

New Foster Orientation

Welcome to the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria!

Thank you for your interest in fostering with us!



Created in 2009... Our Mission is to:

- Inspire compassion for all living things, to provide shelter to animals in need, and to promote adoptions, animal welfare, and responsible pet ownership in our community.

Foster Caregiver Requirements

- You must be age 18 years or older
- Successfully complete a foster caregiver application (at the end of this presentation)
- Complete the questions at the end of this orientation
- Complete specific training classes as required or related (i.e. dog or cat behavior, medical training, neonate training, etc.)

Welcome!

- The goal of the Foster Care Program is to give special needs animals a temporary home and the extra care that they need to thrive.
 - Raise the standard of health of ill and injured animals
 - Ensure that all underage and underdeveloped animals can reach maturity
 - Increase the adoptability of animals in need of socialization or training
 - Increase the capacity of our shelter to care for animals in need throughout the community

Types of Foster Placement



- Medical (minor and severe)
- Behavioral (minor and severe)
- Weaned underage/underweight kittens and puppies
- Neonatal Care
- Fospice
- Time/space
- Sleepovers





Socialization – Margot
the shy hound



Underage animals-
Tygra the kitten



Medical – Nelly
recovering from
“cherry eye”
surgery

Time and Commitment for Fostering

Care can be between 24 hours (sleepovers) or up to 6 months (extended medical care). Most fosters placements last between 1 and 4 weeks (puppies and kittens).



What do you do as a foster?

Provide love, food and water, shelter, safety, enrichment, and exercise.

*You may be asked to administer medication.

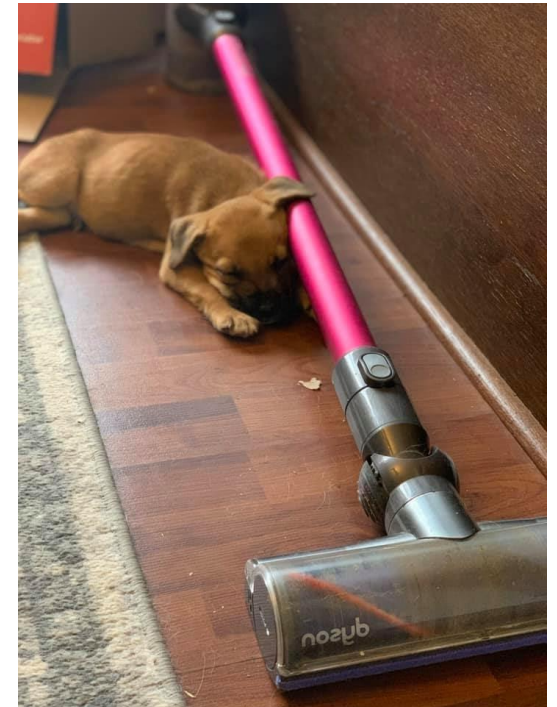


Time and Commitment for Fostering

- **Why are foster homes important?**
 - Fosters play a crucial role in rehabilitating rescue animals. You are in a unique position to help abused or neglected animals learn how to love and trust again.
 - Foster homes can help these animals become more adoptable by providing socialization and basic training.

Keeping your home sanitary between foster animals

- In order to prevent disease and parasite transmission, please thoroughly clean animal areas and supplies between foster animals
- Areas and supplies must be cleaned prior to a new foster animal's arrival
- We will provide you with sanitized supplies for your animal
- See Orientation Packet for specifics



Foster Program Contact Information



Email *Email is the best way to communicate non-urgent information.

Foster Program foster@alexandriaanimals.org

Phone

Foster Program

703-746-5580 (office)

Foster Hotline

571-620-2851 (mobile and after hours, call or text)

Animal Welfare League

703-746-4774 (shelter)

*Please email us with routine questions, concerns, requests for supplies, and to schedule appointments, pick-ups, and drop-offs.



What to do in the event of an emergency:

- During AWLA business hours, you may call the AWLA Front Desk in the event of an emergency.
- Outside of business hours, you may call or text the **Foster Hotline** in the event of an emergency. Please state:
 - Your name
 - The name of your foster animal
 - A phone number where we can reach you
 - A description of the urgent situation

A staff member will get back to you as soon as possible.

Please leave the Foster Hotline clear for EMERGENCIES ONLY.



Emergency Concerns

If your foster animal is in need of emergency medical care outside of shelter business hours **and you are unable to reach AWLA Staff**, please bring your foster animal to an approved AWLA veterinarian immediately.

We will provide you with a recommended veterinary care facility and a medical release form when you pick up your foster animal. You will not be responsible for making any medical decisions for your animal.

What Constitutes an emergency?

An emergency is any situation in which a foster animal's life is in danger.

Illness or trauma

- indications of severe illness include difficulty breathing, lethargy, severe vomiting and/or diarrhea, or signs of pain

Lost Foster Animal

- If your foster animal escapes or is lost please contact the Foster Program or front desk immediately. We will connect you with animal services to work with you to find them.

Deceased Animal

- In the rare event that an animal passes away in your care, please contact the Foster Program immediately.

Emergencies continued...

Bite Incident

- We must take animal bites and/or deep scratches VERY seriously. If anyone in your household, including your own pets, have been bitten by your foster animal, or if your foster animal has been bitten by another pet or wildlife, please contact us immediately.

