

Last Revised 7/31/15



Foster Home Handbook

***P.O. Box 416
Osakis, MN 56360***

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www.southeastgsdrescue.org

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WELCOME

Welcome to the SGSR pack! We are so glad you have decided to join our organization and help us carry out our mission to rescue, rehabilitate and re-home German Shepherds!

SGSR strives to be there for each of our pack members! Please always feel free to ask any pack member for help as you participate in volunteer activities. There are never “stupid” questions and your ideas and suggestions are always welcome.

SGSR is committed to displaying a professional image and building positive community connections. This handbook outlines some basic information we feel will help you understand how to responsibly represent SGSR.

SGSR strives to ensure that each member is well-informed and trained to enable everyone to enjoy a fun, positive experience as part of the organization.

Thank you for choosing to help SGSR and the dogs!

MISSION STATEMENT

Southeast German Shepherd Rescue is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) organization based in North Carolina and committed to assisting German Shepherd Dog rescue efforts throughout the southeast. Our mission is to RESCUE displaced, neglected, or unwanted GSDs; REHAB them with proper medical care, nourishment, and socialization; and REHOME them into caring and responsible forever homes where they can thrive as alert, loving, and loyal family members.

ABOUT SGSR

Southeast German Shepherd Rescue was founded to save German Shepherd Dogs from abuse, abandonment, and high kill shelters. SGSR is a non-profit organization that relies on the compassion and dedication of volunteers within surrounding communities to rescue, rehabilitate and re-home this noble breed.

The SGSR team has over 20 years of shared experience and encourages new volunteers, providing advice and guidance where needed. SGSR seeks to provide our foster homes and volunteers with all necessary training and education so that rescued GSDs have a safe haven from euthanasia.

SGSR is based in North Carolina, but we partner with like-minded shelters and rescue organizations all across the southeastern United States. Our shared dream is to place every ill-fated GSD in a loving forever home. In addition to saving GSDs, we actively participate in community outreach events, dog training, and education to encourage responsible pet ownership as well as pet population control.

SGSR CODE OF CONDUCT

We, the members of Southeast German Shepherd Rescue Inc., in order to better conduct ourselves in ways that consistently benefit our dogs, our organization, the adopting public, and the community at large, pledge ourselves to the following code.

1. The integrity of the group being dependent on the individual integrity of each member,
As far as possible, we will keep our commitments, and if we find ourselves unable to do so, we will promptly communicate that to all concerned.

2. Recognizing that we are a group of individuals who vary emotionally and temperamentally,
We will demonstrate our respect for the rights and feelings of other volunteers by protecting their privacy, by giving them the benefit of the doubt, and by exercising courtesy and objectivity when sharing our concerns.

3. We will support through our actions and words the leadership, Bylaws, policies, and operational structure of our group.
*If we disapprove of the acts of other volunteers, we will use *established methods to lodge complaints.*

If we want policies or the structure itself to change, we will communicate through committees, to the Officers, or to the Board.

4. Bearing in mind that each of us acts as an ambassador for the whole group, we will conduct ourselves in a professional and courteous manner.
We will treat everyone we work with - adopters, potential adopters, veterinarians, trainers, shelter personnel, fellow volunteers, and all others, with a high degree of respect and consideration even when opinions and philosophies differ.

5. In keeping with the mission of Southeast German Shepherd Rescue Inc., we will always strive to act in the best interests of our dogs.
While recognizing that our dogs belong to the organization, not to any one of us, we will exercise the utmost care with all dogs entrusted to our keeping, treating them as we would treat our own dogs.

6. In partnering with other organizations, we will respect their cultural and philosophical differences.
We will treat each organization with respect, recognizing that we are all working together toward a common goal. We will never disparage or otherwise denigrate their mission or their methods. We will exercise our right to silently disengage from partnering with any organization that demonstrates a lack of respect for animals, our organization or our people.

WHAT TO EXPECT

The majority of dogs pulled from shelters have been abandoned, neglected and often times physically or mentally abused. Rarely do we get a dog that has been trained or well taken care of.

Anyone who has been to an animal shelter knows that there are limits on the type of care that can be given in those facilities. Most dogs will need a bath, a good brushing, and plenty of food and water. In addition, they will probably be very stressed for the first few days.

