



**ROCKY MOUNTAIN  
ANIMAL RESCUE**

# FOSTER HANDBOOK

A Reference for Rocky Mountain Animal Rescue  
Volunteer Foster Caregivers

We are a registered Canada Revenue  
Non-Profit Animal Rescue Organization

Sanctuary/Headquarters located near  
Canmore, Alberta

**Contact**

[foster@rockymountainanimalrescue.com](mailto:foster@rockymountainanimalrescue.com)

[www.RockyMountainAnimalRescue.com](http://www.RockyMountainAnimalRescue.com)

Last Reviewed: June 11, 2014

©2009-2014 Rocky Mountain Animal Rescue. All Rights Reserved

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>LETTER FROM RORY O'NEILL .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>DON'T BE AFRAID OF FOSTERING .....</b>	<b>4</b>
What if I get too attached? .....	4
Will fostering make it hard on my children? .....	4
<b>QUICK REFERENCE FAQ.....</b>	<b>5</b>
Q. What are a fosterer's responsibilities?.....	5
Q. Does a fosterer need access to a vehicle?.....	5
Q. How long does an animal need fostering? .....	5
Q. What are the costs associated with fostering? .....	5
Q. What happens if we go on vacation? .....	5
Q. I live in an apartment. Can I still foster? .....	6
Q. I don't have a fenced yard. Can I still foster? .....	6
Q. I work a full 8 hour day. Can I still foster? .....	6
Q. What if the pet does not get along with my current pet(s)? .....	7
Q. How many dogs can be fostered at once? .....	7
Q. How does a potential adopter meet the foster pet for adoption? .....	7
Q. What if we want to adopt the pet? .....	7
<b>VOLUNTEER FOSTER PROGRAM IN DETAIL.....</b>	<b>8</b>
Animal In-Take Assessment .....	8
Foster Home Match Up .....	8
Training & Support .....	8
Progress Reporting.....	9
Meeting Potential Adopters .....	9
<b>VOLUNTEER FOSTER QUALIFICATIONS &amp; REQUIREMENTS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>VOLUNTEER FOSTER APPLICATION PROCESS .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>EMERGENCY INFORMATION .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>THANK YOU NOTE.....</b>	<b>14</b>

# LETTER FROM RORY O'NEILL

## Director

Thank you for opening your heart and home to one of our rescued animals. The sad truth is there are more dogs and cats suffering from starvation and exposure in below 0 temperatures than we could ever hope to bring into our sanctuary, so every fosterer helps save a life we may not have been able to save otherwise.

Our foster care program was designed to involve people who want to help save an animal's life by providing temporary care and training for kittens, puppies, dogs and cats. You will offer a temporary, safe, comfortable home where they will learn manners, what it is to be loved, and how to enjoy the real world with car rides, meeting new people and other animals, dog park trips and more!

The best part of this, however, is you get to see an animal tap into what it already knows how to do: be the perfect pet!

You play a key role in helping them get adopted: you make a difference. I can't begin to explain how much we appreciate what you are choosing to do. To us, and no doubt to you, every animal counts.

Sincerely,

Rory O'Neill  
Director of Rocky Mountain Animal Rescue

# DON'T BE AFRAID OF FOSTERING

## It's Really the Best Feeling in the World

**You can't imagine how many times someone shows an interest in fostering, but then says they can't because they're afraid they'll get too attached: that they will love the animal too much and want to keep it.**

We wish we could rescue every animal that is suffering from starvation, exposure to weather, and loneliness – but we are limited to the space in our sanctuary. This is why we rely on people like you who want to open their homes and hearts; every person who fosters not only sets their foster pet up for the best possible outcome, but gives another animal a chance to be rescued.

We hear people say that they're afraid they'll love the animal too much to say goodbye. We can empathize, because every animal that comes to our sanctuary is one we love dearly. The alternative, however, is that the pet you would “too much” would NEVER know love, or what it feels like to have a fully belly and be warm.

**Another big concern is how children will react to the ultimate “goodbye” day.**

What it all boils down to is how you, the parent, present the concept of fostering to your child.

What if the “Goodbye Day” was treated like a birthday party? It's something to look forward to, because it means you have played a huge role in helping your foster pet move on to an amazing life.

The truth is, goodbyes happen in real life...but it doesn't have to be sad. Fostering is a great way to teach kids (and yourself) what it means to do something truly selfless. It's a journey that everyone can take great pride in.

