

The
Haven Humane Society
Foster Care Program



**Policies
and
Procedures
Manual**

Providing a Quality Second Chance

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Haven Humane Society's Foster Care Program. Your willingness to consider, and possibly commit to becoming a foster parent is valuable and sincerely appreciated. It is concerned people such as you that make this program possible.

The Foster Care Program is intended to operate as a team effort. This manual has been provided as a resource for making an educated decision on whether or not you should consider becoming a foster care provider for Haven Humane Society. It is critical for a foster program to have articulated standards, guidelines, and goals. In order for the program to operate successfully, each foster care provider must understand and agree to abide by the policies and procedures outlined in this manual. Please read through this manual thoroughly before making any decisions. We take extra measures to ensure that our animals will be properly cared for. Do not hesitate to contact the Foster Care Director with any questions that may arise after reviewing this manual.

What is the Foster Care Program?

The Foster Care Program is the temporary placement of special-case animals into qualified volunteer homes until conditions allow for a permanent adoption. This program is composed of a group of foster volunteers committed to offering animals a second chance at life by providing a temporary home, food, and TLC. It takes a very special person to become a Foster Parent. Whether a frail elderly cat, or an abused Labrador who has become terrified of people, many animals arrive at the Society Animal Welfare Center with potential, but who may not be ready for adoption. These animals need the time, TLC and learning environment that only a Foster Parent can provide.

The Goal of the Program

The goal of the Haven Humane Society's Foster Care Program is to provide adoptable animals in need with a quality second chance at life. Animals who come into our care that are too young to be adopted, are underweight or sick, or those in need of socialization and training are all candidates for the Foster Care Program.

Becoming a Foster Parent

If after reviewing this manual you decide to open your home and your heart to the care of animals in need, you may expect a personally rewarding experience beyond compare. Fill out a foster application and return it to the Director of Community Affairs. Your application will be reviewed and a home visit scheduled.

Upon approval, all Foster Parents must attend an orientation meeting and any training sessions as may be required before taking an animal home. General “for the good of the cause” meetings are held periodically and Foster parents are expected to attend.

Fostering can be an emotional experience. By taking these animals into your home, you are providing a second chance to find a loving permanent home. Many people ask how we can take animals into our homes, care for them, and then give them up? The answer is simple... they need our help! Yes, it is normal to become emotionally attached... but we know that we are simply there to help. And there is nothing more rewarding than placing a beloved foster pet into a permanent and loving home. We do not seek special recognition for what we do, but rather we wish to contribute toward preserving the life of another innocent animal.

The Selection Process

Animals are selected into this program based on several variables. Each week staff must select the dogs, cats, and occasionally other small animals, such as rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, and even birds to take to our adoption sites. We concentrate on the ones available for adoption, who have temperaments and personalities suitable for adoption, who are in good health, and who will make good companion animals. This is a difficult choice because there are so many who meet these qualifications. The goal becomes to find the right family for each animal. With your support, we are able to offer many of these animals “a quality second chance.”

It is paramount to use realistic criteria when selecting animals to participate in the Foster Program. We cannot possibly rehabilitate every animal! Selecting animals to be fostered requires careful consideration of the best prospects along with projected veterinary care needs and a suitable foster home environment. The Kennel Master is the only person at Haven Humane Society who can authorize an animal to be placed in a foster home.

Criteria for Foster Care

There are many different reasons animals may be selected for foster care, including:

- ❖ Shelter adoption may be hindered because of injury or illness such as canine cough in dogs or upper respiratory infection in cats - or even more severe medical needs
- ❖ Behavioral problems that are correctable with proper attention
- ❖ Special needs animals - blind, deaf, and sometimes old animals
- ❖ Limited caging/housing for exotic species
- ❖ Rehabilitation from cruelty cases

For a variety of sound reasons, Foster Parents are not allowed to come in and choose their own foster animals. In the city limits of Redding there is a limit of six animals (dogs or cats combined) per household beyond which special permits or licenses may be required. In Shasta County, there is a limit of no more than six canines per household, and no limits on felines. Therefore, a foster animal cannot be considered if the potential foster parent is already at the legal limit within their jurisdiction. The Society must reserve the right to exercise discretion when the law does not address critical issues. This includes the number of animals allowed in a given household, which shall be determined on a case-by-case basis.

