



**Middle Tennessee
Golden Retriever Rescue

Foster Home Handbook**

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SECTION A: WELCOME

MISSION STATEMENT

MTGRR is an all-volunteer, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to the rescue, care, evaluation and placement of abandoned or unwanted golden retrievers. In addition, our mission is to promote the understanding, appreciation, and care of canines among the general public, through education about responsible pet ownership. Finally, we endeavor to raise awareness regarding the extraordinary unwanted pet population, and do our part to decrease it.

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF FOSTERING

Thank you for joining MTGRR as a foster home. You are embarking on a wonderful journey by providing a new beginning for a rescued Golden Retriever.

By fostering, you have one of the most important and rewarding jobs in MTGRR:

- Opening your home to a Golden Retriever and giving it love and security
- Being a nurse, teacher, record keeper, behaviorist, groomer, friend and parent to your foster dog
- Spending the most time with your foster dog
- Evaluating the dog's temperament and medical needs
- Reinforcing basic obedience and manners
- Being responsible for some necessary paperwork
- Helping place your foster dog in its forever home

You don't need to know everything about Goldens because our organization is full of people who share a wealth of knowledge and true dedication to the task; all you have to do is ask.

We are often asked "Don't you become so attached to these dogs that it's hard to give them up?" Of course we become attached and you will, too. When you know that your foster is going to a good home, and you see the joy it brings to the adoptive family, you're reminded of why you became involved in rescue - to help a golden in need.

MTGRR: BEHIND THE SCENES

MTGRR has a variety of volunteers who advance the work of MTGRR to successfully meet our goals. These dedicated volunteers spend many hours working behind the scenes. MTGRR is operated by an all-volunteer Board of Directors. Contact information for the Board and other key volunteers is included at the end of this manual.

VOLUNTEER RESOURCE CENTER (VRC)

There are many resources listed on the VRC, located on the private section of our web site, which may be of assistance to you. Your Foster Volunteer will show you how to access this site. You have permission from MTGRR to print/copy any public handouts that might be of assistance to the adoptive family. If you lose the password for the VRC, please contact your Foster Volunteer.

VRC, Documents and Files: MTGRR has done considerable research with other rescue organizations to put together its fostering policies and procedures. All the documents you need as a foster home are on the VRC. Make sure you familiarize yourself with the VRC and the documents.

We suggest that you *do not* print off large quantities of these items for your files. When a change is made to a form/document, the new form is uploaded directly to the VRC. By not printing many copies, you are sure to have the most up-to-date paperwork.

SECTION B: THE FOSTERING PROCESS

HOW A RESCUED DOG COMES INTO MTGRR (INTAKE)

When we are contacted about a Golden that needs to come into MTGRR, an Intake Volunteer conducts an interview with the surrendering party. During the interview a variety of questions are asked to obtain a profile of the dog. We try to determine if the dog is a Golden Retriever, if there are any medical or behavioral issues, etc.

When MTGRR takes in a golden retriever, an approved vet will do an evaluation of the dog. This assessment is a starting point that determines:

1. The general condition of the dog
2. Social skills of the dog
3. If the dog has behavioral issues
4. Medical Issues (i.e. ears, coat, nails, odd gait, limp, etc.
5. Meets golden, golden-mix appearance & personality guidelines

Before an MTGRR dog goes to foster, the dog will have had the following vetting: spayed/neutered, heartworm test, fecal test, rabies vaccine, DHLPP vaccine, bordatella vaccine, and a general wellness check.

We need to emphasize that the assessment process does not always find every issue that the dog may have; it is only a small snapshot in time. Foster homes must be prepared for the foster dog to behave differently than described on the assessment or intake information.

Once the assessment and necessary vetting has been completed and a volunteer has offered to foster the dog, transportation is coordinated.

FIRST TIME FOSTERS

The first time you foster will be a little different than your subsequent fostering experiences. You will be contacted by a Foster Volunteer who can help answer any questions you may have. Contact your Foster Volunteer with any questions you may have about any of the policies and procedures in this manual. Do not hesitate to ask questions!

NOW THAT YOU ARE FOSTERING – CONGRATULATIONS!

MTGRR has many years of experience and also has worked with many rescues to provide you with up-to-date information. Your home visit and initial training is behind you, and we know that there is a lot of information to remember. We have put together this handbook for your reference.

WHAT EXPENSES AM I RESPONSIBLE FOR?

MTGRR will reimburse for all **approved** medical expenses for your foster dog which include medications, spay/neutering, and vet recommended prescription food. If you have a question about a medical expense, please ask *before* having the service performed, unless it is a medical emergency.

Foster homes are responsible for feeding their foster dog, and **MTGRR will not reimburse** for any luxury items such as toys, dog beds, etc. From time to time dog food is donated to MTGRR, and we will make this food available to foster homes on an as needed basis. MTGRR has some items available, including dog crates. Please let your Foster Volunteer know if there are any supplies you need to borrow.

UPON ARRIVAL OF YOUR FOSTER DOG

- ☐ Make sure the dog has a buckle or snap collar that fits
- ☐ Remove all tags except for the rabies tag (if current)
- ☐ If the assessor or transporter has not already attached a MTGRR ID tag to the collar, do this immediately. This tag goes with the dog upon adoption and the family is encouraged to leave this tag on the dog's collar. Contact your Foster Volunteer if you need an MTGRR tag.
- ☐ Secure your generic "If lost, please call..." tag on the foster dog's collar as well. If your foster dog should get away, it is more efficient for whoever finds the foster dog to be able to call the foster home directly instead of leaving a message on the MTGRR hotline. This generic tag will be removed from the foster dog when adopted, and you can use the same tag on your next foster dog.
- ☐ Crate (please advise if you need to borrow an MTGRR crate)
- ☐ Leash
- ☐ Dog food
- ☐ Have you designated a safe, confined area for your foster dog and dog proofed it?