Some dogs have never seen the inside of a house and things such as ceiling fans or odd noises may scare them. We've seen dogs who were scared of vacuum cleaners, brooms, men, women, sudden movements, walking on linoleum or hardwood floors and climbing up or down steps.

Some dogs may be food aggressive, especially if they have been starved, tied out, or on their own for a long time. Some may whine or pace, especially in a crate during the night or while you are gone during the day. Some may have separation anxiety and destroy doors, crates, blinds, furniture, etc. when left alone. Most of the time they may not be housebroken or crate trained. **It takes a lot of patience to work with these dogs to get them accustomed to home living.**

As a rescue, we strive to bring new dogs into an experienced foster home so that we can assess them and have them vetted before moving them to a maintenance foster home. This delay in placement provides an opportunity to determine if there are any underlying issues that need to be addressed. It also allows us to place each dog into a proper foster home while minimizing stress and risk to both the foster family and the dog. Not every home can handle the stress of taking a dog straight from the shelter and not every home is equipped to deal with some of the behavioral issues that we encounter. We want each and every one of our foster homes to have a positive experience and will do our best to make sure that each foster home receives appropriate placement based on foster needs and limitations. We will also do everything we can to support you and your new foster fur member as you are an extension of our SGSR family.

FOSTER CARE RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 Getting Your First Foster Dog

Before you get your first foster dog, make sure the whole household is prepared to welcome your new dog. The first week that your new foster dog is in your home is sure to have its ups and downs. It typically takes at least 7-10 days for the dog to get accustomed to his or her new life of luxury.

You will need to contact SGSR to ensure you have all the supplies that you will need. You will be supplied with food, bowls (if needed), a crate (if needed), a one month supply of flea and heartworm medications, and a foster dog folder. This folder will be used to keep up with the dog's information. It contains helpful information for you regarding adoption procedures and general foster home information. If your foster dog moves to a new foster home or to their forever home, this folder needs to remain with the dog and needs to be fully updated and filled out prior to moving homes. It acts as

their “paw print” within our organization and contains pertinent medical/vaccine information. Additionally, if you are receiving a foster dog from a different foster home, you should make sure to get the dog's folder from the previous foster home. **If a foster dog folder is not provided to you at the time you receive your foster dog, contact your Area Coordinator and you will be provided with a folder as soon as possible.**

Sometimes, you will be receiving your foster dog from an experienced volunteer. They will provide you with all the information that is known about the dog at that time. This may not be much, so it is good to be prepared for anything! Usually, the dog you get has had an opportunity to spend a week or more with one of our experienced foster homes. Our experienced foster homes will try to get the dog fully vetted and do some temperament testing so you know a little more about your new foster dog. SGSR's goal is to do this with **all** of our foster dogs, but sometimes we lack the resources to do so.

When you receive your foster dog, be sure that the dog comes with a collar, rabies certificate, and SGSR ID tag. **If the dog does not have these items, please contact your Area Coordinator immediately.** Also, if you have any additional questions or concerns, you can always contact the appropriate coordinator.

1.2 General Care

As a foster home, you are responsible for providing care, shelter, affection, socialization and basic obedience training for the dog entrusted to you. SGSR will supply you with food, bowls, collars, crates, flea/tick and heartworm preventatives as needed. We also provide all medical care to include vaccinations, spay/neuter and heartworm treatment when necessary.

The hygiene of the dog is also the responsibility of the foster home. It is imperative that all of our dogs appear well groomed, healthy, and happy, especially at our monthly meet and greet events. Most of the dogs that come from shelters have been on poor diets and have unhealthy coats. While it isn't healthy to bathe a dog too often, they will most likely be in need of a bath and a good brushing. It is up to the foster home when the dog gets bathed, please keep in mind that many of these dogs have been through a tremendous ordeal and giving them a bath as soon as you get them home may traumatize them even more. Use your best judgment as to when to bathe your foster dog. Please note, SGSR does not reimburse for any grooming expenses except where medically necessary.

1.3 House and Crate Training

Some of the dogs (and of course puppies) that we bring into our rescue are not yet housebroken. Potty training is also the responsibility of the foster home. We highly recommend the use of a crate to help with house breaking; most dogs view a crate as their “safe place” or “own room”. Because of this, crates should never be used as a form of punishment.

