



RESCUE TO SERVICE / SERVICE DOG CANDIDATE

Foster Home Job Description

Overview:

The Rescue to Service Program (RTS) and Service Dog Candidate Program (SDC) are programs of Handi-Dogs, Inc. RTS works in collaboration with animal welfare organizations. SDC may get dogs from breeders, individuals, or service dog breeding programs. The goal of the programs is to identify dogs needing permanent homes who could be potential candidates for service dog training through Handi-Dogs.

Foster homes (fosters) are a critical element to this program. Fosters will care for a service dog training candidate (program dog) in their home until such time the dog is adopted to its permanent home. It is anticipated the minimum time in foster care will be 3 months and may be as much as 12 – 16 months for a very young dog/puppy. While in foster care, the foster will also be responsible for training core skills, socialization and exposure to varying environments per the program parameters. Fosters may be required to also be a volunteer with an animal welfare organization for dogs in RTS.

Eligibility to be a Foster:

- Have a relatively calm household.
- Homes may have other animals living in them. There should be no aggressive history / tendencies of the other animals. All dogs living in the house should be spayed/neutered and vaccinated. If any dogs are not spayed/neutered, this must be disclosed upfront.
 - The program dogs in RTS will be spayed/neutered prior to placement and will be current on vaccinations.
 - The program dogs in SDC likely will not be spayed/neutered and will receive vaccinations per Handi-Dogs recommended schedule in consult with a veterinarian.
- Agree to a home check prior to having a program dog placed with you, and agree to random home checks once you have a dog.
- For the RTS program, complete any additional orientation sessions or documents as required to be a volunteer with a participating shelter / rescue organization.
- Fosters can NOT be the person or family member for whom the program dog will be trained to be a service dog.

Responsibilities:

- Complete Handi-Dogs' orientation sessions which will include education on dog body language, an overview on the training methods to be used, and review expectations of what is to be achieved through training your foster dog.
- Provide a safe environment, with expectation of the program dog living in your home a minimum of 3 months.
 - The program dog is to reside in the house (not left outdoors overnight or for extended period of times)
 - Supervise throughout the day
 - Feed the program dog a diet recommended by the program
 - Do not encourage letting the program dog be on furniture
 - Keep the program dog on an approved collar/harness and leash at all times unless in secured fenced area or inside the home.
 - Crate train (as their safe place, that can be moved with them to their forever home)
 - Handi-Dogs will supply a crate, leash, collar or harness, and settle mat for each program dog. This equipment will go with the program dog when it is adopted.

- Teach the program dog core skills (loose leash walking, watch me, 4 on the floor, sit, down, etc.)
 - Only use approved positive reinforcement techniques, as taught through this program.
 - With the program dog, attend weekly training classes at Handi-Dogs - Days/Times TBD.
 - You will start training classes 1 -2 weeks after the program dog has been in your home. This enables the program dog to acclimate to his/her new surroundings first.
 - If you care for a puppy, you may be asked to take the program dog to a pre-approved puppy class, held elsewhere. Handi-Dogs will pay for the classes.
 - Do daily training homework (at least 10 – 15 minutes per day).
 - Training sessions will be funded by this program. The foster will not need to pay for these.
- Socialize the program dog and provide exposure to varying environments per Handi-Dogs recommendations.
 - A key to service dog training is to NOT take the dog too many places, before it is ready – if that happens, it could be detrimental to the dog ultimately becoming a service dog.
 - Go to places where pets are allowed (Bookmans, pet stores, parks, La Encantada, etc.)
 - Do NOT take out as a ‘Service Dog In-Training’ to places where pets are not allowed, unless prior written approval by Handi-Dogs is given. Do NOT let dogs wear ‘service dog in-training’ vests, unless prior approval by Handi-Dogs is given.
- Transport program dog as needed to training sessions, socializations, vet appts, etc.
 - Crate or put in an approved seat belt when in car at all times.
- Complete weekly RTS/SDC training reports. Submit as requested by Handi-Dogs.
- Keep the program dog well-groomed (brushed, bathed, clean ears and teeth, keep nails clipped, etc.)
- Financially support the care of the program dog by paying for its food, treats, and grooming. Self-fund transportation needs for taking the program dog to training sessions, vet appointments, meet & greets, etc.
 - If financial assistance is needed, please consult with Handi-Dogs and/or any animal welfare organization in which you also will be fostering a program dog, in advance of being assigned a program dog.
- Work with the program to arrange ‘meet and greets’ with prospective adopters.
- Agree to return the program dog to Handi-Dogs or the shelter / rescue upon request.
- If a program dog is not available, we encourage volunteers to register to be ‘relief’ and ‘emergency’ foster homes for dogs in this program.

Throughout the fostering, the program dogs will be evaluated for the potential to become a service dog candidate. At any time should it be determined the program dog may not be a good service dog candidate, the dog will be removed from this program. In these cases you will work with Handi-Dogs and/or the animal welfare organization in determining the best care for the dog (remain with you until an adoptive family can be found, be moved to another foster, etc.) Dogs that don’t make it in this program may be deemed good candidates to become an emotional-support or a therapy ‘volunteer with your dog’ dog.

I have read, understood, and agree to the above:

Print Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____