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## **FOSTER CARE GUIDELINES AND AGREEMENT**

The Gulf Coast Humane Society Inc. recognizes the value of animals and the people who want to care for them. In doing so, we offer a foster care program to benefit both. We want to provide caregivers and pet-adopters a quality relationship with GCHS, while promoting good relationships between people and animals. In view of this, please keep the items below in mind:

- 1) As a foster caregiver, you are required to comply with all laws governing pet ownership and foster care in your county. That means your pets must have up-to-date rabies vaccinations and county licenses. Also, some counties have limits on the number of animals which can be fostered, so you will need to keep the number of your fosters within such limits.
- 2) The GCHS shelter manager is the coordinator for the foster care program outlined here. Your foster animal comes from the GCHS. That means that you will need to communicate with the shelter manager with regard to the temperaments and medical conditions of the animal on a regular basis.
- 3) Should you wish to adopt your fostered animal, you will need to do the following:
  - a. Fill out an Adoption Application.
  - b. Read and sign the Adoption Contract.
  - c. Pay the Adoption Fee.

**To avoid confusion and for administrative purposes, please do not change the name of your foster animal until you have legally adopted her/him.**

- 4) Should you have found and adopter for the animal in your care, these are the guidelines to be followed:
  - a. Fill out an Adoption Application.
  - b. Inform the GCHS so we can
    - i. Do a home check.
    - ii. Get a veterinary reference.
  - c. Read and sign the Adoption Contract.
  - d. Pay the Adoption Fee.
- 5) Veterinary care can only be provided by veterinarians at the GCHS. However, if the animals require emergency care, you must take them to the nearest emergency clinic or animal hospital that can provide care. Unless otherwise agreed upon, the foster caregiver must pay for such care. If you have any concerns about the animals' health, in a non-emergency situation, you should contact a member of the GCHS.
- 6) Sometimes, despite the best screening, an animal may have a medical or behavioral condition that doesn't show itself until after it has entered the foster home. In rare cases, the condition(s) may require that the foster animal be removed from the foster care program entirely. If such a situation arises, you will be required to return the animal to the GCHS and foster another animal instead. If a fostered animal should ever die while under your care, particularly those who need

rehabilitation of some type, you must return the animal to the GCHS so that post-mortem tests can be conducted, if needed.

- 7) Cats cannot roam outdoors. They may, however, be allowed access to screened porches or screened structures, provided that such enclosures do not allow them to roam freely or escape. Often, cats will need a quiet space of their own for a period of time. Cats must also be transported, regardless of destination, in secured carriers.
- 8) Dogs cannot roam free outdoors. They may, however, have access to backyards providing the yards have secure fencing that the dogs cannot climb over or crawl under. When outside the home or a fenced yard, all foster dogs must be on leashes. Voice command is not sufficient. When you will be away from the animal for more than a few moments, a crate may be used. If your foster dog is not crate-trained, a GCHS member can provide guidance on how to accomplish this. Please do not tether your foster animal(s) without your direct supervision. Some animals do not do well on tethers when left alone.
- 9) Animals should receive the same diet, as often as possible, so as to avoid gastric or intestinal upsets which could be mistaken for deadly viruses or infections. Please use a quality commercial food specific to the type of animals under your care and avoid “people” food and table scraps. If an animal needs a special diet, foster caregivers must provide that diet, as directed. Fresh water must always be available.
- 10) If you are willing to provide care for “special needs” animals, you will receive coaching on how to provide the care. Often, younger animals need a bit of extra help with physical conditions or feedings. Elderly animals may need medications. These types of needs will be discussed with you before the animals are released to your care. Under no circumstances should you provide medications to animals without the approval of the GCHS.
- 11) You may be required to quarantine your charge in an area, separate from your existing pets and/or family members for up to 14 days, depending on the instructions of the GCHS. If you have animals of your own, take the introductions slowly. Ideally, the new animal should have a place of its own for a period of time.
- 12) Try to have toys appropriate to the animals and their ages. Avoid toys that might be eaten and cause choking or gastro/intestinal problems. Catnip toys are often good choices for cats and a tennis ball, in a sock, works well for dogs of any ages. Do not let dogs chew rawhides, hooves, pigs’ ears, Greenies, etc. while unattended.
- 13) ALWAYS keep kitchen and garage products out of reach of animals (and children for that matter). Just a lick of anti-freeze can kill an animal.
- 14) Fostered animals should not spend large blocks of times in cages/crates. If you work, arrange for someone to visit the animals during the times you are away. If you go on vacation, the foster animal will need to be returned to the GCHS.
- 15) Take your time with the animal and do not let shyness put you off or cause you to hurry him/her. Sometimes, the animal feels confused and unsure. Soft words and gentle interactions often work best. Letting the animal come to you, rather than forcing him/her into something he/she is not ready for, works best. Be patient.
- 16) **Make sure children and animals are always supervised when together.**

