command, such as "sit" or "stay." Take the dogs for a walk and let them sniff and investigate each other at intervals. Continue with the "happy talk," food rewards, and simple commands.

Be aware of body postures

One body posture that indicates things are going well is a "play-bow." One dog will crouch with her front legs on the ground and her hind end in the air. This is an invitation to play, and a posture that usually elicits friendly behavior from the other dog. Watch carefully for body postures that indicate an aggressive response, including hair standing up on one dog's back, teeth-baring, deep growls, a stiff-legged gait, or a prolonged stare. If you see such postures, interrupt the interaction immediately by calmly getting each dog interested in something else.

For example, both handlers can call their dogs to them, have them sit or lie down, and reward each with a treat. The dogs' interest in the treats should prevent the situation from escalating into aggression. Try letting the dogs interact again, but this time for a shorter time period and/or at a greater distance from each other.

Taking the dogs home

When the dogs seem to be tolerating each other's presence without fearful or aggressive responses, and the investigative greeting behaviors have tapered off, you can take them home. Whether you choose to take them in the same vehicle will depend on their size, how well they ride in the car, how trouble-free the initial introduction has been, and how many dogs are involved.

If you have more than one resident dog in your household, it may be best to introduce the resident dogs to the new dog one at a time. Two or more resident dogs may have a tendency to "gang up" on the newcomer.

It is important to support the dominant dog in your household, even if that turns out to be the newcomer. This may mean, for example, allowing the dominant dog to claim a special toy or favored sleeping spot as his own. Trying to impose your preference for which dog should be dominant can confuse the dogs and create further problems.

Introducing puppies to adult dogs

Puppies usually pester adult dogs unmercifully. Before the age of four months, puppies may not recognize subtle body postures from adult dogs signaling that they've had enough. Well-socialized adult dogs with good temperaments may set limits with puppies with a warning growl or snarl. These behaviors are normal and should be allowed.

Adult dogs who aren't well-socialized, or who have a history of fighting with other dogs, may attempt to set limits with more aggressive behaviors, such as biting, which could

harm the puppy. For this reason, a puppy shouldn't be left alone with an adult dog until you're confident the puppy isn't in any danger. Be sure to give the adult dog some quiet time away from the puppy, and some extra individual attention as well.

When to get help

If the introductions don't go smoothly, contact a professional animal behaviorist immediately. Dogs can be severely injured in fights, and the longer the problem continues, the harder it can be to resolve. Punishment won't work, and could make things worse. Fortunately, most conflicts between dogs in the same family can be resolved with professional guidance.

Adapted from material originally developed by applied animal behaviorists at the Dumb Friends League, Denver, Colorado. All rights reserved.

The First Week with a DCDR Dog

Introduction

Derby City Dog Rescue prefers for your dog(s) to meet the DCDR dog away from your home before fostering. This is not always possible, but is recommended. Even if your dog has many different canine playmates, you should still bring it to meet the potential foster/adoption. Dogs are like people and sometimes a dog might not like another dog for no apparent reason.

What to do once you are home with the DCDR dog

- Do be alert and make the introduction/reintroduction gradually and calmly. Even if they got along great at the meet and greet, your dog may be territorial at home.
- If possible, go for a walk around your neighborhood with the dogs and multiple handlers (one dog per person is best; but, if that is not possible one person should walk the foster and another should walk your current dogs). Walk the dogs side by side on leashes and allow them to sniff one another and become familiar with one another.
- Do give your own dog(s) LOTS of love and praise.
- Do leave leashes on all the dogs when you are home so that you can get immediate control if needed. You will probably only need to do this for a short time during the initial adjustment period.
- Talk normally letting the dogs know that you are fine, they are fine, and everything is fine!
- Be patient and go slowly with the DCDR dog as they may have been through a stressful, abusive, or neglectful situation.
- Don't leave the DCDR dog unattended with your resident dog(s). Even if they get along when you are there, you should separate them when you are not home. After the initial adjustment period, this may no longer be necessary. Be sure to always remove toys, food, and chews when unsupervised and make sure there is adequate bedding for everyone.

