

Southwest German Shepherd Rescue, Inc.



FOSTER PROGRAM GUIDELINES

If you are considering taking on the rewarding and incredibly benevolent task of fostering a homeless animal for Southwest German Shepherd Rescue, herein referred to as SWGSR, you should carefully review the following guidelines in addition to the Foster Agreement you will be asked to sign. Fostering parents and families form the backbone of the work we do.

We cannot exist as a rescue if people are not willing to bring needy animals into their homes while we search and screen for permanent homes for them.

Fosters have our undying gratitude and deepest respect and admiration. There are never enough foster homes to go around, and each is precious to both SWGSR and the animal we are trying to save.

To ensure that your fostering experience as positive as possible for you, your family, and your furry friend, herein referred to as dog or foster, please abide by the following before bringing him/her home:

1. SWGSR will arrange to introduce the new animal to your own pet(s), if any, outside on neutral territory, preferably in a park setting or greenbelt near your home. A member of our staff will gladly supervise the introduction of the newcomer to any and all pets in residence. Once inside, it is best to introduce him/her gradually to other household members, utilizing a crate when necessary. Do not try to make the fostered dog an immediate part of your family. Let him/her settle into the new environment and help him/her learn the rules of the house as soon as possible. Never let the foster take over and place your own animals or family at risk or under stress.

2. SWGSR provides a specific type collar for walking a fostered dog. Dogs can easily slip out of a flat collar, particularly if frightened or disoriented, which should be worn for identification purposes only. Some training collars should be removed after a training session. If you do not know how to use or size a collar properly, please let us know and we will show you. Please **never** use a retractable/ flexi leash when walking your fostered dog.

3. Prior taking in a foster dog, ask questions and educate yourself about the characteristics of the breed, (it's not always a purebred German Shepherd), age, gender, temperament, and why he/she is in need of adoption. This will give you insight as to what type of behavior to expect.

We ask that you provide SWGSR with periodic updates, by email or phone, regarding the dog's progress. Remember, all find homes, sooner or later if we work cooperatively together. Please be sure to advise us of any significant changes in your household or work schedules. You must also let us know of any plans to move.

4. **Never** turn over a fostered dog to someone who claims it is his/her lost pet! This person could be mistaken, or he/she could be deliberately trying to mislead you. The animal could have been removed from his/her former home for all kinds of reasons. The claimant could well have mistreated the animal. Report any such claims to SWGSR immediately, and we will investigate.

Do not place OUR dog in someone else's care, for any reason, without the written permission and approval of SWGSR.

5. If necessary, SWGSR can lend you a crate, a collar and/or leash. Whenever you transport any dog, make certain you have him/her on a leash, with ID & collar and NEVER transport in the open bed of a pickup truck. If you plan to foster on a regular basis, it would be a great help to SWGSR if you could get a crate of your own as we have a limited number of loaners.

Make sure the animal has ample room to move around when choosing the proper size. Mature GSDs usually require a 42 inch at home, 36 inch for a vehicle.

6. Foster families typically provide food, treats, and chew toys for their foster dogs, with no reimbursement from SWGSR. If you are unable to do this, please let us know.

7. If your fostered animal becomes ill or gets hurt, contact Steff Smith or Nancy Swanner immediately. SWGSR covers medical expenses, but all expenses, treatment and medication must be preauthorized. SWGSR has specific veterinarians who work with our rescue. Should it be necessary for your fostered dog to see a veterinarian, in all but emergency situations you **MUST** contact us first. In cases of an emergency, when every moment could mean the difference between life or death, do not hesitate to take the dog to a vet immediately or to an emergency clinic if after regular vet hours. The important thing is to do everything possible to save the animal in distress. Know where your closest vet and emergency centers are located before you foster any animal. Keep the numbers handy and easily accessible. The time to search is not when you are holding a sick or injured animal in your arms. You will be provided with a list of recommended vets and clinics in your area. **Whenever you uncertain as to what expenses, medical or otherwise, are reimbursed, please check with us first. It is always the best way to avoid any misunderstanding.**

8. Please understand that in the world of canine rescue, there is no time frame with respect to how long you will be asked to house and provide for your fostered dog. We have placed our rescue dogs in their new homes in as little as 48 hours and as long as ten months. There simply, is no way to know in advance. Each time a dog in transition is moved, it becomes increasingly traumatic, disorienting and stressful to the dog. Our goal, therefore, is to provide as much stability and routine, prior to placement, as we possibly can. Thus, **we ask that you think about and inform us BEFORE accepting a dog into foster care, of any planned trips, seminars, work responsibilities, family, or other commitments or obligations that you know of ahead of time, so that we can make the necessary arrangements.**

9. SWGSR understands that occasionally, the unexpected or unforeseen arises. Our fosters need to understand that we cannot make a dog instantly disappear on short notice. We must have time to arrange for housing or a safe haven to which we can move your fostered dog should the need arise. In the event you feel that you are not able to continue fostering the dog, we need as much advance notice as possible in order to accommodate your request. In cases of uncontrollable aggression, destruction, or any other situation deemed potentially dangerous, the dog will be removed immediately.

Dogs placed in foster care come from a variety of sources and situations. Many, such as shelter dogs or strays, have a mystery history, that is to say, we know nothing of their past. One of the most valuable and necessary roles of fostering, is that of observer. By living with and caring for a dog we know nothing about, you will be providing us with information such as whether or not the dog gets along with other dogs, cats, or kids. You will learn, along with us, about a particular dog's behavior, temperament, issues, challenges, training level, etc.

The majority of German Shepherd Dogs in rescue are either under or not socialized. They could have been confined to their yards or property and not properly exposed to the outside world. Ongoing socialization is necessary for all dogs and for German Shepherd Dogs in particular. Whether you own or foster, getting the dog out around strangers and all of the sights and sounds of the outside world is absolutely necessary.

SWGSR is always willing to assist you with training guidance, especially in the case of a socially reactive dog. We conduct socialization sessions to that end as well.

10. The decision to place a dog in your foster care was made on the basis of your existing household at the time. Adding **any** pets or other fostered animals could easily upset the dynamic of the household. We require that no new animals be added to your home or care without the express knowledge and permission of SWGSR. Not advising us could create conflicts within your pack or even a potentially volatile situation. Safety for all is our utmost concern. You will be asked to provide us with a list of pets currently in your home, along with your work schedule, if applicable.

11. Typically our fosters do not show dogs to prospective adopters. Please refrain from arranging for others to meet your fostered dog. What if the dog were to bite someone or get into a fight with the

