



## Fostering 101

Thank you for choosing to become a Foster with Heading Home K9 Rescue (HHK9)!

Fostering is the soul of rescue. We (and the dogs) are truly grateful as HHK9 could not fulfill its mission of rescuing homeless and unwanted animals without you.

We work with you to find a dog that is a good fit for the traits you are seeking in a foster dog. However, taking home a new dog is never flawless: they have accidents, they bark in the crate, they are stressed and may be high energy making you question why you chose to become a foster parent. Hang in there! Usually within 3 days, they settle in. Please make sure you are committing to not only the good and happy times but also the exhausting, frustrating, and bring-you-to-near-tears times.

Fostering requires you to commit to training, exercising, and caring for a dog. The average period of time is 2-3 weeks, but it can be anywhere from 1 week to several months, depending on the dog.

If a dog is not working out, a 3 day MINIMUM notice is required to find a new foster placement. The more time the better. We do not have a surplus of available backup fosters, and it can take longer than 3 days to find a new foster home.

We have backup fosters for emergencies, planned trips, etc. Whenever possible, a timely notice is required.

Do not take your foster dog to your own vet, groomer, doggy day care, class, etc. without first contacting us. Any costs incurred without prior approval are NOT reimbursable.

Do not leave your foster dog in the care of anyone else without first contacting us. Others may not be as vigilant, understand the needs of rescue dogs, know how to introduce dogs, etc. YOU were approved as a foster parent and YOU are responsible for anything that occurs once you take the dog into your care.

Keep notes on your new foster dog and provide regular updates to Katie on behavior, training issues, favorite things, medical needs, etc. Your input is very valuable to help us match your foster dog with the perfect family.

We are all volunteers. We have jobs outside of this Rescue and as such, at times are unable to reply at a moment's notice. We do check our accounts regularly and always promise to reply to a message as soon as we possibly can. Sometimes this is a matter of minutes, other times it can be an hour or more. We will always reply within 24 hours.

## **Expectations**

### **The Face of Heading Home K9 Rescue**

PLEASE be mindful that you represent HHK9 and impressions are important!

*Learn from the mistakes of others. You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.*

*-Eleanor Roosevelt*

To many of us, the dogs are the face of HHK9 but to the general public, YOU are the face of HHK9.

In our world of high technology and social media, news and rumors spread fast. You have "friends" that you don't even know that you have. Everything and everyone can be connected.

When you speak, write, post about other fosters, adopters, and/or other rescues, regardless of your intention, this reflects back on us and affects opinions and perceptions of HHK9. We strive to be as professional as possible at all times and ask you keep this in mind, especially when using social media.

### **The Howler**

On the first of every month you will receive our monthly newsletter, The Heading Home Howler, via email. It isn't long, but it does take a significant amount of time for us to pull together every month. It has both helpful and needed information, and it comes with the expectation that you will find 5-10 minutes to read it.

### **Veterinary Care:**

All Veterinary Care MUST be pre-approved. Any veterinary costs incurred without prior approval are NOT reimbursable.

Veterinary appointments are made by Laura at one of our partner vet clinics. Contact Laura at [lberg05@comcast.net](mailto:lberg05@comcast.net) if you think your foster dog needs to see a vet.

As a non-profit rescue, we are always financially operating at a bare minimum - especially since we often take in senior, special health care need, and long-term dogs. Therefore, we need to evaluate and prioritize what is absolutely necessary in terms of veterinary care.

We have years of experience with rescue dogs and health issues, so please don't think we are not taking something seriously if we ask you to try some things at home before a vet visit or if we determine a vet visit to be unnecessary.

## Medical Emergencies:

If it is a life-threatening emergency and you CANNOT reach Katie or Laura, take your foster dog to a veterinary clinic or, if after hours, the Golden Valley Emergency Vet and continue trying to reach us. If emergency care is needed, we require you bring the dog to the Golden Valley Emergency Vet.

**Examples of True Emergencies are** copious amounts of blood coming from anywhere; profuse vomiting or diarrhea; obvious or suspected fracture or dislocation after a fall or accident; lack of eating, drinking or playing for more than half a day, especially in puppies as their bodies are much smaller and less resistant.

**Examples of NON-life threatening conditions are** cough, loose or colorful stool, worms in stool, acting a little “off”, slight cold, etc.