Some common mistakes

- Holding the leash too tightly (i.e., short-leashing or resisting the dog's pull) may cause a dog to react defensively.
- Leaving toys and chews around the house can cause guarding, which could escalate very quickly and result in an altercation.
- Feeding the DCDR dog with your resident dog. It's best to separate them initially and closely monitor them while eating. It is natural for dogs to be protective of their food. We also suggest always feeding your DCDR foster dog in a crate/kennel to further ensure a barrier between dogs with food.
- Over-stimulating the DCDR dog with too many introductions and events at first. It is very important to socialize the foster dog and take them to events where they can meet potential adopters, but too much too fast could cause anxiety and stress.

Introducing your cats to the DCDR dog

Introducing a cat to a dog is similar to introducing dogs but might require a little more time and patience. Some dogs might have lived with cats before and others might have just been tested at a shelter. DCDR tests shelter dogs with cats only by request. We will never put a dog into a home with cats if we think there could be any potential cat aggression, but sometimes this does not become apparent until the dog is in a home with a cat.

- Before you introduce the DCDR dog to your cat, you might want to wait a few days until you have confirmed or instilled some basic obedience in the DCDR dog. You will need to have the dog under control and know what behaviors are appropriate when interacting with a cat.
- Allow the dog to settle in and know your surroundings before you start introductions to unfamiliar animals. Take your time to create a stress-free environment.
- Begin by keeping your cat and the dog in separate areas of your house. Let them each explore the other's areas for short periods of time when the other pet has been removed. This will allow them to pick up on each other's scents and this starts the introduction process.
- After a few days, allow them to meet but keep the dog on a leash. Observe their interactions carefully. A dog that is showing overt aggression, such as snarling, baring teeth, or growling will probably never accept a cat. If all is reasonably calm, walk the dog around the room on a leash but don't let go in case the dog decides to chase the cat. On-leash interactions will allow the cat to approach the dog if it wants.
- It is a natural instinct for a dog to chase a cat, especially if the dog has not been around many cats. Never allow the dog to intimidate the cat by chasing or barking at it. Sternly tell the dog no or "Ah Ah" and let it know that this is not appropriate behavior. Make the dog sit and reward with praise and treats when acting appropriately around the cat.
- On the other hand, if the cat bops the dog on the nose as a warning, this is a good sign and should not be discouraged. When they set up boundaries between themselves, they are beginning to establish a working relationship.
- Let them interact, with the dog on a leash, for 15-30 minutes, and then return them to their separate areas of safety. Praise the dog again with lots of praise and rewards.
- As the days go on, increase the amount of time that they are together each visit. It's important to be patient and take extra time so that your cat is not overwhelmed and the dog understands the rules of interacting with cats. Be encouraging and relaxed and always reward good behavior.
- When you feel comfortable that they can spend time together, you can release the dog but keep the leash connected to its collar in case you need to regain control of the situation.
- Use your best judgment as to when they can begin to interact with the dog off-leash.
- It's always a good idea to have a safety zone for your cat. You can do this by blocking one room with a baby gate or using a hook and eye latch reversed to keep a door slightly open for your cat. In the event of a stressful situation, your cat has a protected area to go where the dog cannot.

10 Ways to Become a Successful FOSTER PARENT

1. Give your foster animal lots of attention and affection.

The animal you are fostering likely has special needs that require time and energy. The animal may have lived a difficult life before coming to your home; your love and attention will help to heal the animal's physical and psychological wounds.

2. Learn as much as you can about pet care.

Before you bring your foster animal home, learn as much as you can about caring for that animal. Read about feeding, grooming, and training. Study the warning signs that may indicate the animal needs veterinary attention.

3. Be prepared to make a financial commitment.

Before volunteering to foster an animal, find out from the shelter what costs you will incur. Depending on your shelter's policies and resources, you may be asked to pay for food, supplies, and/or veterinary care.

