



BCAS/Friends of BCAS DOG FOSTER PROGRAM

**Dog Foster Program Manual
08-01-2016**



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Foster Support Team

When you take home a foster dog, you will be assigned a mentor. You will be given your mentor's contact information. Your mentor has a history of fostering dogs. Your mentor will be your first point of contact for any questions/concerns. Your mentor will help you engage additional resources, if needed. If your mentor is not available, contact Debbie Hampton.

Debbie Hampton

- **Title:** Friends of the Burlington County Animal Shelter ("Friends") Dog Foster Coordinator
- **Contact:** 609-744-5810 - (C) | debbiehampton66@hotmail.com
- **Description:** Volunteer coordinator for the BCAS Dog Foster Program. Works with BCAS Staff and Vet Techs to choose and move dogs into foster homes. Recruits and manages fosters. Liaison to the foster program, including any medical inquiries. Primary contact for foster needs outside of shelter hours.

Lisa Cliver

- **Title:** BCAS Adoption Advocate | BCAS Foster Coordinator
- **Contact:** 609-265-5843 | lcliver@co.burlington.nj.us
- **Description:** Represents BCAS in foster matters. Reviews volunteer foster applications. Schedules foster dogs for BCAS spay/neuter clinic.

John Richardson

- **Title:** BCAS Adoption Advocate | BCAS Foster Coordinator
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- **Description:** Represents BCAS in foster matters. Reviews volunteer foster applications.

Jen Furman

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- **Title:** Friends Dog Trainer
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Is Fostering for the BCAS Right for You? (Frequently Asked Questions)

1. What is fostering?

Fostering is providing a temporary home for a homeless pet, who for whatever reason, needs to be housed outside of the shelter. Fostering is truly lifesaving.

2. Why should I foster?

Fostering can be a wonderful experience for you and your family. You feel good knowing that you have made a positive difference in a dog's life, and each animal fostered in a home opens up kennel space for us to save another dog! Fostering can also provide individual attention that certain special needs dogs require. Foster commitments range from just overnight to several months, so you can choose foster options that fit with your lifestyle.

3. Do I need to have any special training or skills to be foster parent?

Foster families should be compassionate, caring and patient. You will be informed of your foster animal's known history, medical and behavioral health before they are placed in your care, and our foster support team will help answer questions, provide resources and information.

4. What are the requirements?

- Abide by policies and procedures in the manual and foster care agreement
- Able to access email regularly
- Able to provide transport to and from the shelter if needed
- Provide some supplies and food for foster animals
- Spend time with foster pets and treat them like your own dogs while they're in your care
- Have up-to-date rabies vaccinations and Bordetella (kennel cough) for all dogs in the home

5. What types of dogs need foster care?

- Hospice Care - Dogs that need a break from the shelter environment
- Seniors - Pets with special medical or behavioral challenges

6. How long do dogs need to be in foster care?

Every situation is different! Our foster needs range from one day to until the animal is adopted, which can take several months.

7. How much time do foster parents have to devote to the dog in their care?

It depends on the situation. Foster dogs need all of the same things that owned dogs do, and may even need more attention if they are recovering from illness/injury, or need training.

8. What are some of the potential risks of fostering a dog?

Fostering is one of the most rewarding experiences that you can have, but there are some potential risks. While rare, below you will read some of the possible risks.

- Owned animals could catch a disease and/or a parasite from a foster dog
- Foster families, members of their household, or visitors could catch a disease and/or parasite from a foster dog. We do not, as a practice, send dogs with known diseases transmittable to volunteers.
- Owned animals could be injured or killed by a foster dog. This is always preventable if you follow procedures and guidelines recommended.
- Foster families, members of the household, or visitors could be injured by a foster dog
- Foster dog could die in foster care or have to return to the shelter to be euthanized
- Foster dog may destroy personal items

9. What happens if my foster dog needs medical care?

BCAS will provide all non-emergent medical care for the animals in its foster program. Emergency care will be coordinated by the Friends.

10. Can foster parents adopt their foster dog?

Yes. Foster parents can adopt their foster dog, and are given first choice.

Foster Program Policies and Procedures

Legal Guardianship

All animals in foster care are the property of the Burlington County Animal Shelter and are subject to all applicable BCAS rules and restrictions.