## Policies & Procedures

### The Adoption Process:

#### Pre-Adoption:

HHK9's available animals are posted on the HHK9 website, Facebook, Pet Finder, the Adopt-A-Pet network, Instagram, and Tumblr. We take care of posting the dogs to known and trusted sites. Do not post your foster dogs to other locations (ie: Craigs List or MN Farm and Pet) without the prior approval of Kaite. Each animal's biography contains information on who to contact to obtain additional information about the animal - this is usually either Katie or an experienced foster.

To adopt an animal from HHK9, the potential adopter must complete a pre-adoption application and pass a reference check.

When a potential adopter has been approved, you will be notified via email. It is your responsibility to make arrangements for the potential adopter to meet the animal. Meetings are to take place **within a week** of being notified of an approved potential adopter.

Meetings can take place at an HHK9 Adoption Event or another location of your choice depending on your level of comfort with the potential adopter. Acceptable alternate locations include a park, PetsMart, Chuck & Don's Pet Food Outlet, your home, or the potential adopter's home.

Be sure to communicate your expectations with the potential adopter including time and location of the meeting, if children or other pets will/can be present, if the potential adopter can take the dog home if all goes well, the adoption fee and payment expectations, etc.

If you find something wrong with every approved adoption applicant, you need to consider if you want to adopt your foster dog. As the dog's foster parent, you have input on the type of home and family your foster dog gets adopted to. However, adoption is ultimately a joint decision between you and Katie.

## Adoption Options:

### Standard Adoption:

With a standard adoption, the adopter has a 7-day “trial period”. If for any reason during this time the adopter chooses not to keep the dog (such as landlord issues, allergies, animal personality clashes), the adopter must notify HHK9 immediately and make arrangements to return the dog. If done appropriately, the adopter will receive a credit towards another dog. The credit is for one dog of equal or less value (adoption fee) and is valid for 60 days from the return date. The credit is nontransferable. No cash refunds are given.

### Foster to Adopt:

With the Foster to Adopt Program, the potential adopter becomes the foster. All foster to adopt parents are required to pay a deposit in the amount of the dog’s adoption fee. If the foster to adopt parent chooses to not adopt the dog by the end of the agreed upon date (usually 2 weeks), the dog is returned to HHK9 and the deposit/adoption fee is returned.

### Adoption Fees:

Contact Katie or Laura if you are unsure of your foster dog’s adoption fee.

### ADOPTION FEES ARE TAXABLE.

When you are asked what the adoption fee is, be sure you say ***X Plus Tax***.

Here is a quick list of common adoption fees + tax totals:

\$100+tax = \$106.88	\$300+tax = \$320.63
\$125+tax = \$133.59	\$325+tax = \$347.34
\$150+tax = \$160.31	\$350+tax = \$374.06
\$175+tax = \$187.03	\$375+tax = \$400.78
\$200+tax = \$213.75	\$400+tax = \$427.50
\$225+tax = \$240.47	\$425+tax = \$454.22
\$250+tax = \$267.19	\$450+tax = \$480.94
\$275+tax = \$293.91	

You are also provided an Excel tax table to use for figuring tax on fees not listed.

Adoption fees are payable by check or cash at the time of the adoption/foster to adopt. If paying by check, the check is to be made out to Heading Home K9 Rescue.

## **Adoption Contracts:**

If you are conducting an adoption outside of an adoption event:

- Contact Katie @ [kladams4545@gmail.com](mailto:kladams4545@gmail.com) for electronic copies of the necessary paperwork.
- Print and complete TWO copies of the required paperwork (Foster to Adopt Application and/or Adoption Contract). One copy is for the adopter and one is for HHK9.
- Be sure you sign and date the bottom line of each Application/Contract before giving a copy to the adopter and returning a copy to HHK9.
- If you are conducting an adoption outside of an adoption event, YOU are the HHK9 Representative/Authorization.

## **FOR A STANDARD ADOPTION:**

Completion of the HHK9 Rescue Adoption Contract is required.

## **FOR A FOSTER TO ADOPT:**

Completion of the HHK9 Rescue Foster to Adopt Application **AND** Adoption Contract is required.

*Here's why:* The Foster to Adopt Application is what is in effect for the first two weeks. We essentially sit on the Adoption Contract during that time. If all goes well and the dog is adopted, the Foster to Adopt Application is shredded and the Adoption Contract takes effect.

Without a completed Adoption Contract, adopters need to either come back to an adoption event or meet with you again to finalize the adoption. There are a multitude of reasons why people don't want to come back to fill out one more piece of paper. We understand this and we want to make the adoption process as friendly, helpful, and convenient for adopters as possible.