# QUICK REFERENCE F.A.Q.

## **Q. What are a fosterer's responsibilities?**

It is your responsibility to provide a safe environment to the animal in your care: this includes daily exercise, mental stimulation, positive socialization, and love. We also sometimes ask fosterers to provide transport to/from vet appointments, to help coordinate meetings with potential adopters, and to participate in some adoption events within your area.

Beyond this, we ask that fosterers provide us with brief weekly updates via an easy online progress form your Foster Coordinator provides to you: this allows us to support you with training and answer any questions you may have.

## **Q. Does a fosterer need to have access to a vehicle?**

No. We will arrange transport in the event you do not have access to a car.

## **Q. How long does an animal need fostering?**

Fostering varies from a weekend to many months, and depends entirely on your schedule, upcoming holiday plans, and how well the pet is working out in your home. We are flexible.

## **Q. What are the costs associated to fostering an animal?**

We cover all necessary costs and provide all necessary supplies. This includes food, kennels for crate training, toys, clickers for clicker training, and other needs discussed prior to placing a pet in your temporary care. All veterinary care is to be handled through our veterinarian of choice (Rocky Ridge Animal Hospital NW).

Please note: all veterinary care must be organized and coordinated by your foster coordinator. For information on emergency vet care, [see page 12](#).

## **Q. What happens if we go on vacation?**

You can arrange to have the pet come back to our Sanctuary, or to another foster family. You may also request that the pet stay with a trusted friend or family

member until you return - with our pre-approval.

You may also bring the pet with you! Many of our fosterers have taken the foster pet with them on holidays, which helps strengthen the animal's comfort level and socialization.

**Q. I live in an apartment. Can I still foster?**

Dogs don't need a lot of space to be happy. What they do need is a sense of security, physical exercise, mental exercise, a strong leader, and a nice, comfy dog bed to lay on! A brief walk is all that's needed to eliminate, and a trip to your local dog park is the perfect social hour for you and your foster pet. As long as you're taking time out of your day to ensure that your foster pet is getting good mental and physical stimulation, everyone will be happy!

**Q. I don't have a fenced yard. Can I still foster?**

Yes! Walks and trips to the dog park are the perfect way to give your foster pet the mental and physical stimulation it needs. In fact, it is a false assumption that a yard provides enough mental and physical exercise for a dog. They need the variety a walk offers, and the socialization a dog park offers.

**Q. I work a full 8 hour day. Can I still foster a dog?**

We often hear people state that they do not want to foster because they don't think it would be "fair" to a dog because they work during the day. The reality is this: people need to work, and dogs are fine with that because it still means a warm bed, a full belly, and lots of play time when you are home. The dogs we rescue are coming from a place (reserve, shelter, or otherwise) where human touch was few and far in between, so they would gladly jump at the chance to be in the comfort of your home while you're at work. We will help you with crate and house training to make this easy and stress free.

We also will help match the right dog for you to foster, depending on your home, schedule, and lifestyle.

**Q. What if the animal does not get along with my current pet(s)?**

When any problem occurs, you should immediately contact your Foster Coordinator to discuss the best way to proceed. We are in a position to help you work through many of the issues that may come up when a new animal enters the house; this extra support in training and socialization benefits the animal. In the event where it is a serious issue, the dog can come back to the Sanctuary without delay.

**Q. How many animals can be fostered at once?**

Usually, fosterers take one animal on at a time – however, in certain circumstances, 2 – 3 have been allowed. It depends on your schedule and comfort level.

**Q. How does a potential adopter meet the foster pet for adoption?**

When a potential adopter sends in an application for the pet you're fostering, our Adoption Coordinator will pre-screen them and then forward it to you. You are in the best position to determine whether they are a match, as you will know the pet intimately. If you are comfortable, you and the Adoption Coordinator may arrange a meeting. [More details on page 9.](#)

**Q. What if we want to adopt the pet?**

You must notify both the Foster Coordinator AND Adoption Coordinator via email the moment you make the decision, because it is very possible that we already have a pending application for the pet – and immediately send in the online adoption application.

# FOSTER PROGRAM BREAKDOWN

## In Detail

### **Animal In-Take Process**

When an animal first arrives at our sanctuary, a full assessment is performed. More often than not, the animal suffers from post-traumatic stress and needs some time with the balanced pack environment of the sanctuary. It is for this reason that we do not place a newly rescued animal in foster care.

### **Foster Home Match Up**

When your foster application arrives, our foster coordinator works with the sanctuary team to determine which animal would best suit your home, schedule and lifestyle. Because of Rory O'Neill's experience and career as a leading animal behaviourist, we are able to perform fully comprehensive assessments of what each animal needs, and what fosterer is the best match for that. Our goal is to ensure a smooth introduction of the foster animal into your home.

