



www.dachshundrescuesouthflorida.com

FOSTER GUIDELINES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Thanks for your interest!

Thank you for your interest in DRSF's foster program! If not for our foster families, we could not rescue, and each one of our foster homes empowers us to help even more dachshunds. It is the toughest job you will ever love and we have put together this document to help give people a greater understanding of fostering, determine if it is right for you, what DRSF provides, and more importantly, what we would ask of you as a foster home.

A Bit about us....

Before getting mixed up in the crazy world of rescue, allow us to introduce ourselves. Dachshund Rescue South Florida (DRSF) is a foster-based dog rescue organization, formed in late 2008, which saves previously unwanted dachshunds and doximixes from being put-to-sleep. Dogs come to DRSF from the streets and shelters, and from homes that can no longer care for them. Sometimes they are physically damaged, sick or injured, more times they are physiologically wounded. Once they enter DRSF they are healed in both body and soul and found loving, safe forever homes.

Where do the dogs come from?

Our Web Watcher team monitors the intake of all three South Florida county shelters and distributes any doxies to our Intake Team who visits with the dogs identified as being doxies or mixes for assessment (age, weight, any perceived medical problems or injuries, etc, etc). For a number of reasons, the county shelters are only able to hold strays for 5 days before they are euthanized, so DRSF places "rescue holds" on all the doxies who come into the shelters regardless of age, physical condition, or behavioral status to act as their safety net should they not be adopted within their "stray time". We also work with strays found on the streets as well as families who need to surrender their dogs for various reasons.

Then what happens?

After the dogs are pulled from the shelter, the DRSF Foster Program kicks in to be one of the most important key elements in helping these dogs start their new lives. Our foster program is made up of two, equally important kinds of foster homes:

- **Quarantine Foster Home (Q Foster)** – All dogs released from County Animal Control Shelters must be quarantined for a two-week period due to possible exposure to kennel cough; a form of canine flu that is only contagious to other dogs.
- **Foster Homes** – After a two-week Q Foster, a dog is ready for their foster family where they will stay until they find their forever family.

What Does DRSF Provide?

Each kind of fostering requires a different kind of commitment which we explain further below, but for both kinds of fostering, DRSF provides the following:

- **Supplies** – bed, blanket, leash, harness, collar, crate (if needed), baby gates (if needed)
- **Medical Care** – All vet visits are covered as well as any necessary medication
- **Support** – We have an extensive network of volunteers who has encountered just about anything and everything dealing with doxies. Not only can we provide support for your fosters, but are available for any of your other doxies too!

Are There Any Special Requirements For My House?

Only quarantine fostering requires any special consideration for your home. Since dogs in quarantine need to be kept separate from other dogs (cats do not catch kennel cough) you will need a spare bedroom, laundry room, or comfortable space in a garage. The space needs to be air conditioned for the summer and even if you have a garage that is not air conditioned, we may be able to provide a spot cooler for you. If you have other dogs, you may wish to speak to your veterinarian before taking in quarantine dogs, so you can be assured that you are taking all necessary precautions to protect your own pets.

What Are The Basics?

The main requirement for fostering is to care for the dog. When a dog comes to foster, they have been through a terrible transition away from their family, have often spent time as an inpatient at a vet, have more often than not experienced some kind of surgery, and are generally terrified and/or depressed. Most of all, foster dogs need love and understanding, above and beyond that, you treat them as a member of your family, just like other dogs, and provide them with:

- Food and water
- Walks and exercise
- Love, patience, and understanding
- Belly rubs....lots of belly rubs

How Else Do Foster Homes Help In The Placement Process?

Providing a temporary home for a foster dog is the first step for the foster family as part of the DRSF team. Since you will be spending the most amount of time with the dog and will know them best, we will need your help in finding their forever family too!