*Therefore, our procedure is:*

Foster To Adopt = Signed Foster to Adopt Application + Signed Adoption Contract

## **Post-Adoption:**

Once the adoption is complete, signed contracts and payments **MUST** be mailed within 48 hours to Laura at the PO Box Address listed on the bottom of the Adoption Contract.

We really can't emphasize this enough. This paperwork **MUST** to be submitted in a timely manner.

*There are quite a few reasons for this:*

1. Taxes are required to be reported on a monthly basis and the completed contract and payment is needed to be able to do this.

2. If we have any veterinary records for the animal, we cannot mail them to the adoptive family until the completed contract and payment are received. If you do not mail in the contract/payment in a timely manner, this delays the adopters from receiving their paperwork.

3. We are put in a difficult position when families contact us wanting their paperwork and have to say, "Oh yeah, we can't send that to you until X turns in your contract and payment."

### **Email Signature:**

Please put the following signature on your email. All communications to potential adopters should include this signature.

-Your Name Here-

Heading Home K9 Rescue Foster

<http://headinghomek9rescue.com/>

<http://www.facebook.com/HHK9MN>

<http://hkh9mn.tumblr.com>

We hold Adoption Events at PetSmart and Chuck & Don's Pet Food Outlets. Check our website or Facebook page Events tab to find out where we will be this week! Adoption fees are payable via cash or check. Please plan accordingly.

### **Supply Requests:**

**For food, Frontline, Heartguard, and other meds:** Contact Laura by Wednesday for weekend pickup. Requests MUST be to Laura by Wednesday so that she can make the necessary purchases and have your items ready for pickup at an adoption, transport, or mutually agreed upon location.

**For donated items like toys, shampoo, treats, blankets:** Depending on availability, Jessica will help coordinate getting the item(s) to you at the next adoption event. Fosters are responsible for any extras that they may choose to purchase. These items are not reimbursable, but are tax deductible (for more information about that, see 'Tax Deductions!' below)

Reminders are provided in the monthly newsletter about Supplies.

### **Additional Helpful Information**

#### **Adoption Events:**

Currently we hold adoption events at a PetSmart store on a quarterly basis. Attendance at adoption events is highly recommended! If you are able to stay, that is very helpful because you are the best person to answer any questions about your foster dog. If you are unable to stay, please leave your cell phone number with someone - if your dog is adopted, we will call so you know you don't need to pick him/her up at 3 PM.

Similarly, with a phone number handy, we can call you should a question about FluffyBarkelton arise. An email is sent the Monday before the PetSmart Adoptions asking for an RSVP. Please reply as soon as possible if you and Fluffy will attend so that necessary arrangements can be made.

In addition to our adoption events at PetSmart, we have regularly-scheduled Mini-Adoptions/Meet and Greets at Chuck and Don's Pet Food Outlet in the south metro. Dates are on our website, Facebook page event tab (you don't need a Facebook account to see the page), and detailed in the monthly Heading Home Howler newsletter. Space at Chuck and Don's can be limited depending on the store location, so RSVPs are required. More information will be provided about this in the Howler.

## **Facebook**

Please note: Facebook is NOT a means to contact Katie as she is not an Admin on our Facebook page. We work very hard to provide not only pertinent information in our postings, but we also provide a an email contact for people to direct questions and inquiries to. All communication for Katie should be directed to her email address, NOT as a comment on the HHK9 Facebook page or a private message to.

We ask you be mindful of this not only with your questions, but when you are also communicating with friends about HHK9. When in doubt, please give Katie's email address.

## **Facebook Group: Foster's Corner**

"Foster's Corner" is a place where foster parents can get together privately to discuss their foster pups, ask questions of other foster parents, post tips or ideas, meet one another, and promote their pups.

To join the group, enter "Foster's Corner" into the search bar when you are logged in to Facebook. The group is closed, so your request needs to be approved by Jen, the moderator.

## **HHK9 Gear:**

Because we are all volunteers and every dollar is put into the dogs, we do not have a stash of HHK9 items to provide to foster homes. If you would like some HHK9 swag, we have a storefront set up at CafePress. Clothing, hats, totebags ... you name it, we probably have a logo on it! The markup on items is very minimal (often less than \$2.00), and we use the markup money to pay for the fees associated with having the storefront. [www.cafepress.com/headinghomek9rescue](http://www.cafepress.com/headinghomek9rescue)

## **Tax Deductions:**

Because HHK9 is a registered 501c3 charitable organization, your mileage and out-of-pocket expenses (items you may purchase for your foster dog/cat that we do not reimburse you for) are tax deductible.