SECTION B: THE FOSTERING PROCESS

We encourage the surrendering families to send items with the surrendered dog. When a dog comes in with personal belongings, it is important to use these items for the comfort of the dog (dog bed, bowls, etc.). After an adjustment period, you can slowly begin to make changes such as using new bowls, a new dog bed, etc. Discuss which items should go with the dog upon adoption with your Foster Volunteer.

NAMING YOUR FOSTER DOG

While going through the surrender, assessment and foster process, dogs can become quite stressed. If your foster dog has a given name, we require that you do not change it to avoid additional unnecessary stress. If your foster is a stray and has been given a name by the shelter, please keep that name for the dog. Please contact your Foster Volunteer if you wish to choose a different name.

THE FIRST 24 HOURS WITH YOUR FOSTER DOG

The first 24 hours is an extremely critical adjustment period for your new foster dog and we cannot stress enough the importance of handling the first 24 hours with tender loving care. To help you understand why we say this, you must first have an understanding of where your foster dog is coming from and try to imagine life as if you are seeing it through the dog's eyes.

Please note the following timelines are minimums. Please go slow in your introductions. It is perfectly okay to go slower than these minimum guidelines. If you are unsure if you should move on to the next step, contact your Foster Volunteer.

To help give you a better perspective of this, here are some scenarios:

The foster dog will very likely be stressed, scared, and will not understand what is happening to him/her. Sometimes the foster dog has come from a traumatic or less desirable situation, and literally needs to decompress. Some have physical and or psychological scars. Some are just shy and timid. Some dogs have lost their self esteem, dignity, are depressed, and prefer to have a barrier between them and the outside world. Some have never been in a house or a car or have never been socialized with other humans or other animals. Others are very anxious, high energy, overly hyper, cannot focus, their emotions escalate, and they simply do not know what to do with themselves. Some are ill or old and handicapped. Some foster dogs want to find their way back home to be with the one and only person or family that they have ever known and loved – not understanding that their elderly human has passed away, or that their 10 year old human buddy has moved away and couldn't take him/her.

Your new foster dog's first 24 hours in your home will be an extremely critical adjustment period and you need to make every effort possible to help your foster dog de-stress. For some foster dogs, their first 24 hours may be a breeze and they may act as if they have always been part of your family, but for others, their first 24 hours may be the beginning of a very long journey. To assist you with a successful first 24 hours, we have implemented the following procedures to help make this transition smoother and safer for everyone. We also want the fostering experience to be positive and safe for you, your family, and your new foster dog.

Gradually familiarize your foster dog to his/her new environment. Calmly, quietly and slowly walk your foster dog around the yard and from room to room (or the area in which it will be staying). Allow your foster dog time to sniff and look around. Gently talk to your foster dog, giving it reassurance.

Have your foster dog's crate (a document called Crate Training is located on the VRC) and food and water dishes in an area of the house where there is limited traffic. Ideally, it should be a place where you can keep an eye on the dog – allowing it to see you and observe its surroundings.

An excellent way of bonding, potty training, and supervising your new foster dog is by the use of an umbilical leash. This is a hands-free leash that is attached to the dog's collar and instead of having a handle that you hang on to, it wraps around your waist and clips on to a "D" ring. (A leash wrapped around your waist or a rope with a clasp also works.) The main purpose of this kind of leash is that it simply keeps the dog at your side. Several benefits of using an umbilical leash are:

1. It enables you to move about your house, allowing your hands to be free.
2. It allows you and your foster dog to bond with each other.
3. It helps your foster dog to recognize you as the "parental figure".
4. It allows you to recognize signs or the start of urination and be close enough to act by immediately taking the dog outside.
5. It allows you to supervise the dog and correct any inappropriate behavior or praise appropriate behavior.

SECTION B: THE FOSTERING PROCESS

FEEDING YOUR FOSTER DOG

Throughout your foster dog's entire stay, always feed the dog **separately** from your own dogs, in a different room or in its crate. MTGRR does not permit free feeding of foster dogs or sharing of one food bowl which all pets eat out of at the same time. **Do not permit children to feed your foster dog or approach the foster dog while it is eating.**

INTRODUCING YOUR FOSTER DOG TO FAMILY MEMBERS

Introduce the foster dog to each of your family members separately. Most foster dogs will be very excited to be petted and to meet everyone. In the event the foster dog is very shy and does not readily approach family members:

1. Always allow the dog to approach and establish initial contact with unfamiliar people.
2. Do not encourage the dog to leave the safety of the "hiding" place or area where the dog feels comfortable.
3. Never corner the dog or force yourself on the dog.
4. It is important to put shyness and fearfulness in perspective; these traits are quite normal, necessary, and extremely adaptive traits for all dogs. It is natural for dogs to be wary of things that are novel and unfamiliar, even people.
5. For more information or a list of websites about cautious dogs, visit the VRC on www.rescueagolden.org.

CHILDREN AND YOUR FOSTER DOG

Always supervise children around your foster dog - **never leave a child unsupervised with your foster dog**. We cannot predict how the dog will react to children. Teach children to respect every dog's privacy when they go to their "special place" to be alone, whether that is a crate, dog bed, or just a corner of the room. Do not allow children to take toys away from dog or bother them at meal times. Even the nicest foster dog may bite if s/he thinks children will take his/her food.

Only MTGRR volunteers who have a signed Hold Harmless on file may care for the foster dog. MTGRR's liability insurance *does not* permit visiting friends, relatives, or minors under the age of 18, to care for the foster dog; including walking, brushing, feeding, grooming, dog-sitting, transport, etc. If you have any questions, contact your Foster Volunteer.

There are documents on the Volunteer Resource Center of the MTGRR website on children/dog education.

INTRODUCING YOUR FOSTER DOG TO YOUR DOG(S)

MTGRR suggests that you slowly introduce one dog at a time to your foster. Make sure the first meeting is done outside in a neutral territory with both dogs on a loose leash, two adults required. Only after they are friendly toward one another, should you carefully allow them to meet in your yard, remaining on the leash.

