



## Adopting 101

We can't thank you enough for making the decision to adopt a dog from Heading Home K-9 Rescue! We hope that this packet will help with any questions that you have. Inside we have included basic training techniques, along with tips to make the transition for your family and your new addition easier. Here are a few simple guidelines to follow that will make your experiences safe and enjoyable for everyone involved and to help your family, and your new dog settle into its forever home.

### **First off, the New-Dog Check list! In the excitement of adopting a new dog, it's easy to forget a few things that turn out to be an essential!**

- \*Buckle Collar
- \*ID tag
- \*Leash
- \*20 foot leash for training
- \*Crate
- \*Bed or crate mat
- \*Food
- \*Food and water bowls
- \*Flea/tick/heartworm Preventative
- \*Brush
- \*Nail trimmer
- \*Shampoo
- \*Cleaning supplies – Nature's miracle is awesome!
- \*Baby gates
- \*Toys
- \*Treats

### **Safety:**

- \*Be sure your foster dog has a tight-fitting collar and/or harness with a tag on them at all times.
- \*If you have other dogs or young children, feed your dog in the crate or in a separate space, at least at first.
- \*Be sure new dog is crated or separated from current dogs when they are alone.
- \*Leave a leash on your dog in the house for the first few days at least. This will allow you to ensure safety by grabbing or stepping on a leash rather than getting in too close to grab a collar or other part of the dog. Take the leash off when crated due to choking hazard.
- \*Be sure he/she is managed when someone comes to your door. We cannot stress enough the flight risk. We have spent far too many hours in "search and rescue".
- \*Never leave your dog unsupervised with children or unfamiliar adults, and never leave outside unsupervised.

\* Please crate or secure them safely in your vehicle. Many restraint systems and barriers are available. When alone in a vehicle they can chew wires (like your phone charger), seats or personal belongings. When you are driving, they can put you at risk with sudden movements or fear reactions. Don't leave the windows open enough for them to escape, and remember the temperature in your car is very different than the outside temperature. Hot or cold extremes can kill your dog.

### **Feeding:**

\*Try not to make any sudden changes to their diet for the first few days (If switching to a new food, do so gradually). We recommend feeding twice per day.

\*You can use bits of their dry food as treats while they are settling in rather than adding another type for them to digest. Be careful with the amount of treats for the first few days, their stomachs may be upset from all of the stress.

\*Canned pumpkin (Make sure it is not the pie filling, it needs to be 100% pure pumpkin) is a great supplement to help with diarrhea. 1 tablespoon per 10 pounds of body weight a day, mixed with their food can help firm stool and ease the transition of foods and new homes.

### **Training and Behavior:**

\*Please be aware that the first few days (up to 2 weeks) are a "settling in" period and their true personality does not really emerge until then. They can be very wound up or lethargic from the transport experience and the stress of all the changes. Start from the first minute with training (meaning setting ground rules, etc., rather than formal training) so that he/she will settle in faster. Be gentle but firm, balancing discipline with affection and understanding of all they have been through. Don't forget the exercise part. A tired dog is a good dog!

\*Please keep us updated by email on any behavior issues, concerns, or questions you may have! Don't hesitate to email or call!

\*While in foster care, your dog received house training, and basic training. But, the training doesn't end there! Our fosters did as well as they could with what time they had the dog for, but now it is your responsibility to continue house training, crate training, obedience training, and socialization. Start off slow for the first couple of weeks – don't overload them too soon!

### **Don't let your resident dogs get lost in the shuffle!!**

This is confusing for them too, and you need to protect their status in the household. You are setting up for a rumble if you provide all the attention to the new dog. Make sure you still feed, let out, and pay attention to your resident dog first. Put his leash on first, give him treats first and try to spend some quality one on one time with him/her without the new dog.

### **Medical Emergencies:**

Our dogs have the tendency to get sick or injured outside of regular vet hours. It is ALWAYS a good idea to have the name, address, phone number, and driving directions to the nearest emergency vet in advance. The last thing you want to do when your dog is ill or severely injured is to be wasting time looking up directions! Post it in an easy to reach spot such as a the fridge, or computer desk.

