Golden Retriever Emergency Assistance Team
G.R.E.A.T

Foster Care Manual

Thanks for your help!

Every year thousands of dogs like these two are given up by their families. The reasons given are many from failing health of the owner, non-compatibility, and just not enough time. Often, they are just abandoned and eventually end up in Animal Control or the Humane Society. The lucky ones make it to us at GREAT (Golden Retriever Emergency Assistance Team) Rescue of NE Florida.

http://www.greatrescue.org. Telephone 904-501-6899.

Forward

Be a G.R.E.A.T. Foster Parent…

At G.R.E.A.T. Rescue, our goal is to keep all rescued Goldens in a secure home environment rather than a boarding facility. Because many of the dogs we rescue have been abused, abandoned, or neglected, the love a foster home provides is an important form of therapy the dog needs in order to adapt successfully to its new forever home. Foster families provide daily socialization (with humans and other pets), as well as mental and physical stimulation for the dogs. Interaction in a foster home allows G.R.E.A.T. to better understand the dog's personality during the evaluation period, and foster parent feedback is invaluable when placing the rescued Golden in the best possible “forever home”. After all, who better knows the dog than you!

10 Great Reasons to Foster

1. Nothing is more satisfying than to make a sad dog happy again.
2. You're saving a life!
3. Your dog gets a playmate.
4. It feels so good to change a dog's bleak outlook to one of sheer happiness.
5. You become a lifetime member of the "Make a Difference Club"
6. You can't find a stronger support system.
7. It's a great reason to get out for a walk in the park.
8. You get the inside scoop on all the great tips for obedience and behavior problems.
9. Every time you pet a dog your blood pressures goes down.
10. Every time a dog gets petted his confidence goes up.
11. Nothing compares to the transformation of a frightened rescue to a trusting companion.
12. They're like grandchildren, glad to see them come, glad to see them go (to a good home of course!)
13. Golden hair makes super knitting projects for the kids
14. Nobody is happier to see you come home
15. Did we say 10 reasons?

Foster Care

Foster families provide temporary care for rescued Goldens that we have accepted for placement in a permanent home. Feedback from the foster helps us determine what type of home your foster Golden needs. Your responsibilities would normally include providing a loving environment for your foster Golden, obtaining any necessary veterinary care from our approved veterinarians (all veterinary costs are covered by G.R.E.A.T.), and providing basic obedience training.

People decide to foster for a variety of reasons. Some foster just to foster and rescue dogs, some foster because in the back of their mind they are looking for another dog, and some foster searching for the perfect match. Some foster homes have a dog, a cat, or children, while others are on their own. We accept all different types of foster homes and welcome the opportunity to help you learn more. It is preferred that all of our foster homes have a fenced yard, but it is not required. As a foster home, you can decide how often you want to foster and which dogs you are willing to foster (age, gender, etc.).

We also have a program that we call Foster-To-Adopt. This program is designed for an applicant that is actively looking to adopt one of our Goldens. We would ask that you first fill out an online application and please mark that you would like to foster-to-adopt a particular dog and that you understand that you have the first right of refusal to adopt. It's a good way to test drive your dog and see if they are a perfect match or not. Our preference is always to move the foster dogs as little as possible. If there's a chance that we could place the Golden directly into their permanent home, we'll always try that first. We're very flexible with the program and I think that's why some of our applicants try it.

Lastly, we have a Hospice Foster program, caring for elderly or terminally ill Golden Retrievers who have no hope for adoption, but deserve to have quality end-of-life care. Nothing could require more patience and love, and reap more reward, than providing Hospice care for a Golden in need. GREAT Rescue will continue to fund the medical needs of these dogs for the duration of their care (as needed).

As you can imagine, not every dog is perfect when they come to our rescue. We Vet them, have them spayed or neutered, and give them guidance where they have lacked in the past. The biggest issue our dogs typically have is the need for human contact. Most get along with kids, cats, and other dogs. Most are housetrained or catch on quickly. Many are obedience and crate-trained. The nice part about fostering Goldens is the fact that they learn so quickly and are so eager to please. A little guidance, a lot of love, and a warm home are typically all they needed to be good dogs.

We are a 100% volunteer organization and we have a great foster community. Other foster homes are always willing to offer advice when someone has a question. A lot of our volunteers have been doing this for years and there is always someone to help.

Some dogs are given descriptions such as undisciplined, chews everything I own, barks all the time, etc. and with some love and attention, they become the most well-behaved and loyal dogs.

Foster Guidelines

To make your fostering experience as positive as possible for you, your family, and your furry friend, please keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. Arrange to introduce the new animal to your own pet(s), if you have them, outside on neutral territory. Once inside, introduce him/her gradually to other household members. Let him/her settle into the new place, and help him/her learn the rules of the house as soon as possible. Never let the foster take over and place your own animals at risk or under stress.