When meeting in the house, always begin by letting your own dogs outside and bringing in the new dog by itself. Having a new dog enter a house in which there is another dog can be a high-arousal situation. It is more likely to lead to trouble to have a new dog enter than to have your dogs come into their house to find a new dog already there. When two dogs are meeting for the first time in the house, where space can be limited, make sure that you are aware of the space around the dogs. Both dogs need to have ample room to retreat if they need to do so. Dogs have a fight or flight instinct and if they do not have space to flee and they feel cornered, the one alternative left is to fight/bite. Avoid clustering people around the dogs in a tight, tense circle; give the dogs room to move.

Make sure you give the dogs breaks. Calling them away from one another can draw away tension and keep the mood relaxed and light. Keep these early meetings short (less than a few minutes) so their new social demands do not tire out your dog(s) and the new foster dog. Even if your dogs are accustomed to guest animals and are very accepting, go step-by-step. There is always the possibility that your dog(s) or your foster dog may begin to test the pack order. Gating and crating them to let them de-stress after these meetings is highly recommended. Just like children need downtime or naps, so do dogs...make sure to give it to them.

INTRODUCING YOUR FOSTER DOG TO YOUR CAT(S)

Be careful to pick a meeting place that gives the cat an escape route. A first meeting in a room with only one exit will make the cat very wary. Do not hold the cat in your arms. The cat will feel restrained and threatened, the dog will feel jealous and you may get scratched, nipped, knocked down, or bitten. Put the cat on an elevated surface that the dog cannot reach. Have the dog leashed in case you need to restrain him/her quickly. Let the cat initiate introductions. Make sure the cat has a safe area that is gated or otherwise denies access to the dog.

SECTION B: THE FOSTERING PROCESS

ALLOWING YOUR FOSTER DOG TO MOVE ABOUT THE HOUSE

It is in everyone's best interest to move slowly and gate off parts of the house to keep the interactions with your new foster dog, other pets and people in the household, to a minimum. It is a good idea to keep the umbilical lead attached to the foster dog; it can be a nice prevention tool. For example: If the dog decides to mark or gets into a dog-dog fight, you can pull the dog from marking or from your dog. Pick up all dog toys. Regarding bones, rawhides, pig/lamb ears, or Greenies, please talk to your Foster Volunteer before giving these items to your foster dog. **Never leave your foster unsupervised.** Once the dogs are comfortable together, slowly introduce toys and balls.

ADOPTION BANDANAS

Your Foster Volunteer has a supply of "I'm Available" bandanas. When you are out walking your foster dog or at a Meet & Greet or vet appointment, have your foster dog proudly wear this bandana. The "I'm Available" bandana stays with the foster home and does not go to the foster's forever home.

WHERE DO I KEEP MY FOSTER DOG WHEN I'M NOT HOME OR AVAILABLE?

It is recommended that the foster dog be kept crated when the foster family is not home or is unable to watch the dog. All foster dogs must be kept indoors, living as a part of the family as an indoor house pet.

DOG UPDATE PROCEDURES

When you get your foster dog, a photo and brief update must be submitted within 2 – 3 days of obtaining a new foster dog. While fostering, you are **required** to submit a foster dog update at least **every two weeks**.

Your notes should include the following information when available:

*Sex & age
Playfulness
Idiosyncrasies
Basic obedience
Housetraining
Reaction to cats*

*Reaction to children
Temperament
Personality
Habits
Reaction to other dogs
Crate training*

*Reaction to new surroundings
Color
Health
Weight
Endearing qualities
Provide photo, if possible*

It is important to submit these updates so dogs can be posted on the website and so the Board and Foster Volunteers are kept informed of a foster dog's condition. Note: If your foster dog has any questionable behavior or medical issues, **do not wait** to pass this information along through your updates, **immediately** contact your Foster Volunteer or a Board member via **phone call or email**.

GROOMING

Your foster dog may need to be bathed and groomed. The most important thing to remember is to move slowly. You do not have to brush the entire dog at one time. You need to make this a pleasant experience. If your dog exhibits any signs of aggression, growling, snapping, etc. **STOP** immediately. Contact your Foster Volunteer immediately for advice. If you are confident in doing so, please bathe/groom your foster dog, clean the ears, cut and brush out mats, trim toenails, and trim the hair on the ears and feet if needed. If the dog is in deplorable condition and needs to be professionally groomed, please obtain pre-approval from your Foster Volunteer. **MTGRR does not pay for routine grooming or nail clips on your foster dog. If at all possible, do not attempt to groom your foster dog during the first 48 hours. The dog is de-stressing and you do not want to add to their stress.**

Regular brushing will prevent mats from forming and reduces the amount of dog hair you will find in your home. Ears should be cleaned weekly by gently wiping the ear with a cotton ball. Odor or black "gunk" may indicate an infection. If you suspect an infection, notify your Foster Volunteer or Board member for pre-approval for a vet to check them. Many vets prefer you not clean the "gunk" out of the ears so they can take ear swabs and properly diagnose the type of infection. You may use a dog ear cleaner as a flush if approved by the vet. Follow the vet's directions for use.

For more information on grooming, please visit the VRC.

SECTION B: THE FOSTERING PROCESS

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR FOSTER DOG RUNS AWAY

Some dogs are expert escape artists and may be capable of opening crates, kennel doors, jumping over baby gates or knocking down strategically placed barriers. Some dogs can jump over a 6-foot fence or dig under a fence (in an incredibly short time). Sometimes they look for an opportunity and bolt out of the house or car door the instant it opens. Other dogs simply pull so hard on their leash that they get away from the person attempting to hang onto the leash.

