

Dog Foster Manual

Lonely Hearts Animal Rescue

K-9 Rescue



Open Your Heart and Your
Home to an Animal in Need

Lonely Hearts Animal Rescue – K9 Rescue

PO Box 312

Frederick, Maryland 21705

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
INTRODUCTION	3
GENERAL GUIDELINES.....	4
GETTING YOUR HOME AND FAMILY READY FOR FOSTERING.....	6
Supplies.....	7
INTRODUCING YOUR FOSTER DOG TO YOUR HOME.....	9
Everyone needs their space.....	9
Dog Introductions.....	10
Getting Along.....	10
Dog and Cat Introductions.....	11
WORKING WITH YOUR FOSTER DOG.....	12
DOGS & CHILDREN	11
ADOPTION PROCEDURE.....	12
APPENDIX – Links to Common Agreements and Forms	17
Foster agreement	
Foster Application	
Adoption Application	
Adoption Agreement/Contract	
Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement	

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to foster a dog for Lonely Hearts Animal Rescue. Foster homes like yours allow us to rescue more dogs and we appreciate your generosity in opening your home to a rescued dog.

By providing a foster home, you are providing a stable, loving environment for a dog that has been neglected and abandoned. You are also providing much-needed socialization, and basic training that will make our dogs more appealing for adoption and better members of their adoptive families.

Lonely Hearts Animal Rescue (LHAR) rescues dogs from shelters in the Mid-Atlantic area, as well as from several Southern states. All dogs must pass a temperament test in order to be pulled from these shelters. Only directors of Lonely Hearts Animal Rescue can determine which dogs our organization will take in. The dogs we rescue are generally those that are in the last hours at the shelter because no one has adopted them or they are “rescue only” for a variety of reasons. Thus, they are at great risk of being euthanatized.

We also focus on rescuing pregnant dogs that are at risk of having puppies in the shelter or litters of puppies that have been abandoned by their owners and are at risk of being euthanatized.

General Guidelines

Please read and review the following important guidelines:

1. Prior to fostering, all foster homes must complete an online LHAR Foster Home Application as well as a Foster Home Agreement and receive a home inspection.
2. All Foster Homes agree to accept primary responsibility for providing lodging and care of their foster dog until a permanent adopting family is found.
3. Food donated to LHAR will be made available to all Foster Homes, as it is received. Otherwise a monthly allowance per dog for food and basic necessities will be reimbursed to the Foster Home by LHAR. This must be pre-approved by a LHAR Representative. Additional supplies such as leashes, collars, exercise pens, etc., will be provided by LHAR on a “Loan Basis” and must be returned when the Foster Home no longer wants to participate in the LHAR Foster Program. A Foster Home Supply form must be filled out and be signed by the Foster family.
4. Medical care will be provided only via a LHAR representative. If you think your foster dog needs any medical care, including vet visits or over-the-counter medications, please contact your LHAR representative before acting.
5. Foster Homes agree to bring their Foster Dog to adoption events regularly or when scheduled. Foster homes will receive an email telling them the location of the event and asking if they can attend. Foster Homes are expected to notify LHAR on whether they will be able to bring their foster dog to the event.
6. Foster Homes are asked to keep their LHAR contact apprised of their foster dogs behavior and if any issues arise. If they are not handling the dog at the adoption event they should give basic information to the adoption event coordinators.