The Foster Care program is available to the public during times of various special needs as well. The following are several ways in which the program extends its services to community:

Classifications of Foster Care:

You may choose to participate in one or more of the four foster program classifications:

- 1. Haven Humane Society** - Homeless animals in need of a second chance.
- 2. Women's Refuge** - Temporary care for the pets of battered and abused women.

- Domestic animals such as dogs and cats are most commonly fostered in this situation.

- The foster agreement is for a specified length of time and the animal will be made available for adoption if not retrieved by its owner on or before the specified date. (A specified date is addressed on a signed release on behalf of the animal and a copy provided to the animals' owner for reference).

3. *Elderly Emergency* - Care for the pet of an elderly person with no family in town during a medical emergency.

- We may receive calls from owners or hospital personnel requesting temporary care for a pet. Admitted senior hospital patients may have no family or able friends to lend a hand during this critical period.
- Foster parents will care for pets for the duration of the hospital stay unless a family member, friend, or neighbor is able to step in and take over the care of this pet.
- In the unfortunate event that the owner dies, the animals will be made available for adoption providing there are no other instructions in a will, provided by court decree and/or no immediate family want to provide a home for the animal.

4. *Disasters* - Temporary care of a variety of animals due to a natural disaster.

- During flood and fire, animals must be transported to safety immediately. Foster care providers that choose to participate in this program offer a safe place for affected families to take their pets until they can either move the animals to another temporary location or until they can get back on their feet and take their animals back home. An agreement is signed for each of the animals coming into the program so that in the event an owner does not claim the animals on the designated date; it will be made available for adoption.

*(*During times of disaster, exceptions may be made regarding the number of animals permitted into a household for a limited period of time if within the limits of city, county and state law)*

Before committing to a foster animal, if hygienic care is a concern (i.e.: fleas, ticks, etc), this should be addressed prior to any commitment, and if within reason, proper care will be arranged for and/or approved by the Director of Community Affairs.

How Long Can I Foster an Animal

Fostering may last from a few days to a month or more. An average stay is approximately 3 months. If we are unable to place an animal after three months, it may be returned to the shelter for possible placement in a shelter participation program with another humane society. Each animal in the program at the three-month stay will be evaluated for an extended period of foster care.

If you are fostering for Women's Refuge, Elderly Emergency, or a Disaster situation, the required foster time will be determined prior to the animal being accepted into the program.

Foster Provider Obligations

There are financial obligations when fostering an animal, but they are minimal. You provide the shelter, food, grooming, TLC, and transportation to and from adoption sites and approved veterinary appointments. The foster parent is expected to maintain a suitable level of comfort, health, and safety of their foster animals at all times. If at any time you experience a need for advice, resources, or services to make this expectation more feasible, please contact the Director of Community Affairs to discuss what resources may be available to you.

As a foster care provider we will require you to transport the animals in your care to and from the veterinarian for the mandatory surgeries, routine vaccinations, as well as for any illnesses that may occur while the animal is in your care. The Director of Community Affairs will schedule and approve all medical appointments. In the event that an animal is diagnosed with an illness requiring funding above and beyond the normal vaccinations and neutering expenses, the decisions will be made by the Executive Director in consultation with the Director of Community Affairs regarding the treatment of that animal.

You will be asked to make an exclusive commitment to care for Society animals. This prevents the spread of disease and minimizes the cost of veterinary care during the foster period.

An educated pool of prospective foster parents provides better care. Periodic meetings of all Foster Parents help "foster" the team spirit. Meetings can be used to teach Foster Parents how to provide basic hygiene, trim nails, take a temperature and control parasites. These meetings are not mandatory but are

highly recommended as they are intended to inform, educate and enhance the animal care network.

Foster Adoption Process

Society satellite adoptions are currently scheduled in various locations each month. Your Director of Community Affairs will give you a schedule of adoptions, (Outreach Calendar at the back of this booklet).

You will be required to make certain your foster animal attends at least two of the scheduled satellite adoptions per month. The Director of Community Affairs will notify you via email when and where the satellite adoptions will be held. If you do not check your email regularly or if you do not have an email account, it is YOUR responsibility to call in and check dates or request that a calendar of outreach adoptions be mailed to you.

It is up to you to make sure your foster pet arrives clean and on time at each adoption site. You are welcome to stay and handle your foster pet during visitation hours, after all, you of all people, know your foster pet best. If you are unable to remain at the site, volunteers are always scheduled to help us with the animals. You may drop your foster pet off for the length of time scheduled at that particular site. Please come back to pick up your foster pet at least 15 minutes before the close of each adoption day. A personality profile will be provided for you to complete for potential adopters to read and gain a better understanding of your foster animal in your absence. **Do not** bring animals to the adoption sites if they are showing signs of canine cough (dogs), feline upper respiratory infection (cats), or any other potentially contagious ailment.

