



happy tails. happy hearts.™

## The Highs and Lows of Fostering

Fostering is one of the most rewarding experiences you can have. We couldn't save as many lives as we do without the dedication of our foster volunteers. When you think of fostering, what are you interested in taking home? Will you want a mom with her babies, or older puppies/kittens that are not at weight yet?

*Is fostering right for you and your family? Please go over this with your whole family.*

- **Do you live in Colorado Springs or Pueblo?** We accept foster homes from all surrounding areas. If you have questions about how far you are from our shelter, please contact the Foster Care Program and we can help.
- **Are you aware that there is a great deal of clean-up time and that there is always a possibility of damage to your home?** Mothers and babies can be very messy with the litter box, their food bowls, water dishes, etc. Because they can be messy, we recommend foster volunteers use old supplies, not best linens.
- **Are you able to separate the foster animals from your own animals?** Foster kittens and puppies must have their own room – even if you do not have other pets. Our animals may appear healthy upon intake but can harbor illness for up to 2 weeks, so it is very important for you to keep your pets separated from foster animals for at least two weeks. After a two week period, your pets can meet your foster animals if your pets are indoor-only and current on vaccines. *\*Please do introductions slowly.*
  - Introducing your foster animals can be a risk to your own pets. If your own pets get sick from your foster animal(s), the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region (HSPPR) will not cover their medication or vet visits. Please keep this in mind before introducing the two together.
  - It is important to keep your foster room clutter free – no special knickknacks. We recommend using a bathroom for first couple of days to observe bathroom habits then move to another room (preferably non-carpeted) that allows more space if you have it available. Mother dogs or cats can scratch at doors or carpet to get out of room and may jump on top of anything they can.
  - All cats and kittens must be kept strictly indoors. If your own cats go outdoors, the foster cats must be strictly isolated from your cats to avoid the transmission of disease.
  - Your own animals must be current on vaccinations and veterinary care including spay/neuter. No exceptions. If you cannot meet these requirements, let us know and we can give you resources to get it taken care of before you take home a group. We do this to help stop the pet-overpopulation problems in our area.
- **Are you and your family emotionally prepared for the death of an animal?** As much as we wish otherwise, death can occur. Not all animals are born to live. Not all babies are formed right when they are born. There are congenital birth defects that we can not see. Sometimes foster animals get sick and no

amount of treatment can combat when they are too weak to survive. Our death rate is only 7% in foster care and this also includes animals that don't survive hours after they are born. Because they are receiving high quality care in a foster home, their chances of survival are much greater. If a death occurs, it will be emotionally hard and generally will not have a direct reflection on your fostering skills or abilities.

- **Will you and your family be able to give up your foster animal(s) at the end of the foster period?** Foster families become very attached to their foster animals, and sometimes find it difficult to give them to their permanent families, or to the shelter. You can adopt your foster animal by going through the normal adoption process. You can always pick up another litter - sometimes even the same day - to help you get through the empty nest syndrome.
- **Will you and your family be able to spend quality time with your foster animal(s)?** Socialization is as important as feeding and keeping them clean. We ask that you spend quality time with your foster animal(s). Play with them and help them know that hands are not toys. Snuggle them so they know kind human touch. Take puppies outside so they learn grass is not scary. You are helping train these young animals to be super adults when they grow up.
  - Foster animals are your responsibility. We ask that you go in 2 times a day at a minimum to check on them. All animals should be closely monitored regarding temperament and health. Close observation helps in appropriate placement in their permanent homes as well as avoidance of more serious health issues later. Are they all playing? Is one sitting in the corner? Are they all feeling well? Is everyone pooping, peeing, eating, etc.?
- **Will you be able to bring your foster animals to the shelter when they need to be seen by our veterinarian?** All foster animals receive medical care at our facility at no cost to you. It is not required, expected nor recommended for you to seek outside medical care.
- **Do you feel comfortable telling people about our adoption process?** Be sure that you share with folks that you are a volunteer for HSPPR and are not able to make adjustments to the adoption process. Your foster animals cannot go on sleepovers to neighbors or friends.
  - All foster animals are to be strictly supervised by an adult when around children under 10 years of age or household pets. This is not an exact age requirement so use your best judgment.

### **Rewards of foster care – Saving lives!**

- You are saving animals. Know that you are making a difference is a nice feeling inside.
- Children learn about the responsibility of caring for animals. It is a great way to help children understand what it takes to have a pet. How else can children learn about the wonder of birth, and at the same time, be responsible animal guardians?
- There is no greater joy than watching kittens at play, or nursing a sick animal back to health! We'll bet your family will even give up TV!

At this time if you do not feel comfortable with our procedures and guidelines, we want you to know that we understand that this is not for everyone. If at any time your situation changes, please feel free to contact us again in the future.