Crate training works on the principle that dogs will not relieve themselves where they sleep and the limited quarters of the crate trains them to hold it. Your dog should be crated while you are away. You should take your foster dog out of the crate immediately after arriving home to allow them to relieve themselves. If at all possible, please do not crate a dog over 9 hours. Younger dogs (especially puppies) cannot “hold it” for long periods of time. Please be conscientious of this.

In addition to being a housetraining aid, a crate ensures that your foster dog and home are relatively safe. By crating your dog you don't risk coming home to a chewed up couch or all the counters wiped clean. When you are away, your dog should be crated to not only protect your home and sanity, but also to protect your dog and his/her sanity. Crating ensures your foster dog will not harm himself by chewing on an electrical cord, fighting with other animals in the home, chewing on your furniture, relieving himself in places you would rather he not, etc. Crates can be provided by the rescue. Please let a volunteer know if you will need a crate prior to fostering a dog.

SGSR doesn't require crating but we actively support crating when done properly. If you need assistance with proper crate training, please let us know. At very minimum, please ensure that your dog has a safe place to go when you are away.

1.4 Socialization and Basic Training

The biggest responsibility for the foster home is teaching a dog proper socialization and basic training. Many rescue dogs have never been around people, cats, children, other dogs. Many have never known what it is like to live inside of a home. It is important to determine the personality of each dog to ensure compatible placement in a permanent home. Obviously a three-legged dog or a dog with hip dysplasia would not be good fit with a marathon runner looking for a companion. The same holds true with a dog that gets car sick joining with an extensive traveler. It is up to the foster home to learn the personality of their dog in order for application coordinators to help with placing the dog into a forever home.

If you have another dog, the introduction to other dogs should be on neutral territory first. This will eliminate the “home field” advantage. Dogs in their own home may feel the need to protect or defend their territory and their pack. It is usually best to walk the dogs independently but together and gradually let them get to know each other during the walk. If you are unfamiliar with how to properly introduce dogs to each other, please let us know so that we can help with this.

An introduction to cats will determine if there is a high prey instinct or just curiosity. Many times, we will test a potential foster dog with cats before placing him/her in a foster home. Usually, the extent of the dogs' interest will determine if additional training or behavior modification is needed. Let us know if you need help with a cat assessment.

Basic obedience training is an essential program within our rescue. We strive to place dogs that know their basic commands and respond well to correction when needed. You can find training materials

on our website and we also have several volunteers that are willing to assist. In addition, there may be times when you may need to address specific behavior. Please let us know what is going on with your foster dog so that we can provide the additional support you need.

1.5 Identification

Each of the dogs brought into the rescue will be given a Rescue ID tag which must be worn at all times along with the dog's rabies tag (if provided). We also recommend that adopters keep the SGSR tag on their dog even after official adoption is complete as it is one additional way to help retrieve a lost pet. In addition to a rescue tag, we micro-chip all of our dogs using the AKC companion program. Micro-chipping should only be done by a veterinary clinic. SGSR relies on our veterinary partners to implant our microchips since the proper placement of the chip is critical. The rescue has a microchip scanner to check incoming dogs for existing microchips and to ensure that existing chips are working properly.

Each dog entering the rescue is also assigned an internal ID number by SGSR. The number begins with the year they entered the rescue followed by a three digit number (ex. 2010-001). Information for every dog we bring in is tracked using this ID number. Please ensure it is listed on all documents you send in so that they can be filed appropriately.

1.6 Vet Care

Each foster home is responsible for transporting their dog to and from all required vet appointments. We try to work with our foster families to share the transport burden if distances to participating vets are more than 30 minutes away. In addition, each foster home must keep records of all medical treatments the dog has had (such as spay or neuter, vaccines, heartworm treatment, etc.). **The original copy of each record should be mailed to SGSR.** In addition, please keep a copy of these records in the dog's Adoption Folder and record the information on the SGSR Dog Medical Record sheets contained within that folder.

a. SGSR Required Vetting List

- Vaccinations: Rabies, Distemper/Parvo, Bordetella
- Spay or Neuter
- Heartworms Test
- Heartworm Treatment (if necessary)

b. SGSR Provided Items List

- Heartguard (heartworms)
- Frontline (fleas and ticks)
- Drontal (dewormer)
- Microchip (will need to be inserted by a vet)
- SGSR Identification Tag

Vet appointments at one of our participating vets will be scheduled for you by a Coordinator – please don't call the vet yourself unless otherwise instructed.

