

Humane Society of Elmore County News – 15 Oct '07
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Director

There are many ways to help humane shelters and one of the most rewarding & challenging can be to become a foster home for animals in need. Fostering helps shelters save animals that otherwise might have to be euthanized since space is always at such a premium in shelters. We have many awesome foster homes that help us by bottle-feeding puppies & kittens (this is a particularly demanding task), taking on nursing dog and cat moms with litters, caring for animals too young to be ready for adoption or recovering from injuries or surgeries, rehabilitating an abused animal and providing care to dogs going through heartworm treatment.

Right now we have too many dogs that need to be treated for those nasty heartworms before they can be placed for adoption. Besides needing money for the treatments, we are also in need of foster homes for these dogs so that we can use their kennel space for other dogs during the 30-60 day treatment period.

So what does it take to be a foster for a heartworm treatment patient? The first requirement is to understand that this will normally take 30 days, but in some cases can require 60 days. While in foster care, the dog **MUST** be kept calm and not overexert itself or get too excited. This generally means being crated or kept inside a room so they can't run and play excessively and only going outside on a leash. No running, jumping, Frisbee/ball chasing, playing with other dogs/animals/children can be allowed as the key is to keep their heart rate at a normal resting rate most of the time. The dog might have to take some oral medication if prescribed by the veterinarian treating it, so the foster would need to be comfortable giving that medication. At the end of the 30/60 days, the dog will go back to the veterinarian for one final treatment and then be perfectly ready for adoption back at the shelter. One of the fringe benefits of being fostered like this is that because of the treatment requirements most of these dogs end up also house-trained, crate-trained, leash-trained and just happy and healthy dogs. Once treated they simply need to be kept on heartworm preventive like all other dogs and can go on to live long and healthy lives.

We usually find foster homes for the very small dogs, but it isn't as easy for the bigger dogs. We have five dogs about half-way through their treatment and have another four-five in need. These four-five dogs range in size from 20-45 lbs. Having foster homes will not only help these dogs, but will benefit dozens of other dogs who can use their kennel space while they are out of the shelter.

We will provide the foster with any crate, food/water dishes, leashes, blankets and food that is needed, and a foster care manual. We will also make sure the foster can contact shelter staff 24 hours/day in the event of an emergency or if the foster simply needs to bring the dog back to the shelter at any time.

So if you think you might be that great foster home for one of our dogs in need, just give us a call at 334/567-3377 or email hselco@bellsouth.net so we can discuss it further, fill out the necessary paperwork and find that right foster match-up.

“Being good is commendable, but only when it is combined with doing good is it useful.” ~Author Unknown