NOTE: It is your responsibility to keep a record of your expenses. Should you be audited, you will need to provide receipts to substantiate the expense - we cannot do this for you.

A good article about expenses. <http://shine.yahoo.com/work-money/something-wag-fostering-pet-tax-deductible-143900754.html>

If you have expenses you plan to deduct, you simply need a letter from HHK9 acknowledging you fostered for the organization during a particular calendar year. Please email [lberg05@comcast.net](mailto:lberg05@comcast.net) with your home mailing address and the number of dogs you fostered during the year. The necessary letter will be mailed to you by January 31.

## **Tips and Suggestions**

Here are a few tips, simple guidelines, and basic training techniques to help make the transition for your family and your new foster addition easier, make your fostering experiences safe and enjoyable, and better prepare your foster dogs for success in their new forever homes.

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

Dogs feed off of your energy. BE A CALM, CONFIDENT, ASSERTIVE LEADER.

Do NOT just walk in the house with your new dog or puppy. This is a setup for disaster - even if your own dog got along with other dogs before, every interaction is not the same.

Neutral territory is the best place to introduce dogs:

- Go into the street or have someone else bring your personal dog out.
- The longer the leash the better. It is best to leave the leashes loose if possible. Let the dogs meet but not face-to-face. Try to have them meet parallel to one another and allow them to sniff each other if they want to. Sniffing is how dogs get to know each other. It's like shaking hands.
- Go for a short walk with the dogs in an unfamiliar territory or path. Again have them walk parallel to each other and allow them to sniff each other if they want to.
- Separate the dogs immediately if you see ANY of the aforementioned warning signs.
- If you do have to separate them, give them time to chill out before trying again.
- Only introduce one dog at a time to the new foster. Follow the same procedure with each.

Once things are going OK, head into the house. Let your personal dog go in first.



When inside, leave a leash on one or all of the dogs for a while. This allows 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 the dog is crated as the leash becomes a choking hazard in a crate.

Do not leave out toys, food or treats during the introduction process. Depending on the dogs, you may need to keep these items out of sight during the foster dog's entire stay with you or keep the dogs separated for play with toys and/or when eating.

Do not be shy about separating the dogs – use a crate, close doors, etc..

The main causes of fights between dogs in our rescue have been over food, toys, and/or human affection. Almost every single instance of damage or injury is traced back to people not understanding issues of dominance in dogs and not understanding the needs of rescue dogs. Examples of what not to do: corner a rescue dog, take food away, approach too quickly or loudly, let the dog have unsupervised access to kids or cats, etc.

Be vigilant but try not to interfere unless you see the warning signs listed below.

Sometimes dogs just do not get along even in the best of circumstances. If needed, contact us and we will help with additional suggestions and/or to make the decision to find the dog a new foster home.

### **Warning signs to be aware of:**

Dogs have a pack mentality. In order to establish a pecking order, they must establish dominance. To understand this is to understand much about a dog's behavior. Should you see any of these warning signs, do NOT make a correction, as the last thing you want is for the dog NOT to give a warning sign. Instead, remove your foster dog from the situation and let them chill out for a while before trying again. Examples of warning signs: stiff posture, snarling, growling, intense staring, lunging, erect or stiff tail, hair standing up, or mounting behavior.

### **Introducing your foster 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 with limited exposure to or inappropriate interactions with kids, and adults mean well but many have no idea how to meet a dog.

Have your foster dog sit or lie down when the new person approaches or comes in your home. Don't let the new person stare at the dog or approach him/her from behind or over his/her head.

Instruct the new person to move slowly and kneel or squat holding a palm up, staying more than an 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.

If the initial interaction is positive, have the new person pet the dog on the shoulder or under the chin. Patting a dog's head is intimidating. A new person should also 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.

You should be in control of your foster. Do NOT allow jumping.

If the dog growls, do NOT make a correction as last thing you want is for the dog NOT to give a warning. Instead, distract the dog or take the dog by the leash in another direction. You can try again in a bit with the new person offering treats to the dog. If anyone becomes uncomfortable, discontinue the greeting and visit with the new person in a friendly manner - see if the dog will approach on his/her own.

If the dog is over-exuberant, try to settle him/her. You can always crate the dog with a chew toy or treat while you visit with your friend. If your dog settles down on his own, praise extensively! If he barks or whines while in the crate, cover the crate with a blanket then remove the blanket once he settles. Do NOT force your foster dog to interact. Praise small progress!