All appointments will be scheduled at a convenient time and place for you. If for some reason you are unable to take your foster dog to these appointments please let us know and we will work with you to arrange transport. It is critical that all appointments are kept. Remember that you are representing SGSR and our veterinary partners must be able to trust you to show up when you say you will. If you can't make the appointment, either try to find another volunteer who can assist with transport or cancel in advance. It is fine for you to call the vet directly to cancel or change the appointment but you must let SGSR know that you have done so. Please be courteous of our vets – they are often working with us at discounted prices so we don't want to abuse their generosity or valuable time. It is important that you go to your appointment on time or call ahead if you cannot make it.

ADDITIONAL MEDICAL ATTENTION: If your foster dog appears to have medical issues (such as the examples below), please contact your Area Coordinator to schedule an appointment for your foster dog to be seen and treated as necessary.

- Heartworm positive
- Suspected ear infection
- Kennel cough (hacking cough with no discharge)
- Upper respiratory infection (cough with massive discharge from eyes/nose)
- Eye infection
- Bloody anything (stool, eyes, nose)
- Deep puncture wound
- Sarcoptic or demodectic mange

MEDICATIONS IN STOCK: We have a standard supply of the following medications. Please do NOT allow these to be added to your foster dog's vet bill.

- Cephalexin (500 mg)
- Metronidazole (500 mg)
- Doxycycline (100 mg)
- Rimadyl (100 mg, 75 mg)
- Drontal Plus (rated for 77 pound dogs)
- Panacure
- Cerenia (24 mg)
- Sub-Q Fluids
- Tramadol (50 mg)
- Amitriptyline (25 mg)
- Acepromazie (25 mg)
- Heartguard
- Frontline
- Ivermectin
- Capstar

VET BILLS: Please ALWAYS double check the vet bill to ensure there are no charges for unnecessary vaccinations or unauthorized procedures. If these charges are present, then ask that they be removed from the bill or have them call the SGSR Treasurer.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS: In the event of a true emergency, **please contact your Area Coordinator or one of the following people and then take your dog to an approved vet (if they are open) or to an emergency clinic.** Please have the name, location and phone number of the nearest emergency clinic already available to you to prevent having to search for one in an emergency.

- Diana Hauser, President – 919-604-8822
- Alisa Woodruff, Vice President – 919-802-3522
- Cassie Walsh, Treasurer- 320-491-3347

1.7 Events

Foster homes are responsible for transporting their dog to SGSR sponsored events whenever possible. The more public exposure your foster dog receives the better the chance that they will be adopted to a permanent home. We usually hold a meet and greet event about once a month. Please check the website for upcoming events. The time and location of the event is posted along with a map.

If you have a foster dog that is sick, exhibiting aggressive behavior (towards humans or dogs) or uncomfortable in public situations it is not recommended that you bring him or her until those symptoms subside. If you are unsure as to whether or not you should bring your foster dog feel free to contact your Area Coordinator for guidance.

Typically an e-mail will be sent out to all foster homes prior to an event asking for a list of dogs that will be attending. We like to post the dogs attending on the website so that if an approved applicant is interested in a particular dog(s) they will know whether or not that dog will be there. **If you are unable to make an event, please let us know a week or so in advance so that we can try to arrange transport for your foster dog.**

1.8 Biography and Photos

In order to get your foster dog exposure and find them a forever home, you will need to write a bio of your dog and include some pictures, all of which go on our website. Since you know your dog better than anyone else, it is up to you to pass stories and pictures to SGSR.

Now, we realize that not everyone is comfortable with writing, so if you would like some help please send at least the pertinent information about your dog and we will help you write the story. The website is an excellent way to see what others have written about their foster dogs. Please feel free to be creative. Many times a sappy story or a very creative one will attract a lot more attention than a simple dull one.

