# Mercy Rescue and Adoption, INC. (a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization)

# FOSTER GUIDELINES

If you are considering taking on the rewarding and incredibly helpful task of fostering a homeless animal for Mercy Rescue and Adoption, you should carefully review the following guidelines, and you will be asked to sign that you agree.

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 for permanent homes for them. Fosters have my undying gratitude and my deepest respect and admiration. There are never enough foster homes to go around, so each is precious to MRA and the animals we are trying to save.

To make your fostering experience as positive as possible for you, your family, and your furry friend, please commit the following to memory before bringing him/her home:

1. Arrange to introduce the new animal to your own pet(s), if you have them, outside on neutral territory. Once inside, it is best to situate the foster animal in a crate at first, and introduce him/her gradually to other household members. Do not try to make the foster an immediate part of your family. Let him/her settle into the new place, 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 at risk or under stress.
2. If you find prospective adopters for your foster on your own, please make them aware of the application process, as well as the MRA requirements and adoption donation. MRA screens applicants very carefully. First, the written application is evaluated. Next, a veterinary check is made for all animals the prospective adopter owns or has owned. If the application and vet check are good, a home visit is scheduled. If the adoption is then approved, a contract is signed, and an adoption donation is provided by the adopters. The donation amount varies per animal.
3. Before taking a foster, ask about the animal's breed (it's not always a pure breed, or even a dog!), age, gender, temperament, behavior, and why he/she is in need of adoption. Find out to the best of your ability and ours if he/she is a stray, from a shelter, a private surrender, a victim of abuse or neglect, etc. Share any applications you might get on your own with Anna Poore. Remember that not every prospective adopter is approved, and sometimes other applications may be pending. Some animals are more popular than others and can have multiple applications. Others must wait for that special someone. But they all find homes, sooner or later, if we work cooperatively together.
4. **Never** turn over a foster 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 Anna Poore immediately, and we will investigate.
5. If necessary, MRA can lend you a crate, a collar and/or leash. Whenever you transport any animal, make certain you have him/her on a leash, with a training and flat collar. No prong collars, please! If you plan to foster on a regular basis, it would be a great help to MRA if you could get a crate of your own. Make sure the animal has ample room to move around when choosing the proper size.
6. Foster families typically provide food, treats, and chew toys for their foster animals, with no reimbursement from MRA. Fosters may also be asked to participate in transporting animals or assisting in house checks.
7. If your foster animal becomes ill or gets hurt, contact Anna Poore immediately. MRA covers medical expenses, but must authorize treatments and medications before they are administered, and I must also approve the veterinarian who will be doing the work. In emergency cases, when every moment could mean the difference between life or death, do not hesitate to take the animal to a vet immediately or to an emergency clinic if after regular vet hours. We will work out emergency expenses. The important thing is to do everything possible to save the animal in distress. Know where your closest vet and emergency center are located before you foster any animal. Keep the numbers handy, easily accessible. The time to search is not when you are holding a sick or injured animal in your arms. We use Seymour Animal Hospital 522 2178. Anna Poore must call and can be reached anytime via cell phone 592 5558.
8. Be careful what you tell potential adopters. Avoid giving advice and criticizing. Also avoid answering any questions with absolutes, and **never** answer any question you are not sure about. Do not mislead inquirers. Ask for assistance when you don't know something. Tell inquirers you will get back to them as soon as possible. Always recommend that potential adopters do as much reading about animals and adoptions and about their breed, if applicable. Urge them to sign up for obedience training with a reputable trainer.
9. If you have **any** hesitations or peculiar feelings or "bad vibes" about the adoption or any of the people involved in the adoption of your foster dog(s)-- like the family seems great, all except for the angry look on the father's face -- DO NOT ALLOW IT TO GO FORWARD! Say the final decision is not yours to make, and we will get back to them as soon as possible. You do not have to take the heat for your instincts, but we have learned through experience that it is best to go with them. ***Try to determine what is giving you pause or making you wary, and take note of it.***
10. Be very familiar with the regulations and policies of MRA. Most of all, remember that no one can be approved until their application is deemed acceptable, the vet check is satisfactory, and a home visit is completed. If the adopters are approved, the adoption contract must be signed -- by the adopter(s) and by a MRA representative -- with all information carefully filled out and checked by you. Adopters must provide the non-refundable donation to MRA either before taking possession of the dog or upon taking possession of the dog.
11. Your own animals must be current on vaccinations and preventives in order to foster. Animals coming into rescue have unknown backgrounds and issues that can come up and therefore your animals need to be protected from what a potential foster can bring in.

Any further questions should be directed to Anna Poore at [poorejamie@aol.com](mailto:poorejamie@aol.com) or 812 592 5558.