7. Foster Homes are not required to foster any dog that they do not wish to foster. However, there may not be an immediate alternate foster home for your dog. We will work on moving your foster dog out as soon as possible, but ask for your understanding as we work on it. Only those dogs that have received prior approval for fostering and are deemed adoptable by a director of LHAR can be fostered within LHAR's Foster program. Volunteers and /or Foster Homes are not authorized to pull dogs directly from a shelter.
8. We do not foster-to-adopt. Potential adopter's should go through our regular application process rather than become a Foster Home. Foster Homes are asked to commit to fostering for a minimum of 6 months before they consider adopting a dog, whether it is from LHAR or elsewhere.
9. All applicants for a particular Foster Dog must go through the LHAR application process (online application, interview by a LHAR representative, and home visit). If a friend or family member of the Foster Home wishes to adopt your Foster Dog, that's great! But, please keep in mind, the adopter must go through the same process as other applicants.
10. Your own dogs must be current with their vaccinations. We also recommend that you vaccinate your dogs with a Bordetella vaccination to prevent kennel cough, a common illness with shelter dogs.
11. LHAR is not responsible for any veterinary bills for resident dogs. The Foster Home assumes responsibility for any veterinary bills that result from resident dogs becoming ill due to exposure with a Foster Dog.
12. If you are planning a vacation, please notify LHAR as far in advance as possible. We will need at least 2 weeks to arrange for alternative placement for your foster dog. LHAR does not allow Foster Homes to take their Foster Dogs on vacation with them.
13. Do not leave your dog with anyone else without prior approval from LHAR. Anytime a foster dog is left we must have a signed release of liability.

Getting your home and family ready for fostering

Fostering is a commitment that will affect your entire household: you, your family, your permanent resident pets, and your house/yard itself!

Here are some tips to ensure that fostering will be a positive experience for you and your family.

- Discuss your plans with other family members and get their input on how to make it work out best for everyone. Include in the discussion what kind(s) of dogs are appropriate for your household: small/large, young/old, active/not active.
- Do you thrive on a spunky dog with lots of energy who is a willing playmate for your active dog? Or do you have an older dog who would not appreciate being pestered?
- How long are you gone during the day?

We will need to match you with a dog that works with your schedule and your physical needs. You'll need a dog that fits your lifestyle, even if he/she is only a temporary resident.

Your LHAR representative can work with you to ensure that we understand your personal situation and what types of dogs are appropriate for you.

Supplies

You should have the following on hand before your foster dog arrives:

Food & Water bowls:

- It is best to have separate bowls for your foster dog, and to feed your resident dogs and foster dogs separately so that they can eat in a stress-free environment as they are getting to know each other.

Food & Treats:

- LHAR can sometimes supply food or treats depending on our receipt of donations. Otherwise, we will advise you as to what kind of food or treats is best for your foster. We do provide reimbursement for dog food and the occasional treat.

Dog Crates/Gates/Exercise pens:

- We strongly recommend you have a crate for your foster dog. Crate training is a very helpful way to introduce a dog into a new home. We can supply a crate or if you do not have one, and give you some excellent articles on crate training if you are unfamiliar with it. Restricting a dog to the kitchen area by gates is also recommended. Gates can be supplied.

Puppies are contained by the use of exercise pens. LHAR does not allow crating of puppies as a group and for no more than 2 hours at a time as individuals. Exercise pens will be provided.

Beds:

- Cotton blankets or large beach towels are best used as they are washable and less likely to be chewed up by your foster dogs.

Toys:

- Kong, Nylabone brands are excellent toys—they will keep your foster dog occupied, especially while you are away from the house. Stuffed toys or

toys with squeakers are not recommended as the dog can rip these open, swallow the squeaker or/and ingest the stuffing. LHAR can sometimes provide these depending on our donations.

Collars and Leashes:

- We will provide a collar and leash for your dog. A Lonely Hearts Animal Rescue tag will be on your dog's collar as well. This collar and tag should stay on at all times as it will help ensure the dog is returned to LHAR if the dog ever gets out and is pickup up by the shelter.

Flea Treatment:

- LHAR will provide you with Advantage or frontline for adult dogs. Young puppies that appear to have fleas should be washed with "blue" Dawn dish liquid. We do not use a monthly flea treatment on young puppies.

Introducing your Foster Dog to your Home

Here are a few tips for a smooth transition.

Everyone needs their space.

If possible, it is best to keep foster dogs and resident dogs separate from each other for the first two days. This is a stressful time for both the foster dogs (who may have been on the street/in the shelter/in a transition foster home before arriving at your house—a lot of changes for an animal that likes to have a “pack” and some stability in his/her life!). Also, there are some common sicknesses that sometimes don’t show up for 1-2 weeks that dogs often get at the shelter, so separation can ensure that your dogs don’t get sick.

