

VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