### **Introducing your new dog to your own or other dogs:**

\*Remember that just because your own dog has gotten along with other dogs before, not every interaction will be the same. Do NOT just walk in the house with your new dog or puppy. This is a set-up for disaster. Plan to leave a leash on one or all of the dogs for a while. Remember that YOUR energy is a determining factor– if you are nervous they feed off your energy.

\*Explore outside with your new dog, reinforce copiously when they eliminate outside at your house! Even

previously house-trained dogs will need a refresher. Expect accidents! Dogs under 6 months probably haven't had much or any exposure to potty training.

\*Neutral territory is the best place to introduce dogs. Go into the street, have someone else bring your personal dog out – the longer the leash the better, leave the leashes loose if you can and let them meet – not face-to-face if you can help it. Just go for a short walk with them. Let them be parallel, and then sniff and explore if they want to. Sniffing each other is how they get to know each other. It's like shaking hands with a human. Separate them immediately if you see these warning signs: stiff posture, snarling, growling, intense staring, lunging, erect or stiff tail, hair standing up, mounting behavior.

\*If you have to separate them, give them time to chill before trying again - encourage the parallel meeting again while walking. Unfamiliar territory is better than your every-day walking route initially.

\*Once things are going OK you can head into the house – let your resident dog go in first and keep leashes on both. Don't be shy about separating them –use crate, close doors, etc. Sometimes dogs just don't get along, even in the best of circumstances.

\*Only introduce one dog at a time to the new dog. Follow the same procedure with each. Be vigilant but try not to interfere unless you see the warning signs above.

\*Do not leave out toys, food or treats during the introduction process – and you may have to leave these out of sight during the first few days or weeks, or have them play with them while separated. The #1 causes of fights between dogs in the care of our rescue have been over food, toys, and affection of the humans. Almost every single instance of damage or injury can be traced back to the humans not understanding issues of dominance in dogs and not understanding the needs of rescue dogs – for instance, cornering them, taking food away, approaching too quickly or loudly, letting them have unsupervised access to kids or cats, etc.

### **Introducing your new dog to new people:**

\*Please wait a bit before having everyone over to see your new cutie – they are already stressed enough. Children move fast and are scary to dogs who have had limited exposure or inappropriate interactions with kids. Adults mean well but many have no idea how to meet a dog.

\*Have your dog sit or lie down while your friend comes in. Don't let the person stare at the dog, or approach from behind or over the head. Have them move slowly and kneel or squat holding a palm up while still more than arm's reach away – let the dog approach the person; if the dog doesn't, don't force it. Most dogs will sniff first and then may lick the hand or gain attention in other ways.

\*You should be in control of the animal, and not allow jumping. If the dog growls, do not make a correction. The last thing we want is for the dog NOT to give a warning sign. You can distract, take the dog by the leash in another direction, and you can try again in a bit with the friend offering treats. If any of you are uncomfortable, discontinue the greeting and visit with your friend in a friendly manner and see if the dog will approach on its own.

\*If the dog is over-exuberant, try to settle him and you can always crate him with a chew toy or treat while you visit. Praise him for settling down on his own. If he barks or whines in the crate, you can cover it with a blanket, then remove the blanket once he settles. Do NOT force your new dog to interact. Praise small progress.

\*If the initial interaction is positive, have the person pet the dog on the shoulder or under the chin. Patting the head is intimidating, and a new person should not rough-house with the dog until you all know each other really well. Tug-of-war is not a game that should be played with an unfamiliar dog.

\*If you are on a walk, follow the same procedures for introductions. Don't force the dogs to meet head-on. Let them circle, sniff, etc. only if you and the owner of the other dog are comfortable. You are responsible for the safety of your dog so do not put him or yourself at risk just to be polite or to "see what will happen".

\*Many of our dogs have spent far too much time in crates or cages so they may resist at first. A highly motivating but safe toy is a Kong filled with something yummy. (Peanut butter or canned dog food are great ideas to fill)

Please let us know if there are any other questions, or concerns that you have with your new dog, and thank you again for opening your heart and home to a rescue dog!