Foster animals may be adopted and sent home from Satellite adoption sites if all required testing and altering has been performed. If an animal is still unaltered, or further medical attention is required, it will need to go back to its foster home and a veterinary appointment will be scheduled. When you drop your foster pet off at the Veterinarian after it has been adopted, it will be the responsibility of the new owner to pick the pet up unless other arrangements have been made. Barring other arrangements you will want to say “good bye” at the vet’s office - a time for gladness and perhaps a little sadness too.

The normal questionnaire and adoption agreement are completed, the NAF (no adoption file) and violation records checked. If the adoption is approved, the animal may then be released to the new owner. If there are concerns that

must be resolved before completing the adoption, the animal will be held in foster care until all concerns can be put to rest and the adoption made final.

Foster animals are commonly viewed at their foster home by potential adopters. Because the adoption process involves qualifying and proper approval, **under no circumstances are you allowed to release a pet to anyone unless you have been given an approval from the Director of Community Affairs.** An adoption must be complete with all paperwork on file before we can release any animal from our care. Should a potential adopter see an animal that they would like to adopt, the following sequence occurs:

1. He/She will be asked to read and understand the conditions of adoption.
2. He/She will complete the adoption questionnaire.
3. A visitation appointment with the foster parent will be set.
4. Following a successful visitation and the determination has been made to adopt, he/she will sign the adoption agreement and pay appropriate fees.

Word of mouth is another means by which animals are adopted. Many times we have people looking for a specific breed, age, sex, etc. We will call you and ask you to call a prospective adopter, after they are approved, to schedule a time for the animal and the potential adopter to visit at your convenience. Your telephone number **is never** given out without your permission. You will be asked to call them. We recommend that the meeting take place at Haven Humane Society or another neutral location. If the adoption takes place at Haven Humane Society, all paperwork can be completed on site so the animal may be released.

You are encouraged to take a break after your foster pet is adopted. Give the Director of Community Affairs a call or email when you are ready to foster again.

Adopting Your Foster Animal

Foster Parents frequently fall in love with their foster pets and are willing to adopt them. The standard adoption fee is reduced for foster care providers but contributions are greatly appreciated since the shelter relies on these

funds to maintain quality operations. Any medical costs, including the cost of neutering, must be recovered at the time of adoption. Just fill out the paperwork, make out your check and your foster pet becomes a permanent, happy addition to your family! However, we hope you will continue to be a foster parent.

Legalities Related to Fostering

Society policy is to abide by California animal laws at all times. It is the intent of California law that all shelters have each animal spayed or neutered prior to releasing that animal to a new owner. Therefore, foster care animals should be neutered before going to a foster home. However, much depends on the health of the animals at the time they are intended to enter foster care. In cases where there are health concerns, or an animal is too young or too old to undergo such procedures, the Society will rely on Haven Humane Veterinary recommendation as to whether or not the animal is able to be placed in foster care until health improves or age is no longer a barrier to proceed with required surgical procedures. A follow up exam will be scheduled at the time of release into foster care and if found healthy, it will undergo the required alteration.

Resources and Supplies

Foster homes must have the tools and resources to parent well. In some cases such tools and resources may be provided. The program will provide as much information, training materials and supplies as are available.

As a precaution, it is recommended that you obtain a Bordatella booster for canine cough for each of your personal dogs prior to accepting a foster care animal. However, it is very important that you understand that the vaccine is meant to be a preventative measure to protect your dog(s). There is still a risk of infection to your dog(s) as no vaccine is 100% effective. If your personal dog becomes ill, you are responsible for the required medication and treatment expenses. Medications and vaccinations are available through the Society Clinic at a much reduced rate. Canine cough is rarely life threatening and responds readily to proper medication and diet. You are required and highly encouraged to provide other annual vaccinations for your personal pets at your own expense. Written documentation will be required to verify current vaccinations of personal animals prior to bringing a foster animal into your home.