If it is not possible to keep them separate, be aware that your dogs may be exposed to illness. However, also be aware that many of the diseases that shelter dogs get (Kennel Cough, Diarrhea, etc.,) are stress related or due to change in diet. Many have had poor nutrition and a hard life before coming to your home. LHAR cannot be responsible for resident dog vet bills; we do not have the financial resources to make that commitment.

If it is not possible to physically separate the dogs, try to ensure that everyone has their own “personal space” of a bed, a crate, or a special area. This will keep the stress levels lower for your own dogs and the foster dog.

The backyard is not an acceptable place to leave the foster dog alone and unsupervised. The foster dog may be destructive (digging, trampling flowers) , they may be escape artists, they may bark incessantly, or they could be snatched. A crate or a gated room/area that is enclosed (like a kitchen) are the best choices.

Dog Introductions

Introduce your resident dogs to the foster dog on neutral territory, at a park or down the street from your house, for example. Introduce them on leash, with an adult holding each leash. Allow a quick “Hello” sniff or a walk-by, and then separate them, even if things seem fine. This gives them a chance to think about things, and often, they will then seek each other out to get a lengthier greeting. Give lots of positive reinforcement so that both dogs feel safe and that the other dog is a friend, not a foe. If one dog gets aggressive, separate them quickly, comfort the dogs and slow down the pace of the introductions.

Don’t force things if they are not immediately best friends; sometimes it takes a few days for the dogs to accept each other. Sometimes, dogs just don’t like each other. By giving them each attention separately, and making them feel safe about their bed, toys, and food, you can minimize any tension.

Getting along

Dogs are pack animals. There is usually one who dominates. Correction of one dog by another (whether it is your resident or the foster) is normal. As long as the dogs are responding positively to each other and seem to recognize the “pecking order”, this is fine. So, one dog may growl at another. If the dog reacts by moving away or showing passivity, then usually the dogs will get along fine. If they are constantly battling for the “alpha” position, then they will have to be separated and may not be a good fit for each other.

Never leave the dogs unsupervised together. They are still getting to know one another, and will need correction on appropriate behavior toward each other—which means supervision. If you are leaving the house, then crate the dogs or otherwise physically separate them.

Again, feed the dogs separately. This reduces stress for everyone. Food aggression between dogs is common.

Dog and Cat Introductions

First, make sure that your cat has his/her own sanctuary—preferably a room where the foster dog will not be allowed to go. If you can keep the cat’s food & litter box in this room, and keep the door closed, then the dog and cat can sniff each other under the door for a few days before meeting face to face. This will make things go a lot smoother, as they will most likely feel that they have already “met.” Supervise the do’s behavior even at the door, reinforce playful, curious behavior and correct any aggression or obsession.

When introducing the dog & cat for the first time, put the dog on a leash and just allow the cat to walk by if he/she wants to. Here, you are looking to evaluate both the dog and the cat. Is the cat fearful or curious? Is the dog happy/playful or chomping at the bit to get to the cat?

After introductions have occurred, keep in mind the following tips:

- Never leave the cat and foster dog unsupervised, even if it looks like they get along great. A playful dog can still unintentionally harm a cat.
- Make sure your cat has places to jump up to in each room or hide under where the dog can’t get him/her.
- Playful chasing is normal, but always remind the foster dog to play nice/slow down/not run.
- Don’t allow the dog to stare down the cat. The dog should know that he/she is not allowed to obsess on the cat.
- The cat may swipe at the dog or hiss in order to correct. This is usually a great help in ensuring the dog knows his/her place. But, keep an eye on interactions to ensure the cat doesn’t injure the dog as well.

**With all your resident pets, allow the animals to accept one another on their own time. Never push them toward each other or force interaction. Many animals become companions and playmates, while other simply tolerate each other.

Working with your Foster Dog

While your foster dog is living with you, you can provide some basic training along with lots of tender loving care. No formal training regime is needed for most foster dogs, but if you can work on the following, it will make your foster dog much more “adoptable.”