PREVENTIVE ESCAPE QUESTIONS

- ✓ Does the collar fit properly?
- ✓ Is the dog wearing an MTGRR id tag and your "if lost, please call . . ." tag?
- ✓ Is your leash in excellent condition?
- ✓ Is the baby/fence gate, kennel or crate door securely closed?
- ✓ Do the doors in your house latch properly?
- ✓ Is my foster dog so smart that it can open the door(s) to the outside? Don't forget about patio doors. Dogs are smart enough to slide doors!
- ✓ Does the foster love to dig or jump?
- ✓ Does the dog "bolt" at doorways?
- ✓ Does the dog walk nicely on a leash?
- ✓ How strong is their chase or prey drive?
- ✓ What motivates the foster dog and what do they absolutely love? (i.e. treats, tennis ball, etc.) Carry this/these items with you hidden from the dog (belt bag, pocket, etc.).
- ✓ When traveling with your dog, please keep the window less than half open to prevent it from jumping out.

If Your Foster Dog Escapes:

- ✓ Always be alert to dangers, for both the safety of the dog and the public (i.e. busy roads, children running/playing, etc.).
- ✓ Call the dog, whistle, clap your hands, whatever is necessary to get the dog's attention.
- ✓ Use a motivational item such as a tennis ball, a Frisbee, or a piece of food and let them know that you have that item by presenting it vigorously and with enthusiasm. Bounce the ball, toss it in the air, yell cookie or treat. Running free is a huge reward for the dog, so you have to make coming to you better than whatever is on the dog's mind.
- ✓ Do not chase or run after the dog because "chase me" can be a dog's favorite game. An often successful approach is to change the game for the dog by running away from the dog and at the same time, make the dog aware of you either by calling the dog's name or using the motivational item. Since dogs love to chase things, it is very likely that the dog may begin to chase after you. If the dog comes to you, praise and reward the dog and get the leash/collar on as quickly as possible.
- ✓ Never yell at the dog when it comes to you or physically discipline the dog in any way. Always praise and reward the dog. If you are frustrated or angry do not show these emotions to the dog because the dog will learn that "come" is an awful thing.

If the Dog Still Doesn't Come:

- ✓ Call your Foster Volunteer or a Board member as soon as possible and they will put out a broadcast to all of MTGRR about the missing dog.
- ✓ Call the local shelter(s).
- ✓ If you have your cell phone with you and can see the dog, provide the location information to your MTGRR contact.
- ✓ Get as many local friends, neighbors, MTGRR volunteers as possible to help with the search.

SECTION B: THE FOSTERING PROCESS

GENERAL FOSTERING INFORMATION

Crating: Even an immaculate, vetted, well trained, housetrained dog needs a place of its own, where it can become accustomed to strange surroundings and schedules, recuperate from surgery, or just get away. Nothing is better suited for this than a sturdy crate of appropriate size. If you do not have a crate for your foster dog, contact your Foster Volunteer.

Leash Policy: Due to insurance liability, **all foster dogs must be exercised outdoors on-leash.** If the foster family does not have a securely fenced yard, the foster dog is to be kept on a leash when outdoors at all times. MTGRR's liability insurance carrier requires that you do not use a flexi-type leash on your foster, therefore, do not use a flexi-type leash. You do not have the same control with a flexi-type leash as you do with a standard length leash.

Feeding: MTGRR does not pay for food while the dog is in foster care unless a veterinarian prescribes a particular food for medical reasons. We suggest that a premium natural food be fed. Keep in mind that a sudden change in diet can lead to diarrhea. The dog should be fed twice-a-day. Sometimes a foster dog will not eat for the first day or two. This can be due to many factors including stress of a new environment, or depression. As long as the dog is drinking water, it is not a major concern if the dog does not eat for a day or two. If the dog is not eating, first eliminate possible distractions - toys, children and other pets. Leave the food for 20 minutes, then pick it up and wait about two hours before offering it again. If your foster dog does not eat for 24 hours, you can try adding a bit of canned food or warm broth. Your foster dog will probably eat better once it is accustomed to its new surroundings and has been exercised. Please remember that you are not allowed to feed your dog and your foster dog out of the same dish. Do not free feed your foster dog.

Water: A foster dog needs free access to fresh water. During his/her first few hours at your home, however, you should give water sparingly to minimize the chances s/he will drink too much due to being anxious and then have an accident or vomit. Remember, even if a foster dog is housetrained, it is not unusual for the dog to have an accident due to anxiety and stress.

Providing Water While You are Gone: Some Golden Retrievers are water happy. You may want to limit the dog's water while you are away. This is especially true of young dogs that like to drink a lot and as a result will have to urinate more often. However, if the foster home is not air conditioned, then a small amount of water should be left for the dog to pant-off body heat.

Exercise/Off Leash: All dogs benefit from frequent walks each day, even short ones of 10-15 minutes. Don't be surprised if your foster dog does not know how to walk on a leash. S/he may have been "on the road" for much of his/her life and not know what to make of a leash. A training collar may be useful in training a dog to walk well on a leash (contact your Foster Volunteer for more information). Never walk your foster dog off leash. Even if s/he comes to you every time s/he is called, off-lead exercise is very risky and MTGRR policy prohibits MTGRR dogs from being off lead if not in a fenced area. A fenced yard can be a great advantage, but always keep a new foster dog under surveillance. Some dogs can jump very high, dig very fast, climb quite skillfully, and squeeze through remarkably small places. Don't assume that just because your dog(s) don't get out that a foster dog won't.

Dog Parks: MTGRR discourages taking your foster dog to a dog park. Foster dogs are required to be on a leash and dog parks can be risky situations.

Boarding a Foster Dog: MTGRR typically does not board or pay to kennel a foster dog. If a situation arises where this may be necessary, preapproval must be obtained from your Foster Volunteer. If you are going on vacation or need someone to care for your foster dog, contact your Foster Volunteer and give them several weeks notice to make arrangements. Because the foster dog belongs to MTGRR and MTGRR is liable for the dog's actions and whereabouts, it is required that you communicate any plans or ideas to your Foster Volunteer and obtain approval before you actually put the plans in place.

