

# The Foster Home Experience



## Is it for you?

A key component of RAGofAZ's rescue program is the foster home. The principle behind fostering is to provide the dogs entrusted to our care with a home environment in order to evaluate their habits and behavior, so that we can give the new owner as much information as possible about the dog.

RAGofAZ needs caring, responsible Golden lovers to join our foster home team by opening their homes and their hearts to our rescued Golden retrievers. Here are some questions people ask about being a foster parent. Please take a moment to review them, and, if you think fostering might be for you, one of our RAGofAZ volunteers will be happy to talk further with you about joining our team!

## What will I need to do as a foster parent?

Foster homes are responsible for daily care of the foster dog, including:

- transport to and from a rescue designated veterinarian for basic medical care
- feeding
- exercising
- socializing
- brushing and grooming, as needed
- reinforcing basic obedience commands
- observing and evaluating general behavior and temperament
- and, of course, providing love and security to a special Golden at an often difficult time in his or her life.

RAGofAZ foster homes play a major role in facilitating the dog's adoption to a new home.

As a foster parent, you'll be asked to make recommendations to help select the best adoptive family for your foster Golden (you know him best.) Most foster families talk to the prospective adopter regarding the foster dog's temperament, behavior, likes and dislikes. They have the prospective family to their home to meet the rescue dog and many of the foster families even transport the rescue dog to their new home. You can be as involved in the process as you would like.

## How long does the dog stay in foster care?

Each dog has a unique set of circumstances. The majority of our dogs stay with a foster family for up to a week, but some may stay only a few days. However, if the dog is recovering from a surgery, they may need to stay until they have fully recuperated. The condition of the dog is discussed with the foster upfront so you know what you can anticipate and know if this is something you can do.

## **Do I have to be home with the dog all day?**

No, many of our foster family members are currently employed full or part-time and still provide a quality environment for the dog. However,

our first concern is safety: for you, for your family, for your own dog(s) and for the rescued dog. Therefore, any time you are unable to directly supervise the foster dog, you should confine him or her to a small, secure area, preferably a crate. (RAGofAZ will supply one if you don't have one.)

## **Do I need a fenced yard?**

**No**, however, the rescue dog must **never** be allowed to run free. If your yard is surrounded by a secure fence or block wall, the Golden may be exercised there off leash. Outside the yard, the dog must be on a leash at all times and must have a collar on with the RAGofAZ identification tag firmly attached. If you do not have a fenced yard, the Golden must be leashed at all times when outside.

## **May I choose which dogs I may foster?**

The application allows you to set limits on the kinds of dogs you foster. If you're asked to foster a dog that doesn't seem right to you, you can say **no**. If a foster dog you've accepted proves difficult to handle, he can be placed elsewhere.

## **How much time does it take to be a foster parent?**

From an hour or two a day to however much time you care to spend with the dog.

## **How much does it cost to foster a dog?**

Lack of funds shouldn't prevent you from fostering, but you will have some expenses: for good quality dog food, telephone calls and any toys you choose to provide. Necessary veterinary expenses, including any medication required to treat any medical problem, are paid for by RAGofAZ. The only other expense you would have is your membership fee. In order to comply with insurance requirements, all RAGofAZ volunteers must be paid members. If you are not already a RAGofAZ member, you will be required to pay your membership fee either before you receive your first foster or at the time your foster dog is brought to your home. The membership fee is renewable annually, and will vary in price depending on which level of membership you choose. Will I become attached to my foster dog? Yes, you undoubtedly will—they bond quickly, and give back so much in return for your care and attention. But remember, the reason you decided to foster was to transition the rescue dog to a new and better life. Being a foster parent is a very rewarding opportunity.

## **What happens if I have questions or problems with a foster dog?**

When we place a dog in your care to foster, we provide a minimum of two contacts: the Follow Up Team Liaison and the Vet Team Liaison, in case you need to see a vet. If there are known behavior issues, the Behavior Coordinator's number will also be provided to you. Being a foster home is extremely rewarding, but you should keep in mind that some rescue dogs are not housebroken, may be ill, or may have had little socialization or obedience training. In spite of these challenges, our foster homes have found that, when given a chance, these dogs not only improve, they flourish.

## **What if I want to adopt the Golden I am fostering?**

Foster homes are given preference to adopt the Golden Retrievers they foster. However, unless you alert us up front that you want to foster with the intent to adopt, we will expect that if you offer your home for fostering, it is with the understanding that you are working toward helping a deserving Golden find a forever home. If you intend to adopt one of our rescues, either before or during your fostering experience; please contact the Placement Team member who placed the dog with you.

***And finally...***

## **I would like to foster. What do I do next?**

Once your family has decided together to foster a Golden Retriever, please go to our website and submit an application. You may also download an application and either email or fax it back to us. Once the application is received, one of our volunteers from our Home Visit Team will contact you to schedule a time for a home visit to gather additional information.

## **If I can't foster, is there another way to help?**

**Yes!** You can volunteer to transport Golden Retrievers to our approved foster homes or to serve on any of our other teams:

**Intake**

**Shelter Walking**

**Home Visit**

**Placement**

**Follow Up**

**Vet Care**

**Fund Raising**

**Special Events**

If you are interested in any of these activities, give us a call. We'd be glad to have your help, and you'd be glad you got more involved with a group of Great volunteers who share your love of Golden Retrievers. Donations in any amount are gratefully accepted for the care of the dogs. All donations are tax deductible. RAGofAZ thanks Delaware Valley Golden Retriever Rescue for information and assistance with this brochure.

© Copyright 1999 (rev. 2/18/2018)