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## Between Homes ... Fostering Animals in Transition

Clara B. G. G. G.



There are about 5,000 independent community animal shelters nationwide.

No national organization monitors these shelters.

It is estimated that approximately 8-12 million companion animals enter animal shelters nationwide every year. Approximately 60% of the dogs and 70% of the cats taken in by shelters are euthanized.

You can help to change this tragic statistic by fostering a companion who needs extra tender loving care.



### 10 Reasons To Foster

1. **Companionship without a lifetime commitment.**
3. **Homeless animals flourish in a loving environment.**
3. **Your children will learn a great lesson in compassion.**
4. **If you have pets, one guest won't make a difference to you, but it will surely make a difference to the foster animal who otherwise might not have a second chance at life.**
5. **Fostering increases the likelihood of adoption.**
6. **Increased interaction with gentle humans increases confidence and sociability in animals who often have been neglected or abused.**
7. **Pet interaction lowers your blood pressure and reduces stress.**
8. **You'll gain a lifetime of satisfaction when a companion you have cared for and loved finds a new permanent family.**
9. **You'll be a partner in a noble team effort that reaches far beyond your local shelter. Many animals are transferred hundreds of miles to organizations with the ability to provide foster care.**
10. **YOU'RE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE SAVING A LIFE!**

### Selection and Training of Foster Caregivers

The caregiver's home should provide adequate comfort and safety for the fostered animal.

Candidates should be at least 18 years of age, as they must be able to enter into a legally binding contract. Many sometimes participate in a foster care program in partnership with an adult.

The candidate and a veterinarian should discuss and apply health care measures to protect resident animals as well as potential fosters. Potential caregivers should be thoroughly advised of the risks a foster animal poses to their own pets (transmission of viral, fungal, and bacterial diseases, parasite infestation, and behavioral conflicts).

Finally, caregiver candidates should be advised of the zoonotic potential (scabies, ringworm, rabies, Giardia, etc.) of foster animals.

Caregivers should be given contact numbers for key shelter personnel as well as the assigned veterinarian. "Parents" who take on the task of raising orphaned puppies and kittens should be advised of the work and responsibility involved and be knowledgeable about how to feed and clean them. They should also be taught how to stimulate defecation and urination and how to closely monitor their health as neonates can quickly fade or fall ill.



### Providing Veterinary Care for Foster Animals

While in-house veterinary care for fostered animals is the best option, not every agency has a staff doctor.

Provisions for routine and emergency care are normally part of a shelter's program.

Foster families can expect to deal with middle-of-the-night emergencies and they should be given instructions on who to call and where to go in such cases.

The shelter should make clear how veterinary costs will be covered and the level of care to which the organization is limited.

Millions of lives are at stake.

When foster families step forward, homeless and unwanted pets are transformed from "throwaways" to the true companions they were meant to be.

Communities benefit from reduced societal costs of shelter-housed animals.

Most importantly, the animals benefit from an increased chance of finding, and keeping, a lifelong home.



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In a 2 year period, ALL of these dogs found loving homes thanks to ONE West Lafayette foster family!

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DAVE MURAKOWSKI

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## 10 REASONS TO FOSTER



1. Companionship without a lifetime commitment.
2. Homeless animals flourish in a loving environment.
3. Your children will learn a great lesson in compassion.
4. If you have pets, one guest won't make a difference to you, but it will surely make a difference to the foster animal who otherwise might not have a second chance at life.
5. Fostering increases the likelihood of adoption.
6. Increased interaction with gentle humans increases confidence and sociability in animals who often have been neglected or abused.
7. Pet interaction lowers your blood pressure and reduces stress.
8. You'll gain a lifetime of satisfaction when a companion you have cared for and loved finds a new permanent family.
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## SELECTION AND TRAINING OF FOSTER CAREGIVERS



- The caregiver's home should provide adequate comfort and safety for the fostered animal.
- Candidates should be at least 18 years of age, as they must be able to enter into a legally binding contract. Minors may sometimes participate in a foster care program in partnership with an adult.
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## PROVIDING VETERINARY CARE FOR FOSTER ANIMALS



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THANKS TO ONE WEST LAFAYETTE FOSTER FAMILY!**

### **REFERENCES**

- Shelter Medicine for Veterinarians and Staff Lila Miller and Stephen Zawistowski, Editors
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