Proper Housing and Care Requirements

1. Foster care providers are expected to follow and abide by all guidelines and protocols regarding proper care of foster dogs, including giving them proper food, access to water at all times, daylight, socialization, health care, etc. Foster dogs must be kept in climate controlled homes.
2. Puppies should never be left unsupervised outdoors, and high traffic areas, such as the park, animal stores, public sidewalks/trails, etc., should be avoided, as puppies can be susceptible to deadly diseases that could be lurking there.
3. Dogs can go outside for supervised play time/exercise. Your foster dog must be kept on leash or in a securely fenced yard when outside. Some dogs can jump/climb over or dig under fences surprisingly fast, so please be cautious when leaving foster dogs unsupervised.
4. You are prohibited from taking foster dogs to off leash dog parks or other off leash areas. Dogs must be on leash, under your control, at all times.
5. You are prohibited from having your foster dog socialize with other dogs, except those in your home.
6. If your foster dog gets loose, contact your mentor and the foster coordinator immediately.
7. If injury or illness results from interaction between your animals and foster dog, BCAS will only be responsible for the medical care and expenses of the foster dog. In some cases, you may be asked to keep your pet separate from the foster dog for a pre-determined period of time to prevent the spread of illness to your pet.
9. Friends of BCAS has the right to perform home checks in order to ensure that foster animals are being adequately and appropriately cared for.
10. If a foster care provider refuses to return a foster dog for any reason upon request by BCAS staff, or has improperly transferred an animal to another individual or entity, the foster care provider will be permanently removed from the foster program and the BCAS may initiate appropriate legal action or send an Animal Control Officer to your home to secure the return of the dog.
11. Foster care providers are only allowed to treat foster dogs with medications and supplements prescribed by BCAS veterinary staff, unless alternative care arrangements have been approved by the foster coordinator.
12. Foster care providers must notify the foster coordinator immediately if a foster dog bites a person or animal and the bite breaks the skin.
13. Children under the age of 18 should not be left unsupervised with any foster dogs.

Supplies

BCAS will provide foster care providers with certain supplies -

- Flea/Tick Medicine & Heartworm Preventive
- Medications, supplements or prescription diets that have been prescribed by our veterinary staff
- In some situations, dog food treats, etc.

Health and Temperament

BCAS will be as accurate as possible when providing information about the medical and behavioral health of dogs seeking foster placement, but cannot guarantee the medical or behavioral health of any dog.

Foster care providers are required to be as accurate as possible about their foster dog's health and behavior. This will assist the shelter in determining the proper medical treatment, training and/or behavioral rehabilitation for the dog.

How it Works

Processing New Fosters

Foster Volunteer Application: All new foster volunteers must submit a completed [foster volunteer application](#) to Debbie Hampton. Foster volunteers picking up a dog that will not be returned to the shelter on the same day will receive a copy of the dog's medical records. Fostering is encouraged for dogs in the following categories:

Hospice Care:

- Providing end-of-life comfort care

Fostering Seniors:

- Providing an alternative to the shelter for senior dogs until they find their "forever home"

Medical Fostering:

- Providing short-term care for dogs with medical needs

Short-term Fostering:

- Providing an alternative to the shelter for dogs that have been in residence at BCAS for an extended period or those experiencing kennel stress including behavioral issues.
- Dogs may have a minor behavior problem (jumping up, mouthiness) that a foster volunteer can work on to make the dog more appealing to adopters.
- You may keep the dog overnight, a weekend, a week, or even longer. Not all dogs are eligible to participate in this program.
- You will be expected to train your foster dog.
- You will be expected to help your foster dog find a permanent home by providing updated bio information for online marketing, bringing your foster dog to the shelter or community events approved by the shelter (e.g., PetSmart adoption events, Burlington County Farm Fair) for exposure, and making arrangements for potential adopters to meet the dog. Potential adopters must be approved to adopt before they can meet your foster dog.
- Please contact Jen Furman and/or Dee Curry to work with you before you take a challenging dog home.

Respite Fostering:

- Providing respite fostering for another foster volunteer's foster dog during vacations, business trips, etc.