2. Always use a collar to walk a foster and have it securely fastened so he/she cannot slip out of the collar and run off. The collar must have GREAT Rescue's ID tag on it.

3. If you find prospective applicants for your foster on your own, please make them aware of the application process found on our web site, www.GREATRescue.org under Adopt, as well as G.R.E.A.T. requirements and placement donation. G.R.E.A.T. screens applicants very carefully. First, the written application is evaluated. Next, a volunteer will call and conduct a phone interview with the applicant and the applicant's Veterinarian if possible. If the placement is then approved, the Golden is introduced to all family members. A contract is signed, and a placement donation is provided by the applicants. The donation amount never exceeds $400 for our Goldens.

4. The Golden is the property of G.R.E.A.T. Rescue. Never turn over a foster to someone who claims it is his/her lost pet! This person could be mistaken, or he/she could be deliberately trying to mislead you. The animal could have been removed from his/her former home for all kinds of reasons. The claimant could have mistreated the animal. Instead, get that person's name and number and report the claim to your contact at G.R.E.A.T. immediately, and we will investigate.
5. If necessary, G.R.E.A.T. can lend you a crate, a collar and/or leash. Whenever you transport any animal, make certain you have him/her on a leash. No prong collars, please! If you plan to foster on a regular basis, it would be an enormous help to G.R.E.A.T. if you could get a crate of your own. Make sure the animal has ample room to move around when choosing the proper size.

6. Foster families typically provide food, treats, and chew toys for their foster animals, with no reimbursement from G.R.E.A.T. Most of the time, G.R.E.A.T. can provide

starter food for foster dogs. Fosters may also be asked to participate in transporting animals or assisting in house checks. (We do have donated food available from time to time should you chose to use it).

7. If your foster animal becomes ill or gets hurt, call your G.R.E.A.T. contact immediately. G.R.E.A.T. covers medical expenses, but G.R.E.A.T. must authorize treatments and medications before they are administered by our approved veterinarian who will be doing the work.

8. Be careful about what you tell potential applicants. Avoid giving advice and criticism. Also avoid answering any questions with absolutes, and never answer any question you are not sure about. Do not mislead inquirers. Ask for assistance when you don't know something. Tell inquirers you will get back to them as soon as possible. Always recommend that potential applicants do as much reading about the animal as possible, and if applicable, urge them to sign up for obedience training with a reputable trainer.

9. If you have any hesitations or peculiar feelings or bad vibes about the placement or any of the people involved in the placement of your foster dog(s)-- like the family seems great, all except for the angry look on one of the family member's face -- DO NOT ALLOW THE PLACEMENT TO GO FORWARD! Say the final decision is not yours to make, and we will get back to them as soon as possible. Try to determine why you are undecided or what is making you wary, and take note of it.

10. Be very familiar with the regulations and policies of G.R.E.A.T.. Most of all, remember that no one can be approved until their application is deemed acceptable and the phone interview is satisfactory. If the applicants are approved, the placement contract must be signed -- by the applicant(s) and by a G.R.E.A.T. representative -- with all information carefully filled out and checked by you. Applicants must provide the nonrefundable donation to G.R.E.A.T. either before taking possession of the dog or upon taking possession of the dog as a Foster/Foster to Adopt.

Frequently Asked Questions about Fostering a Golden

G.R.E.A.T. needs caring, patient and responsible Golden lovers to join our foster home team by opening their homes and their hearts to our rescue Goldens. A key component to our Rescue program is the foster home. The principle behind fostering is to provide the dogs entrusted to our care with a home environment to expedite their mental and/or physical rehabilitation and to evaluate their habits and behavior. This allows G.R.E.A.T. to place the dog with the new family and improve the chances of lifelong enjoyment of the dog and the new family. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions about being a Foster Parent:

How much time does it take?
From an hour a day to however much time you care to spend with the dog. Most are genuinely grateful with whatever time you have to give them. Some dogs may need to go to a vet appointment for spay or neuter, shots, follow-up exam, etc. We do have transport volunteers available if you are unable to get the dog to any necessary appointments.

What will I need to do as a foster parent?
You are responsible for the daily care of your foster dog including feeding, exercising, socializing, grooming, reinforcing basic obedience commands, observing and evaluating general behavior and temperament. And most of all, you must give lots of love and attention to a special Golden at an often difficult time in his or her life.

Many dogs need to lose or gain weight. Some will need help with housebreaking and crate training. If you want to start basic obedience training the dog, that would be great, but it's certainly not required.

You will need to report any veterinary visits or other medical care and results of such visits or care to our foster coordinator in order to keep your foster dog's medical records current and up to date.