17) Please keep in mind that you are required to give the animals under your care fresh food and water on a regular basis, adequate shelter, and gentle, supervised interaction. A GCHS representative may visit your home, prior to placing a foster care charge with you and periodically throughout the foster care period, to discuss any concerns that you may have and to help assess the animals' progress.

18) Injuries and/or bites may happen, however diligent a caregiver may be. Any injuries/bites must be immediately reported to the GCHS so further assessments can be completed.

Foster care is a vital and dynamic experience and often saves the lives of many animals who would otherwise not find homes. But it is important to recognize when you need a break from the job. The GCHS will have other projects that you can help with, should you need a bit of "down" time. Don't hesitate to ask for some time off or another project.

The profile that follows will provide us with a bit of your background so that we can place animals in situations that work the best for our foster caregivers and the animals that they help. Please take the time to complete it accurately. There are no "right" or "wrong" answers – just answers that give both parties good information to work from.

Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts for your willingness to help. Only when we all work together for the benefit of our animals can we truly come to a point where every animal can have a home.

#### **FOSTER CARE AGREEMENT**

I have read the guidelines and hereby agree to comply with them, both in letter and spirit. Further, I understand that I am assuming the liability for the care of the animal placed with me and will not hold The Gulf Coast Humane Society liable for any injuries/incidents that may occur while the animal is under my care. I understand that the foster care guidelines/agreement does not transfer ownership of the animal to me and that the ownership of the animal under my care remains with the GCHS. I also understand that this is a voluntary relationship and that either party may choose to end the foster care relationship. However, under no circumstances, will I abandon or neglect the animal under my care. I will immediately return them to the GCHS prior to ending this relationship.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact phone number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**FOSTER CARE PROFILE AND APPLICATION**

PLEASE PRINT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home): \_\_\_\_\_ Work/Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Veterinarian's Name, Address, and Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have pets? If so, what type and how many? \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Name</u>	<u>Species</u>	<u>M/F</u>	<u>Spayed?</u>	<u>Date of last Rabies Vaccine</u>
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Where are they kept? Indoors \_\_\_\_\_ Outdoors \_\_\_\_\_

Do you rent? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, name, address, and telephone of landlord: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How many adults live in your home? \_\_\_\_\_

How many children live in your home?

\_\_\_\_\_ Under 6 years old \_\_\_\_\_ 6-12 years old \_\_\_\_\_ 12 years and older

Do you have a fenced yard? \_\_\_\_\_ If so, what type and how high? \_\_\_\_\_

How many hours a day do your pets spend alone? \_\_\_\_\_

Where/how are they kept when you are not at home? \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the types of animals that you can foster:

\_\_\_\_ adult dogs      \_\_\_\_ puppies      \_\_\_\_ mother dog/litter

\_\_\_\_ adult cats      \_\_\_\_ kittens      \_\_\_\_ mother cat/litter

\_\_\_\_ neonatal puppies'      \_\_\_\_ neonatal kittens

\_\_\_\_ others animals (list): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ special needs animals, including those recovering from illness/injuries

Do you have any experience medicating animals? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want to learn how to give medicines? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have any experience with animals with behavioral or training issues? \_\_\_\_\_

Would you be interested in fostering and working with animals with behavioral or training issues?

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have an area of your home where you can quarantine/isolate new fosters? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, where? \_\_\_\_\_

How long can you commit to fostering an animal? (Please circle response)

1-2 weeks      2-4 weeks      4-8 weeks      8-12 weeks      12 weeks +

Would you be willing to provide a foster pet with indoor shelter, adequate food, water, attention and make a commitment to care for an animal until a forever home is found? YES/NO

Where will you keep your foster animal(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you have adequate shelter for your foster animal(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

If so, what type? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any additional information, training, and/or programs that we can provide you with:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thanks so much for helping the animals and The Gulf Coast Humane Society. We couldn't save as many animals as we do without you!!!

Please send completed applications to  
Fax: 239-332-8676  
Email: [Foster@gulfcoasthumanesociety.org](mailto:Foster@gulfcoasthumanesociety.org)