Important information to convey includes their temperament, whether they like cats, dogs, children and/or people, if they are afraid of anything, how they behave in the car and on a leash, if they are house broken, crate trained, obedience trained, etc. The more information you can express in your bio, the better. Even things like attacking the vacuum cleaner or chasing the water from the garden hose, give each dog their own personality and attract attention.

Photographs of your foster dog are also instrumental in attracting potential adopters. Beautiful and/or creative pictures tend to be more appealing than boring ones. **Remember, the photo is the first impression someone will have of your dog. Without good photos, people are less likely to even read your dog's bio – so use the photos to market your dog!** Make sure you get several pictures because we can post as many as seven per dog on the website. Please be sure to email your foster dog's pictures and bios to our Facebook Coordinator.

Take a look at the pictures on the website, which ones most appeal to you and why? Use your imagination. If you don't have a camera or way to get a photo please let SGSR know so that we can arrange to have some taken. There are also usually people at SGSR events with cameras so photos can always be taken there, as well.

IMPORTANT NOTE: All foster dogs need to be in the program at least 10 days before they can be adopted; this allows for the dog to settle in and display any type of positive or negative behaviors. You need time to get to know your dog so that you can determine what type of home would be appropriate for them. **Even though there is a 10 day wait, pictures should be posted as quickly as possible with a “coming soon” and basic description of the dog.**



Examples of good pictures.

1.9 Care While Away

We understand that families go on vacation especially in the summer months and around the holidays. As a general rule we try to avoid kenneling a foster dog because of the financial burden it puts on the rescue and the added stress it can bring to a foster dog. If you can give SGSR advance notice (preferably 3-4 weeks) we will put out a plea for a babysitter while you are away. If we absolutely can't find another foster home to babysit, then we will most likely pay for kennel space but

this is done only when we've exhausted all other resources. Please be as courteous as possible and help us in any way that you can. We work extremely hard to keep our foster homes happy but it makes it hard on others when we have to scramble to move a dog on short notice.

2.0 Communicating with SGSR

Communication between you and SGSR is imperative for both parties. We never want a foster home to feel like they are unimportant or "left out". That being said we are all volunteers just like you and have lives outside of the rescue. We try our best to keep up with all foster home needs; however we won't know what you need unless you tell us! If you feel like you are slipping through the cracks please let SGSR know immediately! We want to make sure you have all the supplies, advice and help that you need for your foster dog. We feel this is the key to retaining our foster homes. Again, you are an extension of our family and the appreciation we have you and your family is tremendous!

It is never our intention to drop off a new dog and forget about you but many times we assume no news is good news and tend to get caught up in other pressing issues. **If you have any concerns or issues you should contact us immediately.** Please don't let things escalate to the point that you are upset and frustrated. We have many volunteers with a lot of experience that can help you with any issues that may arise.

a. Communication Methods Available To You

In an effort to keep the communication lines open on all ends, we have created a few methods in which to communicate with each other.

- **Email**- It is a great way to communicate with several members and volunteers. This is also the fastest way of communication in the event someone cannot get to their phone. You will also receive emails regarding events, fundraisers, your foster dog, etc.
- **Facebook** – SGSR's Facebook page is a great way to be interactive. Hop on and join in conversations about your foster dog, other dogs coming in or already in the rescue, talk to people considering adopting with us, or even stay abreast of upcoming events!

If you would like to have updates added to your foster dog's album, please send all updates and new pictures to the area coordinator.

Please **do not** ask "in house" questions on our Facebook page. We ask that you send any and all questions regarding policy and procedure to your Area Coordinator, or a Board Member.

- **Personal Email and Telephone** – In the earlier part of this Handbook, we have provided you with a "Quick Reference Contact Index" that lists the names, titles, email addresses and phone numbers for all SGSR coordinators. Please note that this is for **INTERNAL COMMUNICATION ONLY** and is not to be given out to non-SGSR members. **It is CONFIDENTIAL!**

The best way to contact most of the SGSR coordinators is by email. Please remember that no matter what method of contact you use, we are all volunteers and may need up to 24 hours to respond.

If you do have an emergency and cannot wait 24 hours for a response, please feel free to contact any Board Member and get help!