As the Foster Parent, you will play a significant role in facilitating the dog's adoption to a new home. You will make recommendations to help select the best adoptive family for your foster Golden (you will know him/her best). The Foster Parent generally gets the adoption contract signed and collects the adoption fee and fills out the Foster Dog Information Sheet. Once the dog is placed, you may be asked to do a follow-up telephone call on the dog's initial adjustment to his/her new home and family.

How long does a dog stay in foster care?
Foster dogs are typically in our program from 2 weeks to 2 months. Healthy dogs usually stay 2-4 weeks, special needs dogs or seniors may need months.

May I adopt my foster dog?
G.R.E.A.T. does not encourage or expect you to adopt your foster dog. We also recognize the realities of fostering, including the fact that foster families can fall in love with their foster dogs. Therefore, foster homes always have first right of adoption if they do fall in love and can't let their dog go.

Do I have to be home with the dog all day?
No, many of our foster families are employed outside the home and still provide a quality environment for the dog. We do require that any time you are unable to directly supervise the foster dog, he/she is confined to a small, secure area, preferably a training crate. This results in a safe secure place for the dog and keeps concern for the foster family's safety and home in the forefront.

Do I need a fenced yard?
A fenced yard is preferred. Foster dogs must NEVER be allowed to run free. If a secure fence surrounds your yard, the Golden may be exercised there off leash. Outside the yard, the dog must be on least at ALL times.

Will I become attached to the dog?
Undoubtedly you will, they bond quickly and give so much back in return for your care and attention. However, when you meet the people who will provide a permanent loving home for the dog you've helped rescue, you will feel immense satisfaction to see them move on to their new and better life. This also enables you to open up your home and heart to another Golden in need. Many foster homes stay in contact with the adopting family and dog after placement.

May I choose which dogs I foster?
We will call you and discuss at length any potential dog we're thinking of for you. You may certainly set limits on the kinds of dogs you foster. If you are asked to foster a dog that doesn't seem right for you, you can decline. If any foster dog you've accepted proves too difficult to handle, we can give you advice and help, or he/she can be placed elsewhere.

What if I can't keep him any longer?
While it is best for the dog to stay in one home, we realize plans sometimes change unexpectedly. When a move is necessary, our Foster Coordinator will know what foster homes are available and which ones might be suitable. If a dog just isn't working out, just tell us and we can arrange to move the dog.

How much does it cost to foster a dog?
Lack of funds should not prevent you from fostering, we only ask you to provide good quality food and lots of love. You may have additional expenses for any toys you choose to provide and any damages the foster dog may cause. G.R.E.A.T. provides the crate and handles all the foster dog's veterinary expenses and medications, including heartworm and flea preventive, unless you want to donate these expenses to G.R.E.A.T. (they are tax deductible). We'll send along any medications we already know the dog needs, and simply ask that you call and let us know if there's a medical issue that needs to be checked.

What happens if I have questions or problems with a foster dog?
All foster homes receive a Foster Home Manual, which provides guidance on handling all aspects of fostering. In addition, you will get training and education during the foster approval process and there are always plenty of G.R.E.A.T. volunteers just a phone call away to answer your questions and provide support. There is also a GREAT phone line that is constantly monitored by one of the board members.

We always have a need for foster homes for senior Goldens. Many of these displaced Golden-agers have been loving family dogs for years and have been lost or abandoned through no fault of their own. G.R.E.A.T. does not feel that any senior Golden should ever be euthanized at a

shelter simply because they are old and no longer wanted. Most of these senior Goldens are low maintenance, well-trained dogs. They fit easily into any family situation and usually require less exercise. Senior Goldens can be long-term fosters as they usually take longer to adopt. Fostering one of these Golden oldies can be an immensely rewarding experience.

What Does Fostering Require?
Our foster home applicants are contacted by the Foster Home Coordinator and a time set up to come to the applicants home and do an evaluation as to what the home is like, and to answer any questions the applicant may have. This also helps to establish a relationship between the coordinator and the foster home. This relationship is key to the open lines of communication needed during the fostering process.

Some knowledge of basic obedience training is desired, but not required. Some of our dogs just need a warm bed and lots of hugs until they meet the "perfect family." The most important element is patience. Some Goldens come from loving homes where due to circumstances, they can't be kept any longer. Other Goldens come from homes where they were neglected, abused, or just weren't treated as a real part of the family. Patience and understanding is key to helping a Golden become comfortable in its new surroundings.

You may decide how often you want to foster. Many times our foster homes "need a break," or only want to foster once or twice a year. That is why it is important to have enough foster homes so that the rescue program doesn't have to turn down a surrender situation "because there is no room."