Socializing:

Socializing is definitely the first priority. This means ensuring that your foster dog is acclimated to meeting new people, dogs, cats, children as wide a group as possible. If you have a shy dog, this is a big task, and should be approached slowly (but all the more important to address it so that your dog overcomes his/her shyness.) With a more outgoing dog, it’s more about curbing enthusiasm so that people aren’t overwhelmed upon meeting the do (or knocked over with love!)

Food Aggression:

Food aggression with other dogs is a fairly common trait; however, food aggression towards people is not acceptable. If your foster dog is growling when you are near his food, you need to work on correcting this behavior. Hand-freed the dog, so that it is clear the food is yours and you are the giver of food. Then, when feeding with a bowl, take it away several times during the meal, giving it back after the dog sits and waits politely. With a non-food aggressive dog, these are still good tips, along with taking chews/toys away and giving them back. If the dog growls a bit, tell them “No”, and then practice taking it until they get the idea. Repeat daily. If your foster dog is showing food aggression with your dog over food or chews, always feed them separately. Another good reason to crate your foster dog, as you can use that place as a safe place to give treats, chews and toys.

House Training (potty training):

House training is definitely desirable for both you and the future adopter. The best way to house train is be vigilant about taking the dog outside regularly, especially after naps and meals. Keep the dog on a feeding schedule so you can take the dog/puppy outside within a few minutes of eating and drinking. If a dog is particularly stubborn about house training, keep them on a leash in the house; this will prevent them from wandering off to hide and go potty.

Crate Training:

Crate training is a great way to establish general house manners since the dog will not be roaming free in the house unless he/she is being supervised. Young puppies should not be crated for more than 2 hours at a time as they cannot keep from relieving itself in that time period.

Sitting:

Sitting is relatively easy to teach and pays big dividends. A dog that sits for his/her leash and food knows they are subservient to the person commanding them to sit. It also helps to get an overly excited dog under control.

Jumping Up:

Jumping is a common problem with our foster dogs—they are so happy to have someone to love! But, it's best if they are taught not to do this, since it can knock people over and it is just bad behavior. The best prevention is to see it coming and tell them “off” and “sit.” They should not receive any “rewards or petting” when jumping up onto someone. We use “off” instead of saying “down” because the word *down* may be used in the future to teach a “lay down” command.

Leash Walking:

Leash walking is challenging to teach. Many of our dogs have never been on a leash and have no idea how to behave. If you are ambitious, you can work on “heel”, but even the word “easy” is fine. “Easy” is when the dog isn't necessarily healing at your side, but they are also not dragging you down the street. This takes time to learn and patience on your part. A nervous dog may not be pulling but reluctant to walk or trying to get away from you and the leash. Young puppies often do a “bucking bronco” or the “alligator roll” to avoid the leash. This is very normal. The goal is to get the dog/puppy to relax and walk confidently with you. Do not pull or drag a dog/puppy while on a leash.

Squirt Bottles:

Squirt bottles can be a great way to get the point across to a dog that is not responding to a verbal correction. Fill a squirt bottle with plain water and set the nozzle to a hard spray (not stream). A quick squirt/spray in the face with a verbal command such as “No” or “Off” at the same time can be very effective. It does not hurt the dog, but it catches them off guard and can be helpful in getting their attention. Generally, you can move to verbal commands only after a few times.

Dogs and Children

Dogs and kids go together like Peanut Butter and Jelly; they are great playmates, guardians, and confidants. But, children must learn proper handling and discipline, and dogs must learn self-control so that they do not play too rough.

Children must be supervised and taught that dogs are beings, not dolls or toys to dress-up or to handle constantly. Teach children not to tease or rile-up the dog unnecessarily. This includes chasing around the house, which can scare a dog, who may snap if cornered or frightened.

Make sure your children know that is not the dog's fault if the dog chews up toys that are left out. Keeping doors shut and toys in toy boxes can help minimize damage. Make sure the dog has his/her own toys, and keep them in the same place all the time—like in a basket or in the dog's crate.

