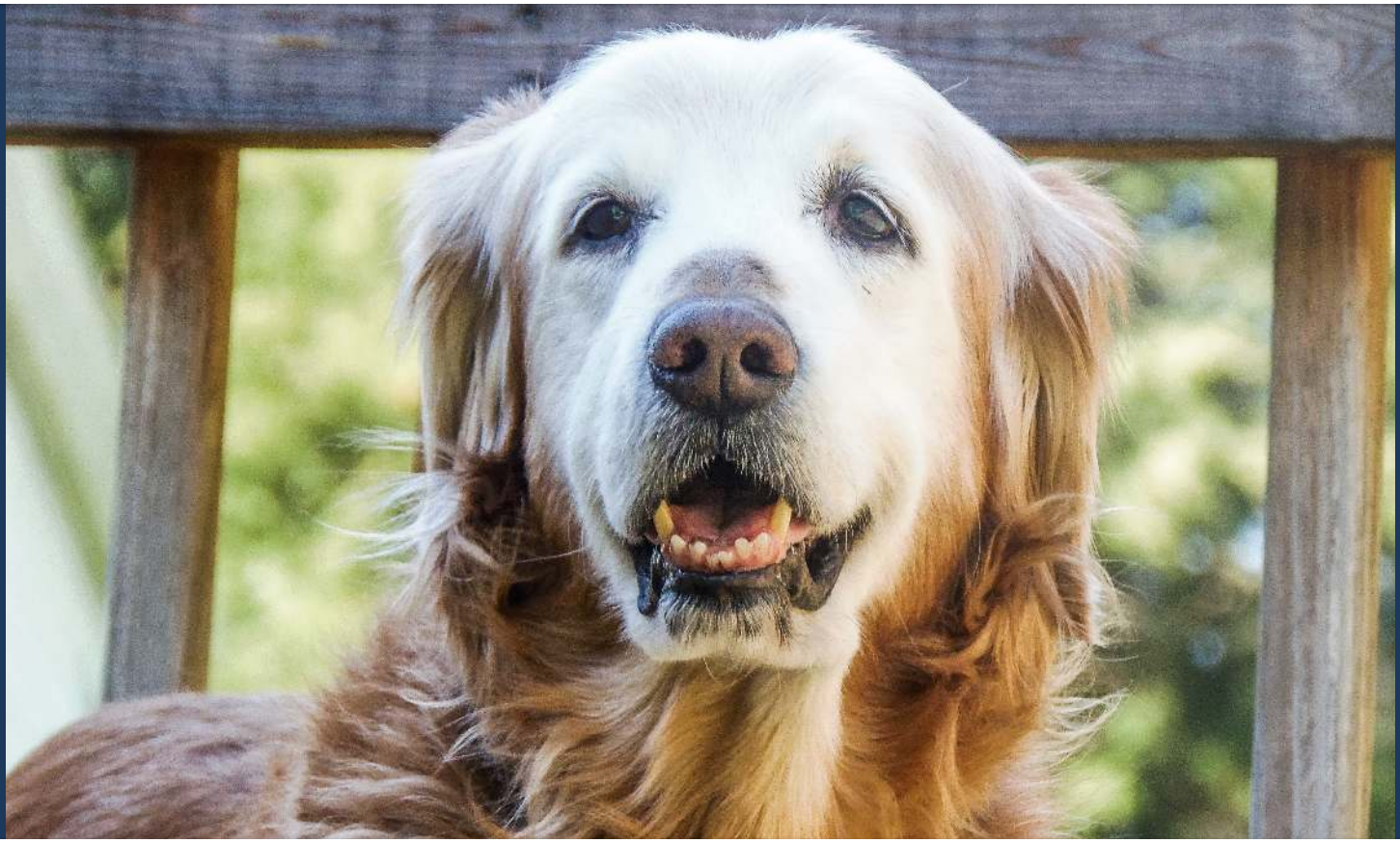
GOLDEN RETRIEVER RESCUE EDUCATION AND TRAINING



Winter 2015 Edition GRREAT *Beginnings* www.GRREAT.org/fosters

# What Fostering Can Teach Us

***by Mary Collings, Intake/Foster Home Coordinator***

A rescued dog can teach us things about ourselves, and through fostering, we can learn that we have more patience, tolerance, and understanding than we ever imagined. Most dogs who have been rescued don't ask for much from us, and they often act like every pat on the head or every treat is a the greatest gift they've ever gotten. They are so appreciative of everything we do for them!