### **Meeting new people/dogs on a walk:**

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

### **Feeding:**

We recommend feeding twice per day.

While your foster dog is settling in, rather than adding another type of food for him/her to digest use bits of dry food as treats. Be careful with the amount of treats for the first few days as the dog's stomach may be upset from all of the stress.

Canned pumpkin (make sure it is not the pie filling as 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 to new foods.

### **Safety:**

ALL RESCUE DOGS ARE FLIGHT RISKS!! We cannot stress this enough!

- Your foster dog should have a tight-fitting collar and/or harness on them at all times.
- Be sure your foster dog is under your control/managed when someone comes to your door.

- Do NOT let your foster dog off leash. They have no loyalty to you and most likely have not received recall training. A secure collar, leash, and a firm, undistracted grip are needed at all times.
- If your foster dog should get away and is not found within a few minutes, PLEASE contact us.
- Do NOT leave your foster dog unsupervised with children or unfamiliar adults.
- Do NOT leave your foster dog outside unsupervised.
- If you have other dogs or young children, feed your foster dog in a crate or separate space.
- Be sure your foster dog is crated or separated from your personal dogs when they are alone.
- Leave a leash on your foster dog when in the house for the first few days at least. This allows you to grab or step on a leash rather than getting in too close to grab a collar or other part of the dog. Take the leash off when the dog is crated as the leash becomes choking hazard in a crate.
- Common household items can be very dangerous to a dog's health. Be alert for household hazards and "doggie-proof" your home of small knick-knacks, children's toys, electrical cords, chemicals of all kinds, cat food and litter.

Initially, your foster dog should be in your sight at all times as they can move fast, cause damage quickly, and often do not know what's appropriate house behavior. Many rescue dogs have never lived in a family setting with expensive furnishing, knick-knacks, or electronics.

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

### **Crating:**

Many rescue dogs have spent far too much time in crates or cages so they may resist at first.

A highly motivating but safe crate toy is a Kong filled with something yummy. Peanut butter or canned dog food are great fillers.

### **Elimination:**

Explore the outside environment with your foster dog.

Praise copiously when they eliminate outside! Expect accidents - even previously house-trained dogs need a refresher. Dogs under 6 months most likely have not had much or any exposure to potty training.

## **Training and Behavior:**

Please be aware that the first few days (up to 2 weeks) are a “settling in” period and your foster dog’s true personality does not really emerge until then. They can be very wound up or lethargic from the transport experience and stress of all the changes.

Begin setting the ground rules with your foster dog from the very first minute you meet him/her. This helps him/her settle in faster. Be gentle but firm. Balance discipline with affection and understanding of all they have been through.

Don’t forget the exercise: A tired dog is a good dog!

Your job is to provide love and safety - everything else is gravy!

Below (listed in order of priority) are things that make your foster dog more adoptable and are GREAT if you work with your foster dog on them as time and progress allow.

1. House training, crate training, and leash training
2. Socialization with people of all ages and other animals when possible (NOT for the first few days or if there are medical symptoms - those are times to avoid a lot of confusion, new visitors, etc.)
3. Basic obedience like sit, stay, drop it, leave it, and recall (“come” or “here”)
4. Playing without mouthiness - “No Mouth” or “No Teeth” are reliable cues. Chewing on appropriate items only – use approved dog toys, tennis balls, etc. Please be aware of balls that are too small - they can be a choking hazard. Do NOT allow dogs to have cat toys, children’s toys, or stuffed animals with removable pieces.
5. Not jumping on people, counters, etc.
6. Good eating behavior (waiting before gobbling meals, gently taking treats, etc.)
7. Alerting to strangers is OK but must settle down in reasonable time.

## **Don’t let your personal dogs get lost in the shuffle!!**

This is confusing for your personal dogs, too, and you need to protect their status in the household.

You are setting up for a rumble if you give all the attention to the new foster dog.

Make sure you feed, let out, and pay attention to your resident dog FIRST. Put his leash on FIRST. Give her treats FIRST and try to spend some quality one-on-one time with him/her without the foster.

**LAST BUT NOT LEAST:**

Send an email to Katie at [kladams4545@gmail.com](mailto:kladams4545@gmail.com) with the subject line: Fostering 101.

Copy and paste the below statement into the body of the email:

I have read the Fostering 101 document. I understand its contents and will adhere to the Policies and Procedures set forth by Heading Home K9 Rescue.

-type your name-

AND AGAIN THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!