

## Why we Foster

By Melinda Hoffman and Julie Horvath

So often we've been asked why we foster dogs, or even more often, "How do you give them up?". Fostering is our way of helping dogs in need, giving back to our community, and getting lots of love.

We talked a lot about volunteering for different organizations over the years and just never got around to it. Suddenly it hit us, with two (very easy) dogs of our own, and a very blessed life, we knew that we could give back by taking in dogs that really needed to be away from a shelter life for a period of time to bring out their true personality and provide them with the best possible chance to get adopted into a family of their own. After our first fostering experience we were hooked. The change in our first foster dog "Itsy's" personality and her integration into our home environment was drastic. She was hyper and frantic in the shelter, but just a few months later was learning commands, playing with respect with our dogs, and giving us so much love! She had quite a personality and we loved her so much, but we knew that she was getting ready for her forever home and when she did find her new family, we knew it was right. We have to admit it is very emotional when our fosters get adopted, because after all of the hard work and lots of snuggles we've become attached to each and every dog. But seeing the joy in the future adopter's eyes and knowing that the dog will now be in their forever home makes the goodbye so much easier. People often comment, "I could never do it!", and we weren't sure that we could either, but fostering has turned into some of the most rewarding experiences of our lives. We feel that we are getting just as much, if not more, from the dogs than they get from us. We've also met some of the most amazing, dedicated people who work on a regular basis caring for these animals, who welcomed us into their community with only offers for help if we needed it. Many of these hardworking people we will always consider friends.

Fostering helps an animal in need of a loving environment, often provides them with some basic obedience skills, and gets them away from the stressful shelter life. Of course, we've been a foster failure, but that happens. We've been rewarded with watching a fearful dog start to build trust, a shy dog's willingness to explore a new environment and a momma dog feeling safe to allow us to interact with her puppies. All these experiences have made fostering one of the best things we've ever decided to do. So now we are able to help the next dog in need.

So if you love animals, have a little time and want to give back to community by saving lives PLEASE think about fostering.