



**NORTHWEST CANADIAN
GREYHOUND LEAGUE**

**Providing Greyhound Rescue and Adoption Services to
Northwest Canada**

Charitable Organization 89972 9214 RR0001

Web Site: www.ncgl.ca

Fostering – the first three days *Anette Hansen*

Fostering isn't for everyone, but it should be.

It is rewarding in ways you won't foresee, and gives back far more than it takes.

One of the most common reasons people tell me they can't foster is the difficulty of becoming attached and then having to give up the dog.

Yes, that can be very hard, but the rewards far outweigh the difficulties.

This is my wee story on why I foster, I'm at 62 fosters, and counting...

I adopted my first greyhound 14 years ago, when NCGL was started by Cindy and Bryan in Grande Prairie, and was still in it's early days. My Brimstone was number 11 adopted out by NCGL. Cindy and Bryan brought her down from Grande Prairie to Vancouver Island; they had fostered her for 3 months, and loved her dearly. We fell in love with Brimstone on the spot. She was the sweetest, gentlest love I have ever met. She made me want to help other dogs like her, so I began fostering. Since then I have 'failed fostering' twice, adopting two of my fosters. Plus my recent 4th adoption, known as 'chipping' because you can't have just one!

The best moment of fostering? That is absolutely knowing that dog is going to bring to that family what Brimstone brought to mine. She changed my life, she brought to me some of the most amazing people I have ever known, and was the catalyst for an endless stream of positive life changes and friendships. My entire life changed for the better, all because of one greyhound.

I foster because I want to pass that on to new families, that amazing dog that will change lives.

It is really hard to say goodbye, but it sure is wonderful to hear how much that new family loves their greyhound.

The hardest part, watching them go, oh, that moment when they turn and look at you as they leave with the new family, wondering why you are letting them be taken...that is the hardest moment of all.

Fostering a retired racer isn't easy, but it is rewarding, not to mention really, really entertaining at times.

When the new dog arrives you need a safe place for them to den. A large crate, or an expen covered with a blanket are best. The greyhounds are used to being kenneled so generally they accept a crate easily. If you use an expen I recommend a tarp under the dogs bedding. Although it is rare, an accident could happen, and you don't want any mess soiling your floors.

The crate/expen should be in the main area of the home, family room, or wherever you spend most of your time. Preferably within close proximity to the outside door the dog will use for pottying. Have the pen set up before your foster dog arrives, you will likely need it almost immediately.

Our greyhounds come to foster care with a leash and collar, and ID tag and tag collar, and a muzzle. While it is tempting to 'free' the dog from life with a muzzle on, please realize that greyhounds are used to being muzzled, it is not a cruelty to use the muzzle, rather, it can keep the new greyhound from making a mistake that could be life altering. Please always muzzle when the new dog is meeting other dogs, this includes household dogs, dog park dogs, any and all dogs and other pets. Until you know your foster dog, always err on the side of caution. Please also muzzle when meeting children of any age. Muzzles are also a good idea when you are getting the dog used to being left alone loose in the house, just in case they decide your shoes would make a fun toy. You also do the adoptive family a favour by keeping the dog familiar with crate and muzzle, as the new family will need to use those when they take the dog home.

If you meet people who are scared by the muzzle, just say it is a new dog and you are just getting to know the dog and are simply being cautious. Most people understand and appreciate that.

Introduce your foster dog to the yard and inside the home on lead. This way you are close by and in control as they explore new surroundings.

Keep in mind that retired racers have never been in a home, everything is new to them. From floor surfaces, to stairs, glass, mirrors, counters, and food within reach. Not to mention other dogs, cats, and children.

Doors and windows within dog reach should be marked with masking tape. New greyhounds have no concept of glass and have been known to try to leap through glass.

Almost all new greyhounds will 'counter surf' attempting to help themselves to any food on the counter. I caught one of my new foster boys sneaking down my stairs with a full loaf of bread in his mouth, and another caught just in time after stealing a dirty steak knife out of the sink. Anything food scented is fair game.

During the first 1 to 3 days, you will need to follow your foster dog everywhere when they are exploring. Everywhere. They will put feet up on counters, steal things, and generally stick noses and bodies everywhere as they explore this new thing we call a house.