4. Make your home pet-friendly.

Before you bring your foster animal home, make sure you "pet proof" your home. For example, remove poisonous plants and protect furnishings. Keep the animal's room warm and comfortable. Also, take steps to prevent the animal from escaping.

5. Keep your pets up-to-date on their vaccinations.

All animals should be current on the vaccinations that protect them from diseases. Before you bring home a foster animal, consult with your veterinarian to make sure your own animals have received the preventive treatment they need.

6. Keep foster animals away from your own pets.

A foster pet may come into your home harboring contagious diseases. Even though your pets are vaccinated against many diseases, it's a good idea to keep the foster animal away from your pets as an added precaution. The length of time will depend on the circumstances, any symptoms the animal may be showing, and/or the results of an initial veterinary visit—and may range from a few days to a few weeks.

7. Recognize your limits.

Fostering requires a great deal of time and energy—both emotional and physical. Don't overextend yourself by fostering animals too frequently; you may burn yourself out.

8. Return the animal to the shelter on time.

The shelter depends on you to make its program work. Be sure to return the animal to the shelter at the scheduled time. If you decide to adopt an animal you foster, go through the shelter's normal adoption process. If a friend or relative wants to adopt the animal you are fostering, that person must go through the shelter's adoption process—not yours.

9. Understand that some foster animals will not survive.

Many animals arrive at the shelter come from unknown backgrounds. Despite your best efforts, the animal you foster may develop a severe illness that cannot be treated. Do the best you can to help the animal, but accept the fact that you cannot save them all.

10. Enjoy being a foster parent.

Although fostering takes a great deal of time and commitment, it can be an incredibly rewarding experience. You are temporarily providing a needy animal with a loving home environment and helping that animal become more suitable for adoption into a responsible, lifelong home.

How to Write Pet Profiles to Find Good Homes for Your Adoptables

By Elizabeth Doyle

Here are some general rules for writing blurbs to go with your adoptables' photos:

1. Facts are uninspiring.

The fact that Joey is two years old, black and brown, 46 pounds, a mix of German shepherd and pit bull, and has digestion problems will not inspire anyone to adopt him. People may be curious to learn these things, and they should be included. But none of it will get him adopted, and this stuff should never be the focus of the blurb.

2. Tell it from the animal's perspective.

The most compelling thing you can write on behalf of an animal is what you imagine the animal is thinking, feeling or remembering. The fact that he ducks his head when you try to pet him is not all that compelling. But the fact that he "seems to remember something hurtful" whenever a hand is raised draws the reader toward the animal.

3. Make the reader a hero.

Don't tell the reader how great the animal is and how lucky the reader would be to have such an animal. For emotional reasons, this never works. Instead, tell them how lucky the animal would be to have them, how grateful the animal would feel toward the wonderful human being who would bless this animal with a home. This is reverse salesmanship: Don't tell them that this is the animal everyone wants – imply that it's the animal nobody wants. That is what they want to hear. And it keeps them from thinking, "Well ... someone else will surely adopt him. He doesn't need me."

4. Be gentle with restrictions.

Restrictions, while often necessary, are always strikes against the pet. For example, even people without children will sometimes be scared off by "Must go to a home without children" because they wonder what's wrong with the animal! Whenever possible, soften a restriction with your wording. For example, "Jo-Jo's such a goofy bundle of energy, he might be a little too much for small children!" is worlds better than "Must go to a home with no children," which leaves the reader raising an eyebrow. Another example: "Matilda would make an excellent companion for another slow, older cat who understands that lazing about on a window sill is enough excitement for one day!" instead of "Must go to a home with older cats only."



5. Adjust the emotional weight to match the urgency.

There is an important trade-off to consider when writing an adoption blurb. The more tragic you make the blurb, the more replies you will get. But on the other hand, some people will resent your heavy-handedness and stop looking at your website. You have to decide. In an emergency, there is a style of blurb that can be written which pretty much guarantees an adoption ... but it plays off people's deep-rooted sense of personal injury, particularly their memories of rejection. Best Friends will not print blurbs like that. However, kill shelters absolutely should, because it's life or death. You have to decide what is the right level of sympathy-mongering for you.