Medical Policy

- **Medical Records:** Foster volunteers picking up a dog must receive a copy of the dog's medical records.
Upon intake, dogs are given medical care according to the shelter's veterinary guidelines. Vaccinations (distemper, rabies and Bordetella) should be current prior to a dog being released into foster care unless there are extenuating circumstances, e.g., health-related restrictions. Dogs should be spayed or neutered prior to entering foster care. If a dog enters a foster home prior to neutering, arrangement must be made to return the dog to the shelter on a clinic day for surgery.
- **Routine Medical Care:** Routine care can be provided at the Burlington County Animal Shelter. Hours for routine care (performed by a vet tech) are posted on our website: <http://www.friendsofbcas.org/foster>. Please contact the shelter for available appointments.
- **Medical Emergencies:** Dogs that have a medical emergency while in your care should be taken to an area animal hospital. Mount Laurel Animal Hospital is our preferred provider if emergency treatment is necessary. Please contact Debbie Hampton in the event of an emergency. Friends of BCAS will be responsible for the costs incurred if we are contacted prior to treatment. **Do not take a foster dog to a vet without prior authorization from Debbie Hampton. If Debbie does not authorize the vet visit, the foster volunteer is personally responsible for the cost.**

Flea/Tick and Heartworm Prevention

All foster dogs over eight weeks of age should be given flea/tick and heartworm prevention monthly.

How can I help my foster dog find a forever home?

When fostering a dog, **YOU** can be the animal's number one advocate! By acting as an adoption ambassador, you won't just be a foster care provider. You will be a photographer, videographer, biographer, a marketing specialist, and an adoption counselor!

- Take at least one clear, landscape-oriented (horizontal), photo of the foster animal and email it to the foster coordinator to be added to the Friends's website.
- Take at least one clear, short video of the foster animal and email it to the foster coordinator to be added to the Friend's website.
- Promote the foster animal on social media websites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest. Email our social media team and ask the Friends to share on our sites (fobcas.socialmedia@gmail.com).
- Create and post an ad for the foster animal on www.Craigslist.org.
- Create and put up flyers for the foster animal in appropriate locations.
- Foster volunteers should regularly check their email inbox and spam box for inquiries from potential adopters.
- Anytime your foster dog is in public places have an Adopt Me vest on him/her.
- If someone shows adoption interest while in public, give them a business card with your foster dog's picture, name and your contact information.
- Meet with potential adopters at your home or a convenient location with the foster dog. Ideally do not have an initial meet at the shelter. The shelter environment tends to make dogs nervous and anxious. You want the dog's true personality to shine.

For additional tips and tricks for marketing foster animals, visit these links:

[Tips for Presenting Your Adoptable Animals Well with Photos and Descriptions](#)
[Marketing Best Practices](#)
[Best Friends Resources](#)

Offsite Adoption Events

Another option for foster care providers seeking forever homes for the dog in their care are our offsite adoption events. These events are typically held on the weekends at various locations.

My foster dog has an adopter, now what?

1. Contact the foster coordinator right away to let us know.
2. The adopter must go through the approval process at the shelter.
3. After the foster dog has been spayed/neutered and micro-chipped, it may be transferred to the adopter.

Returning Foster Dogs to the Shelter

If you need to return a foster dog to the shelter for any reason, please contact the foster coordinator so that we can make arrangements for you to do so. When returning foster pets to the shelter, you will need to go to INTAKE with the animal.

Deceased Animals

In some cases, sick or weak dog may die while in foster care. If your foster dog passes away, please contact the foster coordinator. You will be asked to provide detailed information as to what happened around the time of the death so that we can determine if other animals in your care may be at risk. You will be asked to bring the body back to BCAS.

Short-term Fostering

Refer to Addendum A for specifics about this program.

Pups to the Park Program

You must be an active Friends of BCAS volunteer to participate in this program. Refer to Addendum A for specifics about this program.

Addendum A

Want to give a shelter dog a break from the stress of the shelter and an opportunity for new experiences?
Want to get valuable information about the dog's personality, behavior and needs, thereby helping adopters or rescuers make more informed decisions?

1. Overnights: Check out a foster in the evening and return the next morning.
2. Weekends: Check out a foster in the evening and return in 2-3 days.

Please note: These types of outings are most important for longer stay dogs (dogs that have been at the shelter for more than 30 days), those who have behavioral challenges, or those that are overwhelmed in the shelter setting.

Requirements:

- Your completed and signed volunteer foster application on file.
- Well-fitted martingale or slip lead should be used.

Steps:

1. Check in with Office Staff (9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. except 6:30 pm on Thursdays)
 - Speak with an Adoption Advocate staff member about your dog of choice. He/she can review the dog's notes with you & confirm that there are no behavioral, medical, or other reasons that the dog should not leave shelter at this time. (Examples: a rescue partner is planning to evaluate that day, a foster is coming to pick up the dog, etc.).
2. Adoption Advocate staff will make a note in the dog's record concerning where it is going, who with, your contact information, and the projected time of return.
3. Adoption Advocate will need to see a valid ID, get your DL#, and confirm your current address/contact information.