Greyhounds are used to being turned out at the track to do their business, so tend to be naturally clean about house manners, but they need to be taught where outside is when they are in a home. Marking in the house is not a sign of bad house manners, or an untrained dog, it is simply that a greyhound has no idea about what they can, and cannot do, inside a house. Follow your dog, and if they show the intent to mess in the house, a quick correction and scoot them outside, will show them the house rules. I have had surprisingly few 'go' in the house because I take the time right at the beginning to follow them around and catch any unwanted behaviours right away, and they all figure it out very quickly. It's a worthwhile time investment. Just a quick verbal 'no' or 'tsk' or whatever sound you like, will stop them.

Use the crate. When you go to the washroom, when you need a break, or when you need to go out, please. Use the kennel. Track dogs are kenneled the better part of their days, and while the goal is to eventually have them out of the crate and integrating into the household, you will need to utilize the crate a lot in the early days, and that is as it should be. Also, to the best of your ability, continue to use the crate at night and for when you are out, as it will help the new family. If your foster dog starts to protest at being crated, a Kong with peanut butter is usually an effective way to make them happy in their crate.

Use the crate for feeding if there are other dogs in the house, and assess how the dog feels about their food. Some greyhounds are naturally very defensive about their food, as they have never had another dog stick their nose in their dish. It may take a while to get the new dog used to the proximity of another dog while eating, and this should be done with extreme caution.

Start by feeding in a closed crate, then an open crate, but be right there. Then outside of the crate, then gradually move the feeding areas closer together. Always stand in between while the dogs are eating, always. I'm not a believer in feeding any dogs too close together, so if the closest they get is across the room from each other, that's just fine. If you feel the new dog (or the family dog) won't accept sharing feeding space, don't take any chances and feed them in separate rooms or feed one outside.

If the new dog becomes territorial over items such as bones or toys, start taking them away regularly, cautiously of course, push the dog's neck/head away and take the item, say 'mine', hold it and carry it around a bit, then return it, then do it all over again, and again. Greyhounds have not had the opportunity to have things of their own, and they can become protective once they have 'things'. It is important they learn to graciously give it up, particularly if they go to a home with children. They tend to learn this very quickly. Most greyhounds simply want to please.

Most greyhounds also love to move objects around the house, I think it is the freedom of having things, and being able to manipulate their environment, which is not a freedom they have experienced before. They steal and relocate, but rarely destroy. (But sometimes they do, if it's precious, put it out of reach). I love watching them learn to take and move things, they are so proud!

I had two male fosters at once, and one stole every toy and shoe he could find, and took them outside and piled them on the deck, the other boy took the toys from the deck pile and moved them back into the house and piled all those things on a dog bed. And it went on and on, and on, and I laughed so hard I cried. They never got upset with each other; they just determinedly kept moving 'their' things, to their spot. Sooo funny!

Even the act of opening a drawer can cause a greyhound surprise, it's a concept they don't know, and we take for granted, most of my fosters are completely entertained watching me open and close drawers. Most funny.

Mirrors are also fascinating; they seem to think we keep dogs in the walls when they see their reflections.

When the dogs arrive their time clock is usually a bit out of whack. Track dogs usually get up fairly early, and most are from an earlier time zone. Your dog may start to fuss as early as 4:30-5, when they fuss take them out to do their business, then out them back to bed. Turn on very few lights, and don't make a fuss or speak any more than necessary. Quietly back to crate and bed and you may be able to get another hour or so before their stomach clock protests. If they continue to fuss try turning on country radio. Many of the kennels play country music to drown out any outside noises and keep the dogs calm. It really can help settle them in.

If they still fuss after going outside, and the music doesn't work, then they are hungry, so feed, then back to bed. The idea is to gradually stretch out the time between the dog waking, and when you let them out and feed them. I find it's only about a week at most before they are switched to our time.