Haven Humane Society provides the following supplies for our Foster animals:

Cats/Kittens

- Litter box (if needed)
- Food (if needed)
- Infant formula for orphaned kittens
- All medication, including dewormer, as prescribed by an HHS Veterinarian
- Carrier to transport foster animals

Dogs/Puppies

- Crate (if needed) or X-Pen (if needed / available)
- Heartworm preventatives
- Food (if needed)
- Infant formula for orphaned puppies
- All medication, including dewormer, as prescribed by an HHS Veterinarian
- Collar/Leashes

Supplies available at the Shelter in the treatment room for your use are:

- Flea Comb
- Nail Clippers
- Thermometer
- Shampoo
- Litter
- Bathing Tub
- Flea Shampoo
- Blow Dryer
- Towels

Please check with the Director of Community Affairs for any supplies that you may need. Non-consumable supplies such as cages, toys, kennels, leashes, collars etc. must be checked-out. You will be asked to return non-consumables as well as any remaining consumable supplies such as medications, ointments, special dietary supplements etc. when your foster animal has been adopted.

Medical Attention

Heartworm Tests in Dogs

Dogs at least 6 months of age or older are heartworm tested prior to being put in your care. If your foster dog has not been tested prior to going home, you will be asked to transport the dog to the Haven Humane Society Spay/Neuter Clinic for testing. If a dog is heartworm positive, we may have

to request that you return it to the shelter, depending on the severity of the heartworm progression. The Society cannot foster a heartworm positive dog unless a private donation has been made to pay for the cost of treatment. This is a matter of putting available resources to work for as many as possible. All dogs will be placed on heartworm preventatives if they have tested negative.

Feline Leukemia Tests in Cats

Each cat that enters foster care must be tested for feline leukemia and feline aids virus. Your personal cats must be tested and vaccinated against feline leukemia. Kittens that leave the shelter too young to test will be tested when they are 12 weeks of age. If a cat tests positive for feline leukemia, it will be returned to the shelter and will be humanely euthanized. This is a contagious disease for which there is no cure, and sadly, this is the humane alternative.

Spaying and Neutering your foster pet

All healthy dogs, cats, puppies, and kittens at least 8 weeks of age sheltered by a California animal care agency are required by law to be spayed or neutered prior to being released to a new owner. You will be asked to transport your foster pet to the Society veterinarian and provide post surgery TLC necessary for a quick recovery. Most healthy animals are altered before going to foster care sites. **If you think your foster animal is a candidate for spaying / neutering, contact the Director of Community Affairs to schedule an appointment. Animals must arrive at the Haven Humane Society clinic prior to 8:00am (between 7:30am-8:00am) in order to be seen by the doctor. When you arrive, please make sure that the clinic staff knows that you are a foster parent.**

Medication for your foster pet

Whether it is canine cough (kennel cough) or a feline upper respiratory infection, you should call the Director of Community Affairs at the first sign of illness. A veterinary appointment will be scheduled for you at the Society Spay/Neuter Wellness Clinic.

Vaccinations/Preventatives

All foster animals are provided with the following vaccinations:

- Rabies (after 4 months of age both dogs and cats)
- Dogs: DA2PPv (Parvo/Dispenper combo), and Bordatella for canine kennel cough
- Cats: FVRC-P for prevention of FELV (feline leukemia) and Fiv (feline aids virus)

All routine vaccinations must be taken care of as needed. If you are not sure when your animal is due next for these vaccinations, please contact the Director of Community Affairs for vaccination history.

It is vitally important for staff to be on call for foster parents on the weekends, holidays, and evenings. Foster Parents should be encouraged to contact the Director of Community Affairs or one of the Animal Regulation Officers in the event of an emergency outside of normal business hours.

Foster Care Emergency Procedures

Warning Signs of Illness

- Watch for diarrhea... report any loose stools immediately. Young animals are extremely vulnerable and can dehydrate very quickly.
- Watch for worms in the stool
- Vomiting, gagging, sneezing, or repeated coughing
- Discharge from the eyes
- Loss of appetite and general lethargy
- High Temperature... over 102.0 degrees

Call your Community Affairs Director immediately if you should notice any of these symptoms.

Do not take the animals to the veterinarian without the authorization of the Community Affairs Director or the Executive Director of the Humane Society!

If you are unable to reach someone, you should call the after hours emergency line at Haven **241-2550** and ask to speak to the Officer on duty for authorization.

EMERGENCY: PHONE NUMBERS

Pam Levin
Director of Community
Affairs 510-6998

Haven Humane Spay/Neuter
Clinic
241-1658

Redding Animal Regulation
241-2550

Captain Lee Anne Smith
Redding Animal Regulation
223-2553