2.1 Reimbursement Policy

Requests for reimbursement of expenses must be submitted on the "SGSR Reimbursement Form", an example is included with this letter. Original receipts are required for all expenses submitted for reimbursement. Please retain copies of the receipts, should they become lost in transit. Reimbursement requests that do not contain copies of receipts will be recorded as donations only.

Expense reimbursement forms, together with required documentation, must be submitted to the Treasurer within 30 days. Expense reimbursement forms submitted after the 30 day period will be marked as donation only unless extenuating circumstances are provided.

If you are incurring a large number of reimbursable expenses, consider sending in reimbursement requests every 2 weeks or every week. Allow 2 weeks for reimbursements to be processed.

Reimbursement Expenses

The following are reimbursable expenses:

- Dog Food will be reimbursed in the event that the rescue cannot provide a bag of food to you in a timely manner. Dog food is reimbursed at the rate of \$1 per pound. If you need to purchase dog food, please buy Nature's Domain at Costco or 4Health or Diamond Naturals at Tractor Supply. These are 4-5 Star rated foods that comply with our \$1 per pound policy.
- Supplements, more expensive food, canned food and other specialty items will only be reimbursed in the event that a State Director, Area Coordinator or Board member has approved the expense. Include the name of the approving member on the reimbursement form.
- Vet expenses will be reimbursed IF AND ONLY IF prior approval from your State Director was attained prior to the vet visit. State Directors are able to pay vet bills over the phone, and this is our preferred method of payment. Do not pay the bill at the vet unless directed to do so by your State Director. Include the name of the approving member on the reimbursement form.

- Collars and Leashes will be reimbursed up to \$5 per item in the event that the rescue cannot provide them in a timely manner. Include the name of the approving member on the reimbursement form.
- Travel expenses for trips over 300 miles will be reimbursed upon request at the rate of \$0.15 a mile. Please submit Starting and Ending Locations along with any stops made and total mileage of trip. Tolls and Parking Fees will be reimbursed on any trip over 300 miles.
- Car/Van Rentals will only be reimbursed in the event that the Treasurer or President has given prior approval to the rental and use of a car/van.
- Postage & Shipping will be reimbursed
- Event Fees under \$50 will be reimbursed. Event fees over \$50 need the approval of the functional Treasurer or the President.

The following expenses are not reimbursable under this policy:

- Treats, toys, bedding materials
- Food in excess of \$1 per pound (unless approved)
- Vet bills for visits not approved by an SGSR State Director, Area Coordinator or Board Member
- Travel Meals, including tips between 15-20%
- Telephone Calls or Faxes
- Traffic fines
- Hotel Rooms
- Oil Changes or other car expenses

Reimbursement Procedure

To receive your reimbursement, submit a completed Reimbursement Form with your receipts. You may submit for reimbursement using any of these methods, but mail is preferred:

MAIL (preferred) – mail to SGSR Treasurer, PO Box 416, Osakis, MN 56360. Retain copies of the form and receipts until you have received payment.

EMAIL – email scanned copies of the form and receipts to sgsrtreasurer@gmail.com.

FAX – fax copies of the form and receipts to 888-625-6219.

Allow 2 weeks for reimbursements to be processed and returned to you, not including mail transit time.

Questions

For questions on reimbursable expenses, procedures or policies, email Cassie at sgsrtreasurer@gmail.com or your State Director.

Policy Exceptions

Generally, any exception to this policy must have the prior written approval of the applicable functional Treasurer and the President. Requests for exceptions should document extenuating circumstances or proposed overall savings to SGSR. At certain times, under unusual circumstances, exception may be made after the fact, however, payment by SGSR will not be made without the approval of the President or Treasurer.

Adopting Out Your Foster Dog

In general, this is the most exciting, and sometimes hardest, part about fostering a dog. You may be thrilled to find your foster dog a new home, but may also feel sad to see the dog go. This is all part of the rescue process. Just remember that by fostering, you are helping to ensure that many, many different dogs receive a forever home.