- **Providing Photos** – A great picture is key to marketing doxies for their forever families. We have guidelines of “what makes a great Doxie picture” and will need your help getting some glamour shots of your foster Doxie to post on our Facebook page and website. Getting them quickly is key as the sooner we have a picture, the sooner we can start looking for their forever family!
- **Help Writing Bios** – The foster family sees the doxie’s personality develop and is the most qualified to tell us about them and help write a bio. DRSF takes pride in our creative bios which help our dogs stand out from other rescues and brings personality and character to each one of them as individuals. We need your input as to personality quirks, funny stories, or anything unique we can build a bio around.
- **Updates to DRSF** – We like to check in with our foster families to see how things are going, make sure you have the support you need as we want the best for you and your foster dog! We have a Foster Coordination team who will be in touch with you but you are welcome to drop us a note to let us know how things are going!
- **Vet Transports** – Just like regular dogs, foster dogs need to go to the vet. We are beyond grateful for foster families’ assistance in getting their dogs to and from the vet. We have vets conveniently located in all three counties to minimize driving time.
- **Speaking With Potential Forever Families** – As adoption applications are approved, the DRSF Matchmaking process begins in creating matches of the heart between dogs and families. We need your help and proactivity in reaching out to contact potential forever families who may be a match with your foster dog and giving them honest feedback about the dog as well as asking questions of them to help the matchmaking team ensure we are making a good match.
- **Hosting Potential Adopters** – After a potential match is made, we ask most potential forever families to meet the foster dogs at their foster homes where they are most comfortable and will make the best impression. All potential adoptive families have been background checked with two personal references as well as a home visit from a DRSF volunteer, to ensure they are safe.
- **Adoption Logistics** – The best part of fostering is seeing your foster Doxie find their forever home and knowing you made it happen! The final step in the adoption process is the execution of the contract. We look to our foster families to meet with the forever family and execute the contract.

That Sounds Easy Enough...What Is The Tough Stuff?

As with all things in life there are difficulties mixed in with the good. Here is the fine print for issues to be considered:

- **Proactivity**
 - We need you to be proactive and be able to count on you to follow through on all aspects of the requirements above in a timely manner.

With 30+ dogs in foster care at any time, it is exceedingly difficult to repeatedly follow up with foster homes to ensure they have reached out to speak with a potential family, kept track of phone numbers, and or made it to scheduled vet appointments.

- We need you to be able to schedule meetings and introductions without having to be facilitated through DRSF board and report back on how things went.
 - We need you to return phone calls in a timely manner.
 - Finally, we need you to call a DRSF board member immediately if your foster dog experiences any medical problems or is injured while in your care.
- **Problems** – It is naive to think there will not be problems or an adjustment period when bringing a new dog into your home. DRSF foster dogs, just like any other dogs, may do the following:
 - Bark
 - Mess in the house
 - Have medical problems
 - Mark
 - Occasionally experience conflict with other dogs
 - Exhibit aggressiveness in certain circumstances

We ask for your patience and understanding to work through the issues above as they all can be addressed and after multiple fosters, you will become that much more of an informed and educated dog owner to be able to help your other dogs as well as other friends and associates. You may even earn the title of “dog whisperer” among your friends! If, for some reason, the situation can not be remedied, DRSF requires a MINIMUM of 72 hours to re-locate a dog.

- **Conflict** – Rescue is run on love and with love comes emotion. Often there is more than one family interested in a dog and we look to the foster homes to act as a member of the team to determine which home a dog will be best suited for. This can often require multiple phone calls and/ or emails to come to a place where the majority of the board is in agreement. Some of the calls can be difficult and/or emotional and we look for foster homes who can rise to the occasion to help us find the best home for each and every single one of our doxies.

Our Promise To You....

It is only fair to make some promises back after the long list above:

- You will always be free to refuse to accept any individual dog, or take time off between quarantining/fostering
- You will never be asked to provide foster care for any timeframe beyond your comfort level (although, relocations are best on weekends)
- If a foster parent needs assistance or a break during quarantining/fostering (ie; going out of town for the weekend & need someone to care for your rescues; need help walking or bathing rescues) a DRSF volunteer will help to the extent possible.

Our Parting Words

We take our work in finding rescued dogs forever homes very seriously. These little souls count on DRSF to protect them and find them a place to go where they will never again worry where their next meal will come from. The best part of our work in rescuing dachshunds is seeing the wonderful, happy faces of the new families. We truly believe that every dog has its perfect forever home out there. DRSF serves as the matchmaker who brings dog and family...together.

The True Meaning of Rescue

R is for *RESPONSIBILITY & RESPECT*: please be mindful that you have committed to being responsible for another life and respectful that that life, however imperfect, is dependent upon you for a happy and healthy future

E is for *EMPOWERED & EMPATHETIC*: please feel empowered by this responsibility to fight for, and with, the dog to make it the best dog it can be but also be empathetic that its behaviors and health are the product of what it suffered before you...

S is for *SAFETY & SECURITY*: please ensure that your dog feels the safety and security it needs to become free of fear and secure enough to be itself. It is only through a true sense of safety & security that these dogs and their humans can begin to undo all that went before DRSF

C is for *CARING & CAUSE*: please remember that it is only through consistent love and caring (despite bad behaviors and health problems) that what is now unacceptable ...can be changed; it is because of this we are driven to rescue and adopt rescued dogs

E is for *EVENTUALLY & EVERY*: please keep in your heart and in your mind that eventually, often with a lot of love and hard work, EVERY DOG CAN BECOME A WONDERFUL AND LOVING FAMILY MEMBER AND COMPANION.