* If your foster exhibits any behavior that you are uncomfortable with please contact the Foster Staff immediately so that we may assess the behavior. **We will never place a foster animal with you unless you are comfortable with that animal.**

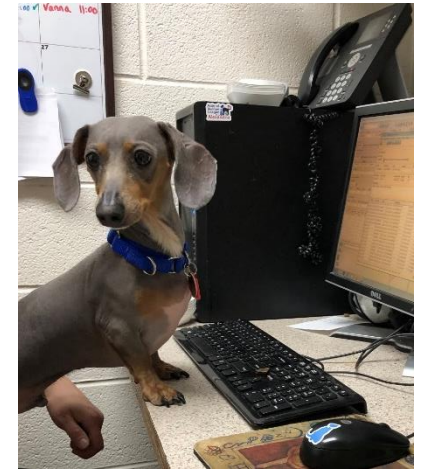
Foster Appointments

Picking up, returning, and medical appointments

We strive to schedule appointments as far in advance as possible, so we may accommodate all foster families' schedules.

Picking up- Primarily scheduled by e-mail. We will describe an animal seeking foster placement, and if you agree, we will then schedule a pickup time. Pickup may be required the same day, or may be scheduled for a later date.

Dropping off- Also scheduled via e-mail. Please return all shelter supplies when returning your foster, so that we may reuse them for other fosters.



Foster Appointments

Picking up, returning, and medical appointments



Medical appointments- Non-emergency medical appointments, such as vaccine appointments, or other routine checkups, are scheduled a week in advance via email.

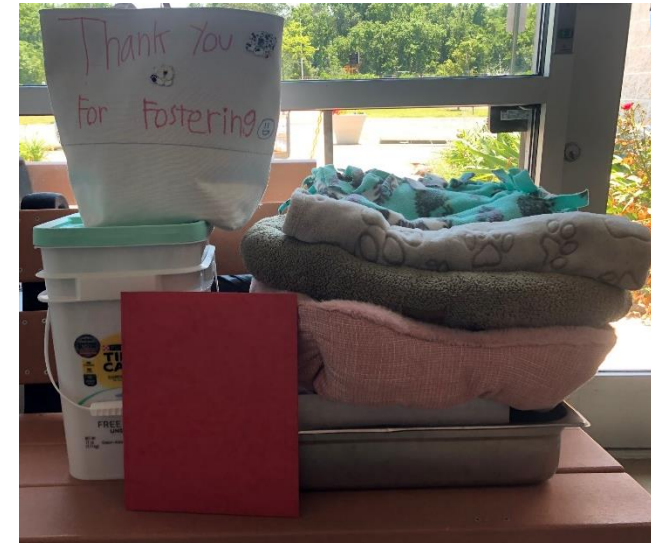
Short notice or emergency appointments will be scheduled as needed. We will do our best to accommodate all schedules.



Picking up and Returning Fosters

Pick up

- We can loan you basic supplies for your foster animal.
 - Bowls, food, bedding, crates, medications, toys and treats (as available), etc.
 - When you return your foster animal, please return any non-consumable supplies so we may sanitize and reuse them for other foster animals.
- You will be given a folder of documents.
 - This folder contains the animal's medical record, an emergency authorization form, and emergency contact information. We also describe the animal's diet.
 - Please bring this folder with you in the event of an emergency.



Getting Your Foster Adopted!

While in foster care we ask that you share pictures or videos of your fosters with us! Images are one of the best ways to get a foster adopted!

We may also send you a Foster Report card to fill out. This questionnaire allows you to share your experience with your foster animal!

Dogs- while out with your foster we can provide you with an “ADOPT ME” vest to encourage individuals to walk up and say hi!



What happens when someone wants to adopt a foster?

If your foster animal is available for adoption while still in your care, people may contact our AWLA Adoptions staff about meeting the animal. Adoptions staff will then contact you to explain how to coordinate a meeting. This meeting will take place at your convenience, and where you are most comfortable (ie. at your own home vs at the shelter)

AWLA's adoption policy is generally: first come first served, and the interested individual must meet the animal prior to finalizing adoption. There are some exceptions to these rules.

What if I Want to Adopt My Foster?



Gouda

If you fall in love with your foster and have made the decision that you want to adopt them, we support you! All you have to do is let the Foster Staff know!

We ask that you take this decision seriously. We know that it is an emotional challenge to care for an animal and then let them go for adoption, but we ask that you think carefully about what is in the animal's best interests.

Our program depends on fosters who gain experience by repeatedly fostering. Please do not intentionally join our program just for a specific individual you want to adopt!



Chacha



Jojo

Other Policies



- We will only send animals to foster who are up to date with age-appropriate vaccines and preventatives.
- Dogs and puppies will be provided a collar with the AWLA logo on it. They must be kept leashed when outdoors or in a vehicle.
- No public or private dog parks, or interaction with other dogs while out on a walk.

Other policies



- Cats and kittens must be kept indoors at all times and placed in a secured carrier when traveling or being transported in a vehicle.
- Kittens and Puppies must be kept separate from other animals until they have been appropriately vaccinated. We will let you know what interaction is appropriate with the animals in your home.

AWLA's Euthanasia Policy

In some cases, it is more humane to provide an animal with a peaceful death than to attempt to prolong a life full of pain, fear, or aggression.

There are generally two reasons that humane euthanasia is considered:

- **Quality of Life:** Those with medical issues that have a poor quality of life and are suffering are no longer considered adoption candidates
- **Behavior:** Animals that are considered an issue for public safety

AWLA will exhaust all potential alternative options (such as behavioral medications, hospice, rescues, etc) before resorting to euthanasia.

Euthanasia at the shelter is a peaceful and painless procedure performed with the utmost dignity and respect.



Thank you for your attention during this orientation! We look forward to meeting you!

Is it naptime?

