

GRREAT
PO BOX 3069
FALLS CHURCH, VA
22043
703-620-6593

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

* Do you have a great personal vet? Let us know and we'll send you a letter to introduce GRREAT and ask them to participate with us!

* In an emergency, contact Jessie Robinson, 301-503-3963, or the GRREAT beeper, 703-620-6593, box 7, immediately.

* Email protocol: Always start your emails with your foster dog's name and ID number (e.g. Koko 08-056) Add anything else afterwards and remember to copy the whole team.

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GRREAT BEGINNINGS

Foster Home Newsletter

www.grreat.org/fosters

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 1

MAY 2008

Sick as a Dog!!

Oh no, Buddy is limping! Goldie can't seem to keep her food down! Max keeps scratching at his ears! Sadie is coughing! Should you call your vet and make an appointment? The answer is, unless it is an emergency—not yet!

Since veterinary costs are so high and GRREAT is completely dependent on the generosity of its members and donors, we absolutely must control our costs. One way we do this is to work with specific vets that give us a Rescue discount. That's why we provide you with a list of GRREAT approved vets when you get a foster dog. Please use only these vets for your foster's needs.

Another way we control our costs is to require prior approval for any vet visits other than for the following pre-authorized reasons:

- Thorough physical exam;
- Rabies vaccine;
- Distemper combo vaccine;
- Bordatella vaccine;
- Fecal float;
- Heartworm/Lymes combo test (4DX or 3DX);
- Spay/neuter.



Buzzy recovers from an injury to his paw

Anything that is not on that list requires approval prior to making an appointment with a GRREAT approved vet. Please contact the Foster Home Coordinator, Erin Ledbetter (410-231-2096, GRREAT-FHC@comcast.net) OR the POC Coordinator, Lucinda Twining (703-754-4379, Velcro_Goldens@hughes.net), for approval.

Once you get to the vet, if he/she wants to do a test or procedure (ex: x-ray, sonogram, dental work, blood test, etc.) call the Veterinary Liaison, Jessie Robinson, right from the vet's office, 301-503-3963. If you cannot reach her, call the GRREAT beeper, 703-620-6593, box 7.

Hopefully Buddy, Goldie, Max and Sadie will be feeling better soon!!

Covering Vet Costs for Foster Dogs

Many of our foster homes have generously been willing to cover all or a portion of the medical costs for their foster dogs and for that we thank you! However, we do have one request:

Instead of paying the vet directly, please allow them to bill GRREAT and then you can send us a donation check. Please indicate the dog's name and ID number on the check. This way we can accurately track per-dog charges and per-dog donations, we can send you an acknowledgement letter (which can be used

for tax purposes,) and we can keep our auditors happy and our dog records straight.

If you have already paid any GRREAT vet bills this year, please send a copy of the invoice, with the dog's name and ID number clearly marked, to our GRREAT PO Box (address above) with a note indicating that the invoice has been paid as a donation.

Remember, donations to GRREAT are tax deductible so please save your receipts!

Putting Your Best Foot (ahem PAW) Forward



Luke visits the
Doggie Parlor

You and your foster have decided to attend a GRREAT Adoption Day. YOU know how wonderful your dog is and you want to make sure he/she makes the best first impression possible. Here are some key steps to making sure your pup is ready for the big day:

1. Your foster dog should smell clean. Start with a bath or if you simply don't

have time or your dog is very difficult to get into a tub, you can try some pet wipes found in most pet supply stores.

2. Brush your dog thoroughly to get rid of any mats and tangles.

3. Clean his/her ears with cotton balls and a gentle ear cleaner.

4. How do those nails look? If they are long or sharp, carefully trim them.

5. Finally, using a soft toothbrush or a washcloth, gently clean your dog's teeth. They even make doggie toothpaste, but simply wiping the teeth should do the trick.

You'll be given a nice bandana for your dog at the Adoption Day which will be icing on the cake. Now your foster is ready to "WOW" potential adopters!

*"Thank you from
the very bottom of
my big Golden
heart for fostering
me until my
Forever Home is
found."*

Please Protect Me

I am your GRREAT foster dog, and I know you'll take good care of me on the first leg of my journey to my Forever Home. To protect me, please be sure I am wearing a collar with my GRREAT ID tag on it at all times, and please ensure that I am microchipped by a GRREAT volunteer as soon as possible. If you are picking me up from a shelter or give-up owner, please put the tag on my collar as

soon as you see me. Also, for my safety I hope you will ensure the collar is snug, but with room to fit two fingers between my neck and the collar. It should not be loose enough to slip over my head, or so tight as to restrict my breathing. While you're here, let me share a tip with you that can help GRREAT save money. If I already have a good collar and leash, even ones that

don't look so pretty, please add a GRREAT ID tag and continue to use them rather than requesting a new set. I was very surprised to learn how much money is spent on new collars and leashes, so I'm just trying to do my part to help cut back expenses. Thank you from the very bottom of my big Golden heart for fostering me until my Forever Home is found.