### **Training & Support**

Fostering means you play an integral part in the animal's rehabilitation. It also means you help prepare it for home life by working on the following things with the support of the R-mar team.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Housebreaking        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proper socialization               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Walking on leash     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Basic commands (sit, stay, recall) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proper house manners | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Off leash training                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Crate training       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clicker training                   |

Your Foster Coordinator is always ready to help answer your questions and put you in touch with someone on the Behavioural Team to walk you through training steps.



## Progress Reporting

We ask that our fosterers complete and submit our easy **online progress report** to their Foster Coordinator every week.

This progress report will ask you to rank how the animal is doing in a number of areas, including different training tasks, socialization and attentiveness. This allows us to not only review what's been going on and contact you regarding any concerns or questions you might have, but it also gives us the chance to keep adoption profiles up-to-date with information and pictures.

## Meeting Potential Adopters

As a volunteer fosterer for the Rocky Mountain Animal Rescue, you will help facilitate meetings between your foster pet and potential adopters.

- When an application for your foster pet is sent in, it will be forwarded to you for your review by your Adoption Coordinator: you are in the best position to screen the application for the best match
- If the application is a good match, please email the **potential adopter – AND CC the foster coordinator and adoption coordinator** – to coordinate a time for them to meet the foster pet
- Most of the time, adoptions happen same day. Payments will be handled by the Adoption Coordinator. You will be informed of the adoption payment processing by the coordinators.
- If, for whatever reason, you no longer feel it's a right match after meeting the potential adopter, you can let them know that the Adoption Coordinator will be in touch with them to discuss other potential matches.

# VOLUNTEER FOSTER QUALIFICATIONS & REQUIREMENTS

- You must be able to provide a **safe, loving, stable and consistent environment** for the foster pet
- You must understand that while we do the best we can at matching you to the right animal, many of these animals have endured major traumas and **their temperaments may change as the animal gets more comfortable** in its new environment. This includes issues like house manners, house breaking, and energy level
- Agree to **transport your foster pet to and from – or help facilitate an arranged transport to and from** - our Sanctuary, vet appointments, and adoption events as needed
- Provide R-mar with **weekly progress updates** on how the animal is doing, temperament and training via easy online progress report
- Provide **pictures of your home, family and pets** (since we bypass home checks that way) upon the completion of your foster application
- Agree that all animals are to be **housed indoors**
- Agree to help arrange and carry out **meetings with potential adopters** to allow them to meet your foster pet and ask questions
- Agree to **contact the Foster Coordinator regarding any and all concerns**, issues, questions you may have
- Agree that **all foster pets are the property of Rocky Mountain Animal Rescue** and must be relinquished to the Sanctuary upon request

# APPLICATION PROCESSES

- Complete and sign the **Foster Online Application**
- You will receive an autoresponder that will request photos and a digital signature for our foster agreement form. Please complete and submit as quickly as possible. Please remember that this is an important step to completing your application – but it does NOT mean your application has been accepted.
- **Due to the number of applications we receive, we can only respond to the applications we accept. If you do not hear back from us, you are welcome to re-submit your application.**
- When your application is accepted, your Foster Coordinator will contact you to go over the program and discuss the needs and requirements of fostering – as well as offer you details of what animal would best match you.
- Once an animal has been decided on, pick up for the foster pet will then be arranged.
- You will be asked to submit a weekly progress report to your Foster Coordinator every week. This is an easy online form provided to you by your Foster Coordinator

# EMERGENCY CONTACT

In the event of an emergency, please use the following procedure:

- Contact the Sanctuary to discuss your concern at 403-673-3224
- If there is immediate danger, please directly contact our vet. Details found below.



## Rocky Ridge Pet Hospital

11595 Rockyvalley Dr., NW  
Calgary T3G 5Y6

### Phone

403-984-4143

### Website

<http://www.rockyridgevet.com/>

## Hours

### Monday – Friday

8:00 am - 8:00 pm

### Saturday

9:00 am - 6:00 pm

# THANK YOU!

We've said it a few times now, but one more won't hurt...

Your selflessness in opening your home & heart goes beyond what words can express. We see so many heartbreaking things in the environments we rescue from, so every success we get to celebrate means a lot to us – and the people who help us get there are truly appreciated.

Being a part of our team is not only about the animals...it's about the relationships we build together. So on that note, we are very excited to get to know you!

Thank you again,  
The Rocky Mountain Animal Rescue Team