1.1 Standard Adoption Process

- Potential homes will be pre-screened with the adoption application, and then interviewed by an Adoptions Coordinator. You will not be communicating with individuals interested in the foster dog until they have been “approved” by SGSR for adoption. The Adoption Coordinator will contact you with the interested applicant’s contact information.
- You should review the application and determine whether the applicant is a good fit for the foster dog, as you know your foster dog best.
- As part of the foster responsibilities you are to contact all interested applicants until your dog is committed to a specific applicant and a meet & greet is setup ... after that please let all interested applicants know the dog is committed but you will keep them in mind if something falls through.
- You will then have a phone or email conversation with the applicant. You may ask and answer as many questions as you like to determine if the dog and family might be a good match. You should rely on your knowledge of the dog and what you learn about the family when deciding if this is a good potential home. Often foster families ask us how to judge - there really isn’t any defined way (other than if the person says something specifically bad such as “My former dog

just loved to ride in the back of my pick-up and run from side to side while I drove” or something equally insane.) You really just need to get to know the family, and be the final judge about whether this is the right home.

- If you liked the phone or email conversation, and the family is still interested in the dog even after they’ve been told the “bad” stories (let’s face it, all dogs, and all people, have good traits and bad – you should tell the bad with the good so the applicant knows up front what they may have to deal with – barking, chewing, not housetrained yet, etc); then they may be invited to meet the dog.
- When the family comes to meet the dog, either at an event or at your house, you should use the opportunity to evaluate how they act with the dog, if the dog likes them, etc. Feel free to ask as many questions as you’d like – ultimately, it will be your decision as to whether the applicant gets the dog (should they decide this is the dog for them).
- It is highly recommended that you send the family home to “think about” the dog. If they call or email you back and want to adopt, then you will make the additional arrangements to send the dog on trial. It is usually best to let the family call or email you back, versus you calling the applicant. If they really want the dog, they will contact you! If they’re not sure, then it’s probably not the right family anyway. In some cases, the family MAY be able to take the dog home the day they meet, but this must be approved by SGSR and there must be extenuating circumstances to warrant this deviation. (This mostly happens when a family has driven a very long way to meet the dog.)
- Finally the right family has been found! You should make arrangements to either transport the dog to his new home, meet in a neutral location to transfer the dog to the applicant or have the applicant come to your home to pick up the dog. Each dog is different and each situation is different. Choose the method that you think is best for your dog as well as best for the adopter and you, as the foster home.
- Upon transfer of the dog, you MUST leave with a signed and initialed Adoption Contract (you should fill out the important information prior to taking the dog), a \$250 check to SGSR, the Dog Medical Record, the leash (unless it is a SGSR transport leash) and the collar. The adopter should not keep the dogs’ collar but should have purchased their own in advance. Please ensure that you have removed the tags in advance of the transfer so that you can give them to the new owner (a zip lock bag in the Adoption Folder works well for this). The new family should provide a leash and a new collar. They must immediately put the dog’s tags on the new collar.
- When the foster dog goes on trial, you should provide the adopter with the Adoption Folder. It is highly recommended that the adopter take the foster dog to their vet during the trial period for a general examination to ensure the health of the dog. Refer to the Adoption Folder for a

checklist to follow when sending your dog on trial. The checklist will tell you exactly what you need to ensure a proper trial.

- The adopter should be informed if the dog is due for any additional medical care (follow up booster shot, etc) within a short period of time, and when the next heartworm and flea prevention doses are due.
- You should your area coordinator to let the rescue know that the dog has gone on trial. The dog should be marked on our website and Facebook page as “on trial.” This ensures that volunteers will not suggest this particular dog to other applicants. Also, please immediately mail the Adoption Contract, Dog Medical Record and the check to the SGSR PO Box. The Treasurer will hold these documents in safe keeping until the adoption is finalized by you and the adopter.
- The dog will be on trial for two weeks with his new family, unless otherwise specified in the Adoption Contract. Contact the adopter once or twice during the trial period to determine how things are going and answer or address any questions or issues. If things do not work out for some reason, you will get the dog back. Be sure to get the Adoption Folder as well and contact SGSR to let them know the dog has been returned. The Treasurer will shred their check and void their contract.
- Should the family request an extension of the trial period, you should contact SGSR with the circumstances for the request before giving the OK.
- Once the trial period is complete, you should contact the adopter to verify that the adoption is finalized. Send an email to SGSR so we can cash the check and move the dog to our happy ever after page on the web site.

1.2 Foster-to-Adopt Policy

As SGSR fosters, every now and then we fall in love with a dog we just can't give up. Luckily, as the foster home, you have the right to adopt your foster dog, if your Area Coordinator agrees.