Going on Vacation: We strongly encourage other trained foster homes to dog sit your foster dog in your absence because they have been trained in MTGRR's procedures. In urgent type situations or if it is beneficial for the dog, immediate family members can watch your foster dog if they have signed a hold harmless agreement, they are advised of MTGRR's procedures and approval is granted by your Foster Volunteer. It is recommended that foster homes have an emergency plan in place in the event of an emergency. Your Foster Volunteer needs to know the whereabouts of the dog at all times. Foster homes need permission from their Foster Volunteer for taking their foster dog with them when they are

SECTION B: THE FOSTERING PROCESS

leaving for vacation away from their home. The foster home should thoroughly go over and leave a copy of the Foster Handbook and the emergency contact list with the family who will be caring for the foster dog in their absence.

Doggie Day Care: Contact your Foster Volunteer for approval before enrolling your foster dog in doggie day care.

Liability: MTGRR dogs are covered under MTGRR's insurance **if** all MTGRR policies/procedures are followed. If you chose to not follow MTGRR policies and procedures, you and your insurance will be responsible for any injuries/damage caused by the foster dog.

MTGRR does not pay for: Any damage to your personal property, repairs or cleaning expenses for your foster dog. Some dogs can carry diseases which may be transmitted to humans and/or other animals. MTGRR does not cover these expenses so please take caution and let your Foster Volunteer know if your foster dog is ill.

Rawhides: MTGRR discourages the use of rawhides/pig ears or similar type products with your foster dog. Please refer to the article on Rawhides which is available on the VRC section of the MTGRR website. Please contact your Foster Volunteer before offering a rawhide to your foster dog.

Other Helpful Documents: The following documents can be found on the MTGRR website:

A fungus amongst Us (Blastomycosis)

About Rawhides

ASPCA Canine Postures

Barking

Bloat

Canine Allergies

Canine Obesity

Cocoa Mulch Dangers

Crate Training

Dangerous Products

Dog Food Information

Dog Owner Reading List

Dog Owner Video List

Ear, Skin & Coat Care

First Aid Starter Kit

Foods to Avoid

Hazardous Plants

Holiday Caution List

Holistic Help

Hypothyroidism

I Think My Dog Was Abused

Keeping Play Dates Bite Free

Obedience Information

Over the Fencepost

Prepare For a New Puppy

Seizures in Goldens

Senior at Seven

Submissive Urination

Sweet Golden Kisses

Teaching Dogs

Teeth Cleaning

Tick borne Diseases

Understanding Socialization

Website References

Why Take Your Dog to Class?

Winterized

Your Rescue Dog

SECTION B: THE FOSTERING PROCESS

KEEPING YOUR PET(S) SAFE: BORDETELLA/FLEAS/TICKS/HEARTWORM

Occasionally a foster dog comes into MTGRR with Bordetella (kennel cough). To protect your pets from kennel cough, (can get at MTGRR events, meet and greets, etc.) an annual Bordetella vaccination is highly recommended. Many groomers and most kennels require proof of a Bordetella vaccination.

Although it is rare, a foster dog may arrive with fleas/ticks (every attempt is made to have the foster dog vetted and Frontline administered before the dog goes into foster). When your foster dog is transported to you, immediately check the dog for any signs of fleas. Flea infestation can be diagnosed by finding fleas on the dog or by seeing black and white “grains” about the size of sand in the dog’s coat. These “grains” are flea feces (black) and flea eggs (white). The fecal material is composed of digested blood that turns reddish brown if brushed on to a wet paper. Do not allow the dog to come into contact with any other pets in your home.

MTGRR requires that all dogs in foster care start or stay on heartworm preventative monthly. MTGRR will also provide Frontline for flea/tick prevention. These preventatives should be given monthly. Do not purchase this product from your veterinarian unless it is preapproved by MTGRR. An MTGRR volunteer will mail preventatives monthly.

Note: MTGRR is not responsible for ridding your own pets or your home of flea infestation and does not pay for Bordetella vaccines for your pet(s). MTGRR also is not responsible and does not reimburse for any veterinarian expenses incurred for your pets for any illnesses they may have caught from the foster dog such as staph infections, mange, etc.

VOMITING, DIARRHEA & BLOAT

The most common cause of diarrhea for foster dogs is due to an abrupt change in their diet and recent significant life stresses. It is not uncommon for dogs coming into rescue to experience loose stool for a few days. Most vomiting and diarrhea are self-limiting and respond well to conservative therapy. Withhold food for 24 hours but offer water or ice chips (small amounts at a time if the dog is vomiting). After 24 hours, and for the next few days, feed several small meals of bland food (boiled rice and chicken) until vomiting and diarrhea have subsided. Then gradually reintroduce a high quality, natural dog food.

If you suspect the dog has ingested something toxic or there is an obstruction, contact a vet immediately. Then, as soon as possible, notify your Foster Volunteer or a Board member.

Bloat is when the stomach fills with gas because the stomach has twisted. Clinical signs are discomfort, uneasiness (pacing), retching without producing vomit, and eventually enlargement of the abdomen. If this occurs, take the dog to the vet immediately! To minimize gastrointestinal distress like vomiting, diarrhea and bloat, feed a high quality dog food twice daily. Avoid heavy exercise immediately before or after eating. Provide plenty of fresh water at all times. Please refer to the article on Bloat on the VRC.

FOSTERING A DOG WITH SEIZURE DISORDER

If you are fostering a special needs dog, we thank you for taking on this additional responsibility. In speaking with behaviorists and veterinarians we have found that dogs with seizure disorders need to be kept in a separate, safe and confined environment when the foster parents are not available. Dogs with medical special needs, such as seizures, are viewed as vulnerable to other dogs/animals and may be attacked or bitten by other animals during a seizure. We suggest that a dog with seizures be crated in a plastic crate with a bottom cushion or pad while unsupervised. There should also be no toys in the crate because they may pose a choking risk for an unsupervised dog. Lastly, no food or water should be in the crate for safety reasons (choking and possible drowning). However, if the foster dog tends to destroy or chew through cushions or pads, do not place them in the crate. Please refer to the article on Seizures on the VRC.