6. Remember, be nice.

Anytime you put something in writing, you are taking a risk. To some extent, there's nothing you can do to make sure that nobody will object to anything you write in your blurb. But when it comes to writing adoption blurbs, you can avoid some of the common pitfalls by following this advice:

- Remember that every breed of everything has someone out there lobbying on its behalf. Avoid statements about breeds. Not even this: "While some people may think Rottweilers are mean, this girl is a complete sweetheart!" I got 57 hateful e-mails for a sentence very much like that one. Don't even allude to a breed stereotype.
- Don't ever print anyone's name, except in a flattering light. Especially, don't ever give the name of the person who abandoned the animal, since this can actually cause a legal problem as well as an interpersonal one.

7. There's someone for everyone.

What do you do when you have to write a blurb about an animal who just isn't your favorite? Don't feel bad! It happens to everyone. It's okay to love one cat just a little more than another – we're only human. But with adoption blurbs, you have to treat everyone equally. So the trick is ... use your imagination. Imagine you are the kind of person who would love this animal the best – and then write the blurb from this imaginary person's point of view.

For example, if you prefer calmer dogs, you might be inclined to write, "He has a lot of energy, which some people might find overwhelming." But the following would probably be more effective in finding the dog a home: "He's the kind of dog who feels like a real companion when you go out for a walk. He keeps up with you – he wants to keep going – he keeps dancing in appreciation." The potential adopter might read the first sentence and think, "Hmmm ... too much energy? Doesn't sound good." But the second blurb might cause this reaction: "Yes! That's what I want."

Some Sample Blurbs

OK, now it's time to practice on some sample blurbs. See if you can figure out what's wrong with these, and do a rewrite.

Common Error: "Jeffrey is just the sweetest dog. He is so cute. You will love him. He licks your hand! He has this cute way of cocking his head. He is so friendly."

Why an error? It's not the dog's point of view. Without a taste of who the dog is, and how he feels, we're not inspired to adopt him.

Try Again: "Jeffrey hasn't known many people who loved him as much as he loved them. Maybe he tries too hard. A lick on the hand, a cock of the head – he doesn't even know he's being cute. He's just trying to say, 'Thank you. Thank you for loving me back.'"

Okay, that's a little bit of hardball. But, not too bad. I would call it "middle ground." But you see how thinking a moment about how Jeffrey feels makes us more drawn to him, more interested in meeting him.

(Another tip: Don't make this stuff up. Spend a few moments with Jeffrey while you guess his thoughts. That way, when people meet him, they'll be able to see what you mean.)

Common Error: "Josephine is the sweetest bunny! You'll just love her tender little affectionate ways. She's a little shy, so she must go to a home without other rabbits. She's a little nippy, so she must go to a home with no children. She's a little scared, so she'll need a very patient person who's home all day. She's a little traumatized, so she'll need to have a home without dogs or cats. But she's so sweet! For the right person, she'll provide a lifetime of love."

Why an error? Yikes! Is there anything redeeming about this rabbit? Vague remarks like "sweet" and "affectionate" are not enough to counteract all the frightening restrictions we just heard. Plus, they don't make sense! She's affectionate, but she doesn't get along with anyone?

Try Again: "Josephine is a dreamy rabbit who lives in a world all her own. At night, she spins imaginative tales of fancy, and during the day, she hides in her alcove ... watching, smiling, remembering. Her eyes are always alert. She doesn't miss a beat. Josephine is so lost in herself that it may not work to introduce her to a household full of other creatures or children. But still, she dreams that there's a place for her. Would you like to meet her?"

In this way, we're able to turn her negatives into positives. By imagining an interesting and positive way to describe her phobias, we can keep the blurb from being a list of restrictions. But, we still get our message across.

Common Error: "Today is your lucky day! Penelope, this gorgeous calico you see before you, will go to one lucky home. She is the purrrfect cat. Beautiful, sweet, smart, affectionate ... how can you lose? So don't let another moment pass! Grab this girl before someone else does!"