Each foster dog is required to stay in the rescue for a minimum of 7-10 days where we list it as “Coming Soon”. This ensures we know the personality and medical history of the dog before placing the dog in its forever home.

During this time, you just might fall in love. At the end of the 7-10 days, the dog’s status changes to “Available” unless you notify SGSR of your intentions to adopt the dog yourself.

Once the decision has been made and approved to adopt your foster dog, you will need to mail in the Adoption Contract, Dog Medical Record, and a check for \$250 to the state director. **This would need to be mailed within 2 weeks of the final vet appointment for adult dogs and within**

2 weeks of receiving your foster for puppy. You will still be allowed to have the standard 14 day trial period that SGSR extends to all adopters.

If you do not notify your Area Coordinator of your intentions to adopt your foster dog at the end of the initial 7-10 days, you will no longer retain your right of first refusal as the foster. This is a courtesy SGSR extends to our foster parents.

Please remember that the Adoption Coordinators are marketing your dog to families and we don't want to cause our adopters undue stress if your baby is really one you can't let go.

GENERAL FOSTER HOME INFORMATION (FAQs)

Here are the answers to some of our most frequently asked questions by our foster homes. Should you have other questions or need more information, contact SGSR.

1. LENGTH OF CARE: How long will I have my foster dog?

You will be responsible for your foster dog during the time he is undergoing medical care and socialization, all the way through the trial period and finalized adoption. Sometimes this period can be as short as two weeks while in rare cases a dog can take months or even a year or more to place. When you accept your foster dog, you are acknowledging that the time period is indefinite. If you have a problem and need the rescue to remove the foster dog, this will be done as soon as possible. Our goal is to remove the dog within 24 hours whenever possible. Before volunteering to foster, it is a good idea to have a plan of how you would separate the dog if a problem arose. Nothing is ever certain when dealing with rescue dogs!

2. FOOD:

SGSR tries to acquire donated food to provide to the foster families. However, in some cases we run out before another donation is given or you may not be located near a supply of donated food. In that case, you will need to purchase food and you will be reimbursed. SGSR recommends using high quality dog foods such as Diamonds Naturals, Kirklands, or Premium Edge. The average cost of a 35 lb bag of dog food will be \$30-\$40. You will receive reimbursement of \$1 per pound up to \$35 with proper receipt. Any food that is more expensive must be approved prior to purchase or you will not be reimbursed for anything over \$35. If your dog requires a special diet or you are unsure of whether the food you would like to purchase is approved, contact SGSR. Please keep your receipt for your reimbursement. You will use the reimbursement form located in your foster folder for this purpose.

3. DOG FIGHTS:

Please realize that we do not usually know the circumstances or personality of each new rescue dog. It is imperative that you do not put him/her in with your own dogs (or friends/neighbors pets) until you know that the dogs will get along with them. In addition, understand that a group of 5 or more dogs is considered a “pack” and can result in aggressive behavior. Be careful to supervise your rescue dog with other dogs.

4. RETURNING A FOSTER TO THE RESCUE:

We hope that when you commit to taking a foster dog, you are committing to keep him/her until the dog is permanently placed. However, we understand that certain circumstances may make it

impossible for you to keep the dog until said time (ranging from personal family situations to issues with the dog itself). **If such a problem occurs, please contact SGSR immediately, so that we may make other arrangements.** If possible, some advance notice and time to make arrangements would be greatly appreciated however; if there are serious circumstances (danger to you or the dog) we will immediately send a volunteer to pick up the dog.

5. DOG AVAILABILITY:

Your foster dog is available for adoption when his medical care is completed and after his personality and behavior have been evaluated (a minimum of 10 days after entering the rescue). Heartworm treatment may be provided (at the rescue's expense) after the dog has been adopted only with prior approval from the Board. You will be the primary decision maker about when the dog is ready for a permanent home, although we (the Board) reserve the right to override your decision when it is in the best interest of the rescue and/or dog.

THANK YOU

On behalf of SGSR and the dogs, thank you for your continuous support and hard work! We hope you have a positive, rewarding experience as part of our pack!

With Great Enthusiasm,



The SGSR Team