FOSTERING A DOG WITH SEPARATION ANXIETY

These dogs often feel better in a small den space. Of course, if they are crated they can't destroy the house while the foster person is gone. These need to be handled on a case-by-case basis as some dogs may harm themselves if you crate them.

STRESS & BITING

All dogs feel stress and all dogs can and will bite if they are under too much stress. Each dog has his own bite threshold and it can be directly related to the dog's stress level. The bite threshold can be compared to the point where you might lose your temper. Some dogs need to be pushed to a very high level of stress before they would even consider biting anyone; however, other dogs are quicker to bite, depending on how much stress they are feeling. Please take the time to notice signs of stress and help your foster dog de-stress.

SECTION B: THE FOSTERING PROCESS

Some signs of stress:

- | | | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| - Humping | - Panting | - Drinking lots of water | - Lip licking | - Stretching |
| - Not eating | - Pacing | - Yawning | - Cheek puffing | - Dilated pupils |
| - Ears pinned back | - Whale eye | - Urogenital checkout | - Freezes | - Stiff posture |

PROBLEMS & PROBLEM SOLVING

There are many different problems that may occur while fostering. Each is a subject in and of itself, e.g., housetraining (the dog may need retraining in a new environment); running, jumping, digging, chewing, mouthing, barking, growling, etc. We can *assume* that the rescued Golden will have some problems. *Remember, the initial assessment may not show any problems.* While it is MTGRR's policy to accept only non-aggressive dogs with no known bite history, this is not a guarantee. Should your foster dog growl, snap, bite, or show other signs of aggression **immediately** contact your Foster Volunteer or a Board member.

If something comes up while you are fostering and you need help, please call your Foster Volunteer. We have a variety of resources and reference materials available that you may borrow. If the problem is too great for you to handle, life's circumstances change, or if the foster dog does not fit well into your household, we will move the dog to another foster home or a boarding facility as soon as possible.

GENERAL SAFETY REMINDERS

When transporting your dog to the vet and other places, it is recommended that the dog be crated or use a pet barrier between you and your foster dog. Make sure that their area is free from objects which could injure the dog in case of an emergency stop or accident. Do not let your foster dog ride in the front seat with you as they may distract you and cause an accident. Do not allow them to hang their head out of a window as they may jump out or get hit by a foreign object driven by the wind or motion of the traffic.

HOW TO SOLVE BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

Barking:

It is natural for dogs to bark in play or excitement, but unnecessary for a dog to bark all of the time.

- Correction 1: Every time the dog barks without cause firmly tell him/her "QUIET" or "NO BARK". You may need to enforce the correction by shaking a penny can (place a few pennies in an empty soda can and tape the opening shut).
- Correction 2: Teach the dog to bark on command - once mastered the "NO BARK" command is easily taught.

Note: At no time should you get into a yelling contest with your foster dog; s/he may then think it is a game, (I bark, she barks; I bark, she barks, etc.) and the behavior will intensify.

Barking While Crated:

If you are certain the foster dog does not need anything, ignore the behavior. Telling the dog "its okay" only tells him/her that it is okay to bark non-stop in the crate. In other words, it reinforces the undesired behavior. The barking may get on your nerves but the best response is no response and the behavior will stop given enough time and patience.

Begging:

A dog that begs can be annoying. Giving the dog what s/he wants will make the dog obnoxious and obese. More importantly, the dog will learn to be demanding at other times, which may lead to bullying and/or aggression.

- Correction 1: Never allow the dog to be fed from the table. Make sure everyone follows this rule and the dog will learn that begging is not profitable. Remember, consistency is the key.
- Correction 2: Just before mealtime, put a leash on the dog and the instant s/he starts to beg, give a quick snap of the lead to one side and say "NO" in a firm tone. Ignore other signs of begging. In a few days the dog will realize that your mealtime is not his/her snack time and s/he will stop begging. Again, consistency is the key.
- Correction 3: Crate or confine the dog in another location during your mealtime.

Chewing:

Chewing is natural for dogs. They chew for fun, because they are bored or anxious, or because they have more energy than they know what to do with.

SECTION B: THE FOSTERING PROCESS

- Correction 1: When you catch the dog chewing on something “illegal,” rattle the shaker can and say “NO” or “NO CHEW” in a firm voice. Remove the object and replace it with an appropriate toy. Be sure to praise the dog for taking the toy.
- Correction 2: Proper confinement can also be helpful. If you cannot supervise your foster dog, a crate will help.

Jumping:

Dogs jump on people as a greeting, but uninvited jumping shows poor manners, can be annoying to guests and more importantly, it can be dangerous. Solving this behavior is not difficult but does require time and effort.

- Correction 1: Place the dog in a situation in which you know s/he will jump on someone. When s/he jumps, rattle the shaker can and in a firm voice say “NO JUMP” or “OFF”.
- Correction 2: Put a leash on the dog. When s/he jumps, using both hands, give the leash a quick snap and in a firm voice say “NO JUMP” or “OFF”.

Whining:

Dogs whine when they are under stress, if they feel abandoned (separation anxiety), or when they are frustrated. As with barking, do not comfort the dog by saying “What’s wrong? You’re okay.” This will only enforce the behavior.

- Correction 1: Firmly say “Enough”. This will let the dog know you hear him/her and s/he will stop. Only say this once, continuous shouting is not helpful and may make the behavior worse. Instead, give the dog things to do to keep his/her mind off the cause of his/her anxiety, such as practicing sit or down, or playing a game of fetch - a tired dog is a happy dog. Only give attention when the dog is not demanding it!