Many of us have had puppies and as they've grown, they can almost have a sense of entitlement and why shouldn't they?!! After all, they've been loved, cared for, fed regularly, gotten all necessary vet care, taken on walks, and played with any time their heart desires. A rescued dog's life has often been filled with uncertainty, improper care, no training, and little or no companionship from the former owner. By the time this dog arrives in a foster home, he doesn't know what to expect, and there can be issues to work through.

Prior to coming into GRREAT, our Rocky 05-200 had been passed around from home to home; we were his fourth in three months. The first couple of weeks were very challenging because he was picking fights with one of our dogs, he tried to bolt out of doors, he counter-surfed, and the list of issues that needed to be worked through seemed endless. It was obvious that nobody had ever taken the time to show Rocky what was expected of him. Once Rocky learned that his behaviors were not ok, he blended into our family seamlessly. Rocky is 14-1/2 now, and not one day has passed in the last nine years since he arrived in our home that we haven't been truly grateful to have him in our lives.

There are countless stories about GRREAT foster dogs who came into the rescue with some "baggage." By showing them patience, understanding, and love, we get so much in return from them, whether their stay is a temporary stop on their way to a forever home or we are their forever home.

# $aving Money on Prescription Medications

***by Lucinda Twining, Medical Coordinator***

Hopefully, your foster dog won't need much in the way of medications, but we have found out a way to save a significant amount of money for GRREAT when foster dogs need to have prescriptions filled. As you may already know, purchasing medications at a vet's office is generally pretty expensive. In 2014, we spent approximately $20,000 on prescriptions for our foster dogs. The good news is that many times the medications our fosters need can be purchased less expensively at locations such as Costco, Walmart, Target and some grocery store pharmacies. Even some online sites such as Drs. Foster and Smith - http://www.drsfostersmith.com/ and Entirely Pets - http://www.entirelypets.com/ lower prices on prescription meds for dogs. You may even want to call Costco, Walmart, or whichever location you plan to use and request the price of the medication your vet is prescribing. You may then want to ask your vet if he/she would be willing to match the price; some of them will.

If you plan to use one of the online sources for purchasing your medications, you may want to ask your vet to provide a week's worth of the medication so that you can go ahead and start your foster dog on the medication while you are waiting for the medication you ordered online to get to you.

As I mentioned above, one of the places you can save money on prescriptions for pets is Costco. You do not need to be a member of Costco to use their pharmacy. You won't be able to purchase other items if you aren't a member, but you can purchase medications without a membership. But, we have learned that you can save even more money on the prescriptions if you already are or if you become a Costco member. Using the Costco Member Prescription Program (http://www.costco.com/pharmacy/member-prescription-program.html), you will be able to get many K9 medications at an amazing discount. Any dog with your last name (foster dog or your own dogs) can be part of this program. One of our foster moms found out, for example, that a medication for one of her foster dogs was priced at $27.28 at another store, but when she signed up for the Costco program, she was able to get the same medication for $8.00! That was almost a $20 savings for GRREAT. As you can imagine, if more of our foster families were able to get similar savings on meds for their foster dogs, it could help us reduce our veterinary costs significantly. So, if there is a Costco near you, we hope you will consider signing up for this program so that you can use it for any medications your foster dog might need and then continue to use it for future foster dogs as well.

Whether you use Costco, another pharmacy, or purchase your foster dog's medications online, we appreciate you helping us to reduce our veterinary costs.

# Holiday Hazards

*by Kathi Crouse, POC Team Leader*

Now that the Holiday season is upon us, along with the cold, snow and ice, it's time to start thinking about how these things affect our pets. Let's start with some holiday hazards. The holidays are fun, even for pets, but the season brings added danger for them. It's good to recognize and manage holiday hazards to keep your pets safe during this time of year.

**Tinsel**

Tinsel is attractive, especially to cats. It is not toxic but consuming tinsel can cause serious harm to your pet's digestive system. The long, tough strands can actually cut through the intestine and cause peritonitis.

**Ornaments**

Pets love to play with bright, colorful ornaments but may end up breaking or even chewing and swallowing them. Sharp, broken pieces can lacerate the animal's mouth, throat and digestive tract. Larger pieces can cause an obstruction and emergency surgery may be needed.