Timing for taking a dog out:

For an overnight:

- Make arrangements ahead of time for taking a dog out by emailing Debbie Hampton.
- Pick up the dog prior to 3 p.m. or 6 p.m. on Thursday in order to complete arrangements.
- Return the dog to its kennel before 12 p.m. the following day, so it will be available for customer viewing.
- Notify the Animal Attendants that the dog has been returned so staff can assure that the dog is fed.

Kennel Sign & Supplies:

Supplies and signage are located in the office or volunteer station.

- Hang the appropriate signage on the dog's kennel.
- Grab an "Adopt Me" vest or bandana to help draw attention to your lucky shelter pup during your outing.
- When returning the dog to its kennel, remove the signage that you placed when taking the dog out.

Assure that you have supplies you will need.

- Outings: Portable water bowl, water, and treats.
- Overnight: Bedding, water bowl, water, and food if needed. *To avoid intestinal distress, it is best not to feed the dog a lot of a new type of food.

Keep the following in mind:

- Consider whether the dog of your choice will truly benefit from, and enjoy the particular environment to which you plan to take them.
- Consider the surroundings, the traffic (both people and other animals), and whether or not this environment may cause further stress to your chosen dog. Crowded public areas should be avoided, including school grounds.
- Prohibited from taking foster dogs to off leash dog parks or other off leash areas. Dogs must be on leash, under your control, at all times.
- Prohibited from having your foster dog socialize with other dogs, except those in your home.

Have a blast! Ride in the car, walk in the neighborhood, play, watch TV, whatever you want to do within the limits outlined above. Use structure, kindness, attention, training, and snuggling as needed. Some dogs will want to spend their time resting and some will want to do lots of fun things. Keep in mind the dog's safety and needs and yours, and have fun!

Share the experience:

- Email us your observations about the dog during your outing, so that they can be added to the dog's record to let everyone know how it went out in public and/or at training.
- Post fun pictures and details to the Friends of BCAS Facebook page.

Addendum B



Pups to the Park

Procedures 8-01-2016

Thank you for your interest in our Pups to the Park program. We hope you enjoy spending some quality time with our adoptable dogs while walking the trails of Burlington County's beautiful parks. This enrichment activity will benefit the dogs by allowing them some time away from the shelter, socialization and exercise. The following are some rules and procedures we ask you to follow:

1. This program is available to active Friends of the Burlington County Animal Shelter ("Friends") dog walking volunteers.
2. A volunteer is permitted to bring only a dog in their walker rating, i.e. green, yellow or blue.
3. Select a dog you have walked a few times at the shelter and are comfortable handling.
4. Wear clothes that are appropriate for walking. Please wear closed toe shoes only. No flip-flops or sandals.
5. Dogs can leave the shelter at 9:30 am. Dogs should be returned any time before 3:30 pm except Thursdays before 6:30 pm.
6. Bring a bowl, water and food, if the dog has not eaten. Dogs are typically fed at the shelter between 10:30 am to 11:30 am. The dog has had a morning feeding if a bowl, empty or with food, is in their kennel.
7. Dogs are permitted to be taken to Long Bridge Park in Hainesport or Smithville Park in Eastampton. Long Bridge Park is recommended for reactive dogs because it is usually less crowded and has wider pathways.
8. Ask an office staff person for a "Pups to the Park" laminated 8.5" x 11" flyer you should place on top of the dog's paperwork on their kennel/clipboard. This ensures staff and volunteers know the dog is at a park.
9. Put an "Adopt Me" vest on the dog. Small/Medium/Large vests are located in a plastic storage drawer organizer on the volunteer station in the shelter lobby.
10. Write on the dog's yellow activity sheet; your name, park and exit time, e.g. Joe Smith/Buddy/Long Bridge/10 am, etc.
11. Transport the dog in your vehicle in a crate or tie their leash to something to prevent the dog from disturbing driving.
12. If someone wants to pet the shelter dog, allow it as long as you are comfortable in the situation.
13. Please use common sense when handling the dog and always pay attention to what you are doing. Avoid creating any situation of conflict between dogs.
14. When you encounter other people with their dog(s), please take your dog off to the side to avoid any possible confrontations.
15. Please clean up after your dog.
16. Do not bring your personal dog, children or friends.
17. Multiple volunteers can bring multiple dogs to the park. Dogs can be transported separately or together. If two dogs are transported together, one dog must be in a crate.
18. You can make multiple visits to the park the same day, i.e. take and return Spot, then take and return Bella, etc.

If you have any questions please ask one of the staff members. Most of all have fun and thank you for spending time with our pups!