Saying Goodbye
We are continually asked, "How do you say goodbye to a dog that's been a part of your family?" The answer is, you sometimes cry, it's not always easy - but, you knew in the beginning that this day would come. The up side is:

- You know that the Golden is going to a home that really wants him/her and is suited for his/her personality.
- You have that sense of accomplishment in seeing your foster dog have a real second chance at a wonderful life.
- After the initial parting, you find you "look forward" to the challenge of helping another foster Golden find its "forever" home. Sometimes you get to see your former foster dog during events such as "Goldenfest" or at a G.R.E.A.T. function, and you feel very rewarded in the fact that you helped in providing that Golden with a loving home.

Who pays for medical care if my foster dog needs to go to the vet?
G.R.E.A.T. will pay for the dog's medical care. We ask that you take the dog to one of our designated vets, and that you obtain prior approval from G.R.E.A.T. In an emergency, take the dog to the approved vet and G.R.E.A.T. will take care of the expense.

Our thanks to the following organizations for their assistance in creating this manual.

Golden Retriever Freedom Rescue, Inc.

Golden Beginnings Golden Retriever Rescue, Inc.

Golden Bond Rescue of Oregon, Inc.

Golden Retriever Rescue of Mid-Florida, Inc.

Delaware Valley Golden Retriever Rescue

(Golden Retriever Emergency Assistance Team)
G.R.E.A.T. RESCUE
of NE Florida, Inc.

Terms of Adoption

1. The Adoption fee for _____ is $_____and is payable upon receipt of this Golden. Funds raised through adoptions will be used to help defray the medical costs of this Golden Retriever and/or future rescued Golden Retrievers.

2. If for any reason, the adoption is not found to be satisfactory for the Rescued Golden or family, the Golden **MUST** be returned to G.R.E.A.T. Rescue. It may **NOT** be sold, transferred or given away. The RESCUE reserves the right to take possession of any Rescued Golden that is being neglected, not properly cared for or is being allowed to roam unsupervised. These determinations will be made by GREAT in its sole discretion. The refund policy is as follows: **Full refund if the dog is returned within 72 hours, 50% refund if returned within 14 days and no refund after the 14th day following adoption.** The dog must be **returned** to GREAT in the same condition in which it was adopted or the refund will be reduced to cover costs to restore the Golden to pre-adoption condition.

3. All adopted dogs will be heart worm negative, spayed/neutered, wormed and vaccinated prior to finalization of adoption and must be kept in good health, have annual vaccinations including rabies and **must** receive monthly heartworm prevention medication by the adopting family. The Golden must also wear a collar at all times that displays the owner's name, address and phone numbers. It is very common for rescued Goldens to be fearful of thunder, be food possessive, crave attention, etc, therefore, necessary precautions and care must be taken to ensure that this Golden will not bite or harm anyone or any other animal. **It is advisable to NEVER leave children alone with a dog. All rescued Goldens must be inside dogs and under no circumstances may they be left outside when the owner is not home, at night or during the heat of the summer or cold of the winter.**

4. In addition, the adopting family further agrees to provide proper shelter, food, attention, love training and companionship to this dog. They further agree that the dog will not at any time be transported in the back of an open vehicle and will ride in the back seat, be crated or otherwise restrained while riding in any vehicle.

5. The adopting family agrees by their signature (s) below that this "Terms of Adoption" agreement will constitute proof of their obligation and intention to co-operate with the Terms of Adoption, and as such may be used by G.R.E.A.T. RESCUE to obtain repossession of the Rescued Golden Retriever.

I/We agree with the Terms of Adoption and fully understand the terms and conditions for adoption of a Rescued Golden Retriever from G.R.E.A.T. Rescue of Northeast Florida, Inc. I/we further agree that G.R.E.A.T. Rescue of Northeast Florida, Inc., its associates and those who work on its behalf have acted in good faith and they assume no responsibility, liability or costs for this Golden Retriever once it has been adopted. I/We acknowledge and agree to release and hold harmless GREAT for any and all claims, liabilities, damages, fees and costs for bodily harm, personal injury, and/or property damage with respect to ownership of the Golden Retriever once it has been adopted.

SERVICES/TREATMENT(S) TO BE FUNDED BY G.R.E.A.T. Rescue if provided at Rescue Approved Veterinary Hospital:_____.

Owner Signature :_____ _____/_____
G.R.E.A.T. Representative Date

Co-Owner Signature:_____

Please make checks payable to:
G.R.E.A.T. Rescue of NE Florida, Inc.
Mail to: P.O. Box 600878, Jacksonville, Fl. 32260-0878

ALL FEES ARE PAYABLE UPON RECEIPT OF THE RESCUED GOLDEN RETRIEVER. *(01/12)*