**Christmas Trees**

Cats love to climb trees, especially when it is indoors and full of ornaments and other decorations. A climbing cat can pull a fully decorated tree crashing to the ground, potentially injuring the animal. Tree water may contain dangerous fertilizers and stagnant tree water may contain unhealthy bacteria.

**Mistletoe and Holly**

Consuming holly may cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Eating mistletoe can result in stomach upset and even heart problems. A cat may suffer kidney failure after ingesting some types of lilies.

**Poinsettias**

A lot of people have been led to believe that the poinsettia plant is deadly for pets and children, but this is actually an unlikely occurrence. The poinsettia plant's brightly colored leaves contain a sap that is irritating to the tissues of the mouth and esophagus. If the leaves are ingested, they will often cause nausea and vomiting, but it would take a large amount of the plant's material to cause poisoning, and most animals and children will not eat such a large enough amount because of the irritating taste and feel from the sap.

However, if the plant has been treated with a pesticide, your pet could be at risk of becoming ill from ingesting the pesticide. The size of your pet and the amount of ingested plant material will be the determining factors for the severity of the poisoning. Young animals -- puppies and kittens -- are at the highest risk. Severe reactions to the plant or to the pesticide it has been treated with include seizures, coma, and in some cases, death.

**Chocolate**

A dog or cat that eats chocolate may experience vomiting and diarrhea, panting, hyperactivity, abnormal heart rhythm, seizures and in severe cases, even death. The darker the chocolate, the more toxic compounds it contains.

**Turkey Meat and Bones**

Dogs and cats love turkey but this may be dangerous to their health. Tiny bones that, if swallowed, may cause painful constipation or even splinter to perforate the stomach; both conditions require immediate veterinary attention. Feeding rich and fatty food can cause vomiting, diarrhea, and even inflammation of the pancreas. Raw or undercooked turkey can contain Salmonella, E. coli, or Campylobacter bacteria that can lead to food poisoning.

**Sage**

The herb Sage contains essential oils and resins that add flavor to turkey and other holiday foods but this herb can cause an upset stomach and even nervous system problems, especially in cats.

**Dough**

Consuming raw bread dough is exceptionally dangerous for pets, as heat from the animal's body causes the dough to rise inside its stomach. The pet may experience vomiting, severe abdominal pain and bloating.

Any pet encountering these holiday hazards may need immediate veterinary care for a complete examination, blood tests, x-rays, medications and even surgery. Make this holiday season merry for everyone, including your pets by keeping them safe from these potential holiday hazards.

# Cold Weather Tips

*by Kathi Crouse, POC Team Leader*

It's COLD outside! The following guidelines will help you protect your pets when the mercury dips.

- Keep your cat inside – outdoors, cats can freeze, become lost or stolen, injured or killed. Cats who are allowed to stray are exposed to infectious diseases, including rabies from other cats, dogs and wildlife. Also, during the winter, cats sometimes sleep under the hoods of cars. When the motor is started, the cat can be injured or killed by the fan belt.

- Never let your dog off the leash on snow or ice, especially during a snowstorm as they can easily become lost. Make sure your dog always wears ID tags.

- When your dog comes in out of the sleet, snow or ice, be sure to thoroughly wipe off his or her legs and stomach. They can easily ingest salt, antifreeze or other potentially dangerous chemicals while licking their paws and their paw pads may also bleed from snow or encrusted ice.

- Never shave your dog down to the skin in the cold winter months, a longer coat will provide more warmth. Make sure to completely dry them off after bathing before taking them out for a walk. Short haired breeds will benefit from a coat or sweater with a high collar or turtleneck and good coverage for the body.

- Never leave your dog or cat alone in a car during cold weather. A car can act as a refrigerator, holding in the cold and causing the animal to freeze to death.

- Puppies do not tolerate the cold as well as adult dogs and may be difficult to housebreak during the winter. If your puppy is sensitive to the cold you may opt to paper-train him inside. If your dog is sensitive to the cold due to age, illness or breed type, it's best to take him outdoors only to relieve himself.

- If your dog spends a lot of time engaged in outdoor activities you should increase his supply of food, particularly protein, to keep him and his fur in good shape.

- Antifreeze and coolant are lethal poisons for dogs and cats. Be sure to thoroughly clean up any spills from your vehicle and consider using products that contain propylene glycol rather than ethylene glycol.

- Make sure that your dog or cat has a warm place to sleep, off the floor and away from all drafts. A dog or cat bed with a warm blanket or pillow is perfect for them.