Why an error? If someone else is going to adopt her, then she doesn't need me. While the above blurb might be cute and fun, cute and fun does not necessarily help the animal get adopted. Most adopters don't need a new animal. They're motivated by wanting to help an animal. It doesn't sound from this blurb that Penelope needs anyone's help. And that will hurt her chances.

Try Again: "Why Penelope has not yet been adopted is a mystery! There's absolutely nothing wrong with this elegant cat. She looks like a postcard – she's gorgeous! Her heart is warm and flowing. She exhibits the kind of affection you might associate with a cat who would be the first to find a happy home! Yet, she just hasn't been picked. Perhaps we need to say more about this sweetheart..."

By changing the focus, we can impress upon the reader that Penelope is a perfect adoption candidate – without making it seem that she doesn't need anyone's help.

Common Error: "Danny the goat was brought here by Leslie and John Shmucko who had shot him twice and then – oh, gee, we feel so bad – changed their minds about killing him and dumped him on us! The Humane Society was no help, of course, as usual. They were just gonna kill him. Gee, thanks! So we had to take him. Why do people like that live in this world? But it's not Danny's fault! He's a sweet guy and is looking for a great home, with someone who's actually nice, for a change."

Why an error? First of all, with all the names that were dropped, it may be time to hire a lawyer! Second, while hard-luck stories do help to get the animal adopted, and should be used, they should be presented in a manner that draws sympathy to the animal, rather than wrath toward the folks who hurt him or didn't care about him. Wrath doesn't inspire adoption, but sympathy does.

Try Again: "Danny has had a terrible lot in life, so far. His family didn't want him, and please don't tell him, but there was even talk of shooting the poor little guy. At a regular shelter, his fate might not have been any better. So we took him, hoping there might be somebody out there who'd want to hug a little goat like this. He just loves everyone – is there someone who might finally love him, too?"

In this way, we can tell his story without expressing anger toward anyone, only sympathy toward the goat. In addition, we've elevated the tone of the language, giving ourselves as an organization a gentler, more sophisticated image than the first blurb presented. Remember that everything you say reflects not only on the animal or on the people who abandoned him ... but on you, too. You never want to sound angry or out of control. No matter what you're writing, you always want to sound like someone who is calm and patient enough to be entrusted with a large and lovely donation.

Elizabeth Doyle is a staff writer for Best Friends. She writes the animal bios and articles for the website, magazine, and newsletters. She's also a much-published romance novelist from Texas.



Derby City Dog Rescue

...saving hearts one paw at a time.

When it is time to say goodbye to your Foster...remember

YOU developed and prepared your foster to be ready to be adopted into his/her **“FUR-EVER”** family!

Letting go of your foster, even to a wonderful home, can be difficult emotionally.

Some people worry that it is unfair to a dog to be moved from a foster home to a permanent home. They worry the pet has bonded to them and will experience a second abandonment. Is this true? Not at all! Being a foster home is a lifesaving bridge for a stray, frightened, ill or injured pet. It gives the animal a chance to recover and get used to life in a home environment. It's an opportunity for the dog to learn that people can be kind and loving, that food is always available and there is a warm, safe place to sleep and be loved.

You may decide to be there when your foster goes home to the new family. Seeing your foster ride off with their new family or seeing your foster in the new family's home, will help you remember that he/she has found a new and loving family.

Many foster families get photos and updates about their foster dogs enjoying their new homes. Pictures and updates may also be added to the Facebook Foster/Adopter Forum; this is a wonderful way to stay in touch. Of course, DCDR will pass along and share any information that we receive.

Knowing you were part of saving this dog's life and helping to find it a new home is tremendously rewarding.

Thank you so much for becoming a part of Derby City Dog Rescue's amazing foster/volunteer team. We could not help the dogs we do without foster homes like yours. We hope that you enjoy your foster experience and look forward to working with you again in the future!

~ Derby City Dog Rescue