New POC for Senior and Ortho Goldens

Kim Wiff, POC

My husband Carl & I adopted our first GRREAT dog, Wendy, in 1999 and a year later became a foster home for the rescue. In that time we have fostered Goldens of all ages, with many different health and behavior issues. Like all foster homes, we found that we had some fosters that we couldn't say good-bye to. In the last 8 years we have "officially adopted" 9 of our foster dogs. After serving for 4 years as president of GRREAT, I really enjoy my "less active" roll as a foster home and as a POC for the senior Goldens coming in, as well as for those foster homes who have Goldens with orthopedic issues.

Just some of
the Wiff
clan smiling
through the
fence.



Glamour Shots

Take a picture of each dog you foster and email it to us, even if the dog will not be listed on the website. The picture will become part of the dog's permanent record and is useful for several reasons:

- To help identify the dog in case he or she is lost, or returned to GRREAT;
- for the website;
- to personalize the Welcome Card sent to new adopters.

If you do not have a digital camera, please let us know and we'll get you together with a volunteer who does.

PHOTO TIPS

0 Just say "NO" to Flash:

Eye shine is cool if you're looking for a sci-fi theme but it's better to see those baby browns when showing off your foster dog. Try taking the picture outside if inside is too dark.

0 **Head-on is Cuter:** Take the picture from the dog's level rather than from the "bird's eye view." You'll get more of an idea of personality, expression and avoid perspective distortion.

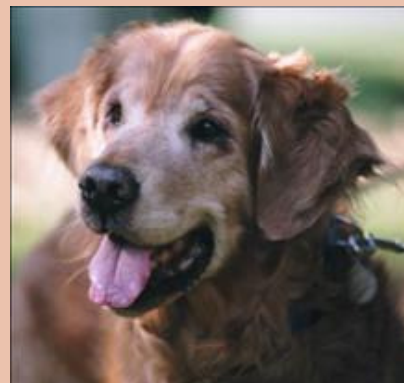
0 **Never Underestimate the "AWWWW" Factor:** Holding a favorite toy or getting someone to hold one behind you can help get a very cute expression on your foster's face. Try to hold the toy or treat low so you can get a good head-on shot.

0 **Minimize Props and Backgrounds:** The focus should be on the dog rather than a costume, toy, or busy background. We can help you crop the photo if needed.

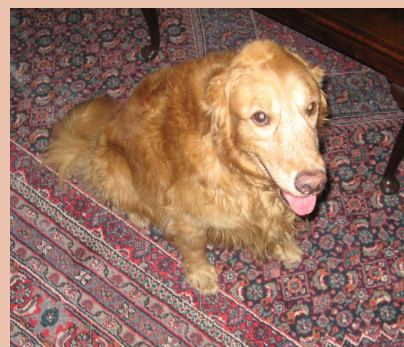
0 **Focus, Focus, Focus:** Be sure camera and dog are still, particularly in low light, or the picture may be blurry.

0 **Use higher Resolution:** Please allow a high enough resolution so the picture can be enlarged and printed without getting blurry. Anything less than 100KB might not be enough. Conversely, anything over 1MB is probably too much and will fill up email Inboxes.

0 **Have FUN:** A happy dog and foster parent take better pictures!



DO's: Head on, perked ears, beautiful eyes, focus on dog



DON'Ts: Above angle causes perspective distortion; flash causes eye shine and face wash-out; background very busy

Choosing Heartworm Medication

We are encouraging all of our foster homes to switch to Interceptor if you currently use Heartgard. We have seen a larger number of foster dogs this year that have tested positive for Whipworms, and Heartgard does not kill them.

Whipworms live in the soil and can infect other dogs so until your foster has a negative fecal result, please be sure to IMMEDIATELY pick up his/her poop.

Other reasons to use Interceptor include:

- Heartgard chewables must be chewed to be effective. If your dog swallows them whole, they can pass through the system without benefit
- Heartgard is beef flavored which can be a problem for dogs with beef allergies

- Interceptor also helps treat Demodex mites.
- Interceptor is much easier on a dog's system with fewer possible side effects and adverse reactions than Heartgard.
- Some vets, particularly holistic practitioners, believe that both Interceptor and Heartgard can be given every 6 weeks rather than once monthly (please check with your vet before changing the dosing schedule of either medicine.)