Children like the idea of caring for a dog, but the daily work of feeding, bathing, brushing and cleaning up after the dog is not really suited for children. Adults need to recognize that the initial enthusiasm will wane quickly and the true responsibility of caring for the dog will fall to the adults in the household.

Young children should not walk foster dogs—even if the dog is easy to walk, the child cannot really handle any encounters with other dogs, cats, squirrels, rabbits that are bound to happen.

Children should not play unsupervised with foster dogs/puppies. For puppies, teach proper handling (pick up by the body, not the legs) and limit interaction. Small children should not be allowed within the exercise pen area with puppies. Children need to be taught that a pup's mouthing is not biting and that the puppy is not trying to hurt them. Perhaps most importantly, children must learn to properly discipline the foster dog/puppy with a sharp "no" or squirt with a water bottle. Children may think that squirting the dog is fun, and need to learn to only use it sparingly. Children often react to a dog's bad behavior by hitting the dog and this is unacceptable.

Adoption Procedure

LHAR's Adoption Committee works hard to find the proper match for each of our dogs, to ensure that both the adopting family and the dog will be happy with their decision. All applicants must go through the Lonely Hearts adoption process. Dogs cannot be adopted out to friends or family of the foster home directly; all applicants must be properly screened. However, it is important for you to understand our adoption procedures since you may get questions about it.

The process is as follows:

1. The applicant fills out an application, preferably using our online application.
2. They must choose only one dog/puppy at a time. We receive many applications for puppies in a litter and will process each puppy individually—which is why the Applicant must choose a particular puppy/dog.
3. The LHAR adoption administrator reviews all of the applications and screens each applicant to see if they are a good fit. They then review the application for answers to questions, such as: where the dog will sleep, how long the dog will be left; the hours the adopter works, what training plans are, how they will be exercised, etc.
4. The Vet references and personal references listed will be contacted.
5. Additional questions may be emailed to the applicant for further clarification.
6. Assuming everything looks good so far, a home visit may be conducted to check for additional concerns.
7. Once the application has been approved, they will receive an email stating that they have been approved. The dog/puppy will then receive a "pending" status. The words "Pending" will then show on the animal's

petfinder/adoptapet page and will not be available to anyone until the approved applicant adopts or decides not to adopt.

8. Adoption and meet/greets are held each Saturday morning. Appointments are scheduled from 10am – 1pm at half hour intervals if needed. The Foster family is expected to transport the dog/puppy to the determined adoption location.
9. We do not do trial periods with new adopters. In certain instances, we will agree to have a puppy/dog returned. Please note that Adoption donations are non-refundable.

Please keep in mind that you should not make any promises or statements to perspective adopters about the “chances” of adopting your foster dog. This is a topic that can get very emotional, with potential adopters getting very attached to the dogs they are looking at. So, we look to minimize hard feelings and keep emotions from running too high by have the Adoption administrator be the only one to let potential adopters know where they are in the adoption process. This also minimizes miscommunication.

We also ask that you trust the Adoption committee as they have been doing this for many years and have learned some things the hard way. However, if you don't understand a decision, feel free to ask. We want to keep you informed, but sometimes get caught up in everything that needs to be done.

Please periodically review your foster dog's posting on our website (www.lonelyheartsanimalrescue.org) and let your LHAR contact know of any updates or changes. The dog/puppies' bio is intended to be truthful, but we also try to focus on the positives. Of course, we always discuss a dog's behavior (positive and negative) in detail with potential adopters on the Adoption/meet & greet day00we want to make sure they are fully apprised of the dog's strengths and weaknesses so as to minimize surprises after the pup has been adopted.

Appendix

For Reference, this appendix contains copies of our common agreements and forms:

[Foster Agreement](#)

[Foster Application](#)

[Adoption Application](#)

[Adoption Agreement/Contract](#)

[Waiver of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement](#)

** Special thanks to Smiley Dog Rescue -- California for allowing LHAR access to their Website content.