Note: When using any corrections, remember to praise your foster dog when s/he does what you are asking

WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR FOSTER VOLUNTEER

If you run into any issues with your foster dog immediately call your Foster Volunteer. It is much easier to correct a problem as soon as it starts, than to wait until it escalates into a much larger problem. Please be upfront and tell us what you think may be the best solution for the situation. Remember...you are the one that has observed and dealt with your foster dog and can tell us what is truthfully going on. Please make sure that you are following the instructions in your foster packet. **DO NOT wait until you put in a dog update to tell us about an issue.**

Questions to ask yourself:

- ✓ Am I using the umbilical leash to make sure I have total control?
- ✓ Am I introducing my dog and the foster dog on “neutral” ground?
- ✓ Am I letting the foster dog know that I am in charge?
- ✓ Am I making use of other tools such as baby gates and crates?

SECTION C: ADOPTION PROCEDURES

LENGTH OF TIME A DOG IS IN FOSTER CARE

Once a dog is medically and behaviorally clear, the process of searching for a forever home will begin. Remember, this dog has already gone from a home to possibly a shelter, then to rescue, or from a home to foster care. The dog has adjusted and settled in to your home. The longer a dog stays at your home in foster care, that harder it is for the dog to adjust to a new forever home. MTGRR policy is to place all non-issue dogs as soon as a good match with an adoptive family has been identified.

Long Term Fosters:

Only the Board of Directors can designate a foster dog as a “long term foster”. A “long term foster” can be a very elderly dog, or a dog with substantial health problems. MTGRR will take care of its basic needs and keep him/her comfortable until s/he crosses the Rainbow Bridge.

IF YOU WANT TO ADOPT YOUR FOSTER DOG

If, when your foster dog is ready for placement, you decide that you would like to adopt the dog, you will need to let your Foster Volunteer know ASAP. If approved, you will then need to complete and submit the adoption contract and adoption fee. The adoption fee for a foster home is the same amount as an applicant would pay to adopt a dog from MTGRR.

FOSTER TO ADOPT PROGRAM

When a foster home is not available for a dog coming in, your Foster Volunteer begins to look at potential applicants for adoption that might be a good match for the dog needing a home. We use this option only for dogs that appear to have no serious behavioral issues, or for families who are waiting to adopt that do not have concerning issues such as small children or aggressive pets currently in the home. This process is called Foster to Adopt. A Foster to Adopt home follows the same procedures as a foster home in regards to policies/procedures, including taking care of the dog's medical needs. The difference is that once a dog is *medically clear*, they have a maximum of 21 days to complete the adoption process. If the dog does not fit into the Foster to Adopt home, they must immediately contact their Foster Volunteer. The Foster Volunteer will make every effort to move the dog as soon as possible. MTGRR asks the Foster to Adopt home be willing to keep the dog until a foster home can be found. *Note: A dog cannot go from a foster home to a Foster to Adopt home without Board approval.*

REASSESSMENT OF YOUR FOSTER DOG

Foster dogs with behavior/medical issues must be reassessed every 30 days, or as otherwise directed by the Board, to determine the best plan of action. If, for instance, your foster dog displays some low level guarding issues with toys, the dog would be worked with on that issue and then reassessed. The dog will normally come into foster care flagged as a medical and/or behavioral issue dog. However, if the foster home discovers something that needs to be flagged as either medical or behavioral while in their care, they should immediately notify their Foster Volunteer via email or phone call. For medical conditions, foster homes should notify their Foster Volunteer when follow-up appointments and recommendations are completed by a veterinarian. The Board will determine whether the foster dog is ready for placement for both behavioral and medical issue dogs.

EUTHANASIA

It is important to have a realistic outlook on the potential outcomes for your foster dogs. A situation may arise where you have a very ill foster dog. There are times when it is medically and humanely necessary to euthanize an ill dog. Please keep in mind that owners are not always truthful about the medical conditions of the dogs they surrender, and that serious medical illness is a real possibility.

In addition to medical illness, there are circumstances where foster dogs may have to be euthanized due to aggression. The message to take from this is that it is very **critical** that you take caution with your foster dog around other dogs and humans. Keep in mind that although the foster dog may have a wonderful personality, it is still a canine with instincts. Take care to avoid and/or proceed cautiously with situations where a bite could occur.

FOSTER HOME CONFIDENTIALITY

There are many instances in which you will have the opportunity to transport your own foster dog. If you are going to be in direct contact with the surrendering family regarding transport, do not let them know that you are the foster home, no matter how comforting it may be. Inform them that the dog is going to an experienced foster home and that if they have any questions, they can send an email to MTGRR. Your Foster Volunteer will get the information from the foster home and pass it along to the surrendering family. This is an important step in keeping your name confidential from the public. Please give your first name only to the surrendering family.

SECTION C: ADOPTION PROCEDURES

ADOPTION PROCEDURES

When your foster dog is ready for adoption, an Adoption Coordinator will begin looking for an approved adopter to be the dog's forever family. When an approved adopter has been identified, the Adoption Coordinator will send you a copy of the application and home visit results. The Adoption Coordinator will also provide your contact information to the approved adopter. Then you and the approved adopter will arrange for them to meet the dog. It is preferable to have the potential adopter come to your house for the first meeting. This way the potential adopter sees the dog in a relaxed state and in a familiar environment. Make sure that you allow at least an hour for the first meeting. Inform the Adoption Coordinator of the time of the meeting.

We all want this to be the foster dog's forever home; please do not rush this process. If you are at all hesitant about the applicant, or if the applicant is hesitant, please think about whether this is the best match. If both parties agree this is a good fit, then the dog can be adopted and all necessary paperwork will need to be completed. Make sure you collect the adoption agreement and check, and provide the Foster Home Dog Information Sheet to the approved adopter. If you feel the dog will not be a good match for the applicant, promptly contact the Adoption Coordinator to discuss the situation.

Let your Foster Volunteer and the Adoption Coordinator know how the visit went and if the dog was adopted.

WHAT IF THE ADOPTIVE FAMILY WANTS A TRIAL PERIOD?

Every adoption is a trial adoption and we will always take the dog back if it is not a fit (it is in our contract to take back the dog if it is not a good match).