Heartgard, Interceptor, Frontline, collars, leashes, and harnesses can be picked up at any Adoption Day OR requested from our Supply Coordinator, Sue Rose, supplies@grreat.org. (Be sure to get a negative HW test prior to giving your foster HW meds!)

Coordinator Corner, meet our new FHC

A big hello and thank you to all GRREAT Foster Homes. I'm Erin Ledbetter, the new Foster Home Coordinator as of March 2008. I know I have big shoes to fill, following in the illustrious footsteps of my dear friend, Mary Collings who held this position for 13 months. I have previously worked with many of you as a GRREAT Point of Contact, but for those that I have not met in person or over e-mail, I look forward to working with you. You can read my Bio in the Dec 2007 issue of the FH Newsletter and see some pictures of my Golden Fur-Kids.

The true key to GRREAT's success and ability to help so many Golden Retrievers is our wonderful and valued array of Foster Homes. So far this year, GRREAT has taken in 85 Goldens, and as of today we have placed 82 in their forever homes. Denise Malczewski has recently sent out an Update Form via e-mail to all FH approved prior to 2006. I have also sent out a few mass e-mails to elicit more about you and if you are available to foster. I appreciate all of the feedback I have received from all of you. Keep it coming!



Erin and Eoghan

We currently have several dogs in boarding without a foster home lined up. Many foster homes aren't available until the school year is out, so if you can help now that would be wonderful. If you find yourself in circumstances that would allow you to take in a foster immediately please feel free to e-mail me at GRREAT-FHC@comcast.net and let me know.

For those not familiar with the process, I have a list of "Dogs Awaiting Foster Homes" that I keep updated at all times. This list is always available to you, just shoot me an e-mail stating that you would like to receive it. Once you narrow down for whom you'd like information, I will send you the Intake info and hopefully a picture. When you decide on a foster dog, I will start the ball rolling with Transport Coordinator, Vicki Eurice and assign you a Point of Contact.

Thanks so much to all of you that support this worthy organization in any way you choose to help. Even if you are not able to take in a foster, you can help with transporting a Golden to a Foster Home or Volunteer at one of our many events. Your time is your most valuable gift.

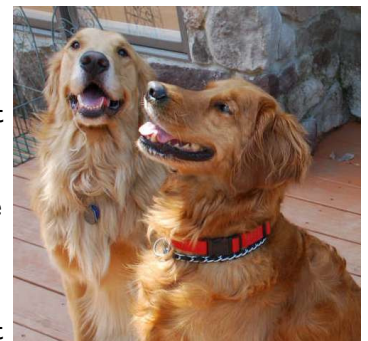
Thank you, Erin Ledbetter, GRREAT-FHC@comcast.net

A New Addition to the POC Team

NANCY FOREST, POC

Maybe I was a golden retriever in another life somewhere. Or maybe I want to be a golden, because they are the happiest dogs on earth. Or maybe – to use a technical psychological term -- I'm just a little nuts. I can't explain the attraction to these dogs, but I will bet that anyone reading this knows the feeling. We became a foster family nearly three years ago. Drake was our first foster, and we were awed that a dog who had been tied up outside all his life could emerge as a happy and contented member of the household and dog society. In addition to Drake's being a wonderful dog, we also met lots of wonderful humans in our first foster adventure. Lucinda stepped us through the adoption process, and soon Drake's description was posted on the web site. As happens fairly regularly, the perfect family was found, and there was no doubt in my mind they would best provide Drake's new home. Everyone who called about Drake had a story to tell of his/her former golden(s). I learned to listen carefully and patiently, because the stories were often very personal and poignant, involving the loss of a treasured dog. What I learned from listening was that there are many people in this world who love goldens as much as I do, and no matter what the difference in ages, life experiences, or current situations, there is a bond among us that overcomes those differences. So GRREAT has provided for me a social network, not to mention providing

seven more wonderful goldens to foster. My husband tells me that I was anxious to retire from the working world, because I didn't want to miss any time with the dogs. He isn't wrong, but don't tell him that. It was inevitable that a foster dog was going to claim my heart big time, and Marley did just that last August. We couldn't stop laughing at this big, sweet, sloppy, intelligent and completely goofy dog, and we still can't. And because we have another permanent golden, Huston, we are at capacity. So being a POC just seemed like a natural next step to stay involved with GRREAT. It's almost like a substitute for fostering, because I "see" dogs being cared for by other caring foster families, and go with them through the adoption process. People see the face of the Creator in many different ways – some through organized religion, some through nature's incredible beauty and diversity, and some through service to others. I guess I see joy, love and "soul stuff" in the faces of goldens, and I am privileged to be in their company.



Huston and Marley