When your foster dog is interacting with other dogs, be very, very careful. Keep the dog muzzled at first. What looks like play to most people, can actually be a greyhound exhibiting prey drive and it is a flash of a second from 'play' to 'prey'. If you see your greyhound going over the top of a dog's neck and getting 'grabby' with it's mouth, that's prey drive. This usually occurs when the other dog is making quick movements and/or noises. Squealing, whining and fast action dogs can trigger a fresh greyhound's prey drive. They simply are not used to this sort of movement from other dog breeds. In most cases it fades with time and exposure, but keep that muzzle on to prevent any injuries. Watch and get to know your foster's body language, very quickly you will recognize the eye focus and 'over the top' body language that signals they are becoming reactive. It does not mean they are going to be like this forever, they just need to learn that dogs are dogs, even the squeaky bouncy ones.

I have found that the first 3 days are most labour intensive, but also so very, very rewarding. Watching them learn and explore their new life is a gift.

Every dog we open our home and heart to, gets one more sweet, sensitive dog out of the racing life, and saves that life. As hard as it can be to love and care for, then to say goodbye to these amazing gentle loving dogs, you are giving the most amazing gift. Not just to the new family, but especially to the greyhound. They will know forever love, in their forever home. Soft beds, good food, health care, and unconditional love, and by fostering, you give that gift.

As heartbreaking as it is to watch your dear foster dog leave with their new family, it is even more heart filling to hear how the new family loves and appreciates their new family member.

Please consider fostering.

These dogs are life changing. Whether by adoption, or by fostering, they will change your life.

Welcome to our newest dogs!

Raiders Nia (Eva)	Copperhead (Copper)
Pat C It A Hoot (Hooter)	Pat C Kenzee (Kenzee)
Pat C Miss Pearl (Olivia Rose)	Djays Quittinyou (Winsor)
Roc A By Tootsie (Tang)	Smiley (Snorri)

Please note: Due to high expenses our adoption fee has gone up January 1 to \$315 and will rise to \$350 on July 1. The adoption fee for seniors (dogs 8 years of age and up) has risen to \$250. Our average cost per dog last year was \$600. In order to keep helping dogs, we need to raise our adoption fee. We will also now include a tag collar (along with the collar/lead/muzzle/tag that we always provided).

Cold weather tips

If you have outside stairs, whether wood or concrete, purchase Eco-Traction from Home Hardware. One large bag will last more than a year. They may need to order it in for you. You sprinkle it (looks like rough sand) on your stairs and then even if they get frosty, they aren't slippery. One bag is much cheaper than the vet bills to stitch up a dog or cast a broken leg. You will need to sprinkle it more than once, as the wind will blow it off the stairs. This product was recommended to me several years ago, I bought it, used it, tested it, and it truly works to keep dogs from slipping on frosty stairs. Not sure about ice, but try it and test yourself first.

Got bored dogs but it's too cold to walk much? Take them for a drive, visit a friend, take them to a pet shop. Many pet stores are huge, allow dogs (on leash), and you can walk inside and let them select a toy or treat. Or look for a place near the water if you are on the west coast, as often it can be up to 10 degrees warmer at the water to go for a short walk. Play games with them inside. Take a towel and show them a treat, then show them you putting the treat under the towel. Let them get it out and eat it. You can do this with boxes, cups, towels, etc. You can purchase toys that when pushed by a dog, dispense treats. Another good inside game is hide and seek. You always get to hide. ☺ Call them and when they find you, give them a little treat, then go hide again. This kind of inside game takes the edge off when you can't give them enough outside exercise.

Rainbow Bridge Dogs we said goodbye to this past year

M (Ashley)
Bracken (Fastern Mymatrix)
Jack (LA Jack Squared)
Coltan (Zoltan)
Loveletter (Pat C Loveletter)
Diamond (PA's Diamond Gal)
Niles (Expeditiousquest)
Berry (Dutch Berretta)
Selma
Fly (Bodo)
Sara (Sahara)
Pluto (Mickey)

Farrah (Killer Eve)
Zena
Casey (PA's Caseyflyer)
Angie (Taking Names)
Angie (Myokie Danelle)
Patches (Pretty Patches)
Darrell (Darrell Hammond)
Skyla (Sissy)
Dawson (MP's Craig)
Ka (Kallie)
Archie
Joy (Miz Joy)

Emergency Planning for you and your animals

Before reading any farther, go do this: Type up a label that says:

In case of emergency, I have animals at home. Please call (insert phone number) to care for them.