ADOPTION PAPERWORK (all paperwork is on the VRC portion of the web site)

The Adoption Coordinator will provide the following:

- ✓ Your MTGRR Dog
- ✓ Vet Records

The foster family is required to provide the following:

- ✓ Foster Home - Dog Information Sheet

The foster family is required to collect the following:

- ✓ Adoption Agreement (with signatures – 2 copies; 1 for adopter; 1 for MTGRR)
- ✓ Adoption Fee

Information that is NOT to be shared with the adopting family:

1. AKC papers, breeding or any registration information
2. Information on the previous owner
3. Personal contact for any MTGRR volunteer

POST ADOPTION PROCEDURES

To ensure that your foster dog's adoption is entered in MTGRR's system and to make the adoption legal, please mail the signed adoption agreement and adoption fee **within 24-48 hours after the adoption is final**. Mail both to MTGRR, 918 Marengo Lane, Nashville, TN, 37204.

SECTION D: FOSTER HOME TRAINING AND CONTACT INFORMATION

FOSTER TRAINING CHECKLIST

Prepare For Dog

- ☐ Read Foster Handbook
- ☐ Get quiet room set up and make sure family/pets are prepared (hold harmless signed, dogs vaccinated)
- ☐ Have food, bowls, crate, baby gate, bed, "If lost, please call . . ." tag, leash, etc. set up for dog
- ☐ Make sure your foster dog has a MTGRR id tag and your "If lost, please call . . ." tag on its collar
- ☐ Slowly introduce and integrate your foster dog into your home

Continuously Assess your Foster Dog

- ☐ Grooming (brush, bath, hair, nails, ears, teeth)
- ☐ Housebreaking (potty, garbage/counter surfing, destructiveness, crate training)
- ☐ Obedience (sit, down, stay, come, walking nicely on leash, wait)
- ☐ Weight (weight reduction, maintenance, gain plans, treats)
- ☐ Exercise (leash, yard, walk, run)
- ☐ Interaction/Play (people, kids, dogs, other animals)
- ☐ Fears/Aggressions (resource guarding, dominance, prey drive, noise, barking, anxiety)
- ☐ Formal reassessment if necessary (per request by Foster Volunteer or Board)
- ☐ Submit your bi-weekly update and photos

Placement Process/Paperwork

- ☐ Read through the adoption application that the Adoption Coordinator has sent
- ☐ Please contact applicant within 24 hours
- ☐ Inform the Adoption Coordinator that the applicant is going to meet your foster dog (typically at your home)
- ☐ Inform your Foster Volunteer and the Adoption Coordinator when the dog has been adopted

Adoption Process/Paperwork

- ☐ Foster Home-Dog Information Sheet
- ☐ Adoption Agreement (2 copies, 1 for adoptee, 1 for MTGRR)
- ☐ Collect adoption fee
- ☐ Provide any of dog's personal items, if applicable (discuss with Foster Volunteer first)

Post Adoption Process/Paperwork

Within 24-48 hours after adoption, send the completed and signed paperwork to your Foster Volunteer:

- ☐ Adoption Agreement
- ☐ Adoption Fee

SECTION D: FOSTER HOME TRAINING AND CONTACT INFORMATION

MTGRR Fostering Agreement

Thank you for your interest in becoming a foster parent for a homeless pet. Please read and sign the following. This provides information regarding the responsibilities of a Middle Tennessee Golden Retriever (MTGRR) foster parent.



I attest the following: I am over the age of eighteen (18) and am interested in helping MTGRR as a volunteer foster parent. All of my own pets will be current on ALL of their vaccinations before a foster animal is placed in my home. I understand that MTGRR foster animals will be checked by a veterinarian and heartworm tested and vaccinated (rabies, DHLPPC, Bordatella) unless they are underage for any of these procedures. (For owner surrenders: vet records/history shall be obtained.) However, I also understand that the history of most foster animals is unknown and MTGRR cannot not be held responsible for any inadvertent exposure of foster parents or their own animals to unknown diseases or other medical conditions. Further, I understand that there is inherent risk including property damage and personal injury when keeping an animal, even the domesticated. I knowingly accept this risk on behalf of myself and my household, including my own animals.

I understand that the foster dog must be adopted out through MTGRR' adoption procedures (including an application, interview, and subsequent approval by the adoption committee) at the current adoption fee that is posted on the rescue website. I agree not to turn over my foster dog to the care of another without first getting approval from MTGRR. I will provide loving attention and proper care for my foster animal and understand that MTGRR has the right to remove any animal from a foster home, if it would be in the best interest of the animal and/or the foster home. I will contact a MTGRR representative prior to taking a foster animal to the veterinarian, unless the situation is an emergency. If a foster needs vet treatment and I cannot do the transport, I will notify MTGRR promptly so that it may make transportation arrangements. If I have to leave the animal with the vet, I will notify the vet's office that the dog belongs to MTGRR, and provide the contact information for the rescue. I will get MTGRR's pre-approval before committing to medical procedures for the foster dog (unless the procedure is necessary to save it's life.)

An MTGRR representative may visit my home before this application is approved or during the time that I am fostering an animal for MTGRR. I understand that MTGRR will not be liable for any injury or damage to persons or property caused by a foster animal in my care and I agree to indemnify and hold MTGRR harmless from any such injury or damage.

Applicant's Signature

Date

MTGRR Representative's Signature

Date

SECTION D: FOSTER HOME TRAINING AND CONTACT INFORMATION

MTGRR VOLUNTEER CONTACTS

Anne Cheek
615-604-7266

Burt Augst
615-438-1125 *cell*
615-386-9430 *home*

Kathryn Chastain
615-428-8353

Sarah Sherck
615-595-9324 *home*
615-498-6047 *cell*
615-467-3449 *days*

Sariah Hopkins
615-775-1931

Valerie Parker
615-482-2051 *cell*
615-302-3072 *home*

MTGRR BOARD MEMBERS

Anita Bobbitt
Anne Cheek
Burt Augst
Hilary Butler
Jane Stricker
Rhonda Smither
Sarah Sherck
Patty Owensby
Valerie Parker