Give a key to a family member, friend or neighbor who knows your pets and can care for them in an emergency. Stick the label on your wallet or near your driver's licence – somewhere that emergency personnel would find it if you were in a car accident.

PRIOR PLANNING SAVES LIVES:

Emergency planning for you and your animals *Maureen Nelms*

Hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, fires - any one of these things could mean you and your animals have to leave home immediately. What can you do to be prepared?

Try to anticipate what could happen in your area and plan for it. You should know exactly what you would do, where you would go, and how you would get there. "Hope for the best - plan for the worst" - old advice, but still sound.

1. ALWAYS fill your gas tank when it is half empty. In a mass evacuation, gas stations will either be closed or the gas will be for emergency vehicle use only.
2. Keep a flashlight plugged into a socket in your bedroom. These flashlights charge while plugged in and automatically come on when the power goes out. Even if they fall on the floor, they stay on so you can actually see where things are.
3. Have a grab'n go bag near your bed. If you are awakened in the middle of the night and told to evacuate, you can grab your bag and your animals, hop into your vehicle, and you're off. I use a gym bag filled with the following:
 - Heavy gloves and shoes (in case there is broken glass)
 - Flashlight and batteries (store the batteries in a sealed plastic bag)
 - Water - you don't need a lot - fill an empty gallon jug from the tap
 - Food - juice, protein bars and dog biscuits are all that's required
 - Waterproof matches and candles
 - Orange garbage bags - (these are highly visible & great to keep warm & dry)
 - Emergency blankets - the little silver ones, sufficient for you & the dogs
 - Medication - one week's worth of your medication & any your dogs take
 - Extra leashes - your dogs should ALWAYS be wearing collars with tags

- Laminated copies of important papers such as your dog's registration papers, vaccination records, your driver's license, birth certificate, etc.
 - Quarters for pay phones and some bills for miscellaneous expenses
 - Extra keys to your vehicle(s) and your home
 - First aid kit with supplies for you and for your dogs
 - A list of phone numbers of out-of-town friends and relatives that could provide a place to stay for you and your dogs
 - Warm clothes for you (keep it simple)
 - Photos of your dogs in case they get lost
 - Plastic bags for picking up after the dogs
4. Not all emergencies happen when we're at home. Just in case I have to walk home (I'm not evacuating anywhere without my animals!), in the trunk of my car I have a backpack filled with the same things as my grab'n go bag with the addition of the following:
- A wind up radio
 - A crowbar (this can be used as a tool or a defensive weapon)
 - Flares to put around my car when I leave it
 - Sweat pants (in case I am wearing a skirt) and a pair of sneakers
5. On a larger scale, I keep two big plastic garbage cans on wheels outside my house. These can be taken with me or in the event that an earthquake has made my home structurally unsafe, the cans should provide everything I need to survive with my animals. Yes - there will be shelters available. No - they will not accept animals. So if you have dogs, **you** will have to provide for them. There's more room in the large garbage cans so you can include many extra items such as:
- Tarps - perfect for temporary shelter
 - Rope
 - Hammer and nails, and other tools, such as an axe and a folding shovel
 - Lots more food for the dogs (dry food) and people - dried soups, nuts, peanut butter, canned meats, fruits and vegetables
 - Can opener
 - Blankets - real ones for me and for my dogs
 - Extra clothing for me and extra coats for the dogs
 - A larger first aid kit and first aid books for people and for canines
 - Prescription medications - more for people and for the dogs
 - Towels
 - A whistle
 - Personal supplies such as toilet paper, toothpaste, soap, etc.
 - A deck of cards, paper and a pen, a couple of books.

You will also need lots more water (I store mine outside in 5 gallon containers and add four drops of chlorinated bleach for every gallon of water, then change the water every six months).

Sounds like a lot of work and a lot of money doesn't it? The secret is to start small and add a bit at a time. Put a couple of bottles of water in the trunk of your car. Buy a gym bag and fill it with one item a week. If you go camping regularly, put all your supplies somewhere you could grab them quickly. Contact your municipality and see if they have any recommendations for coping with the type of disaster your area could expect. Contact a neighbour or friend who could evacuate your dogs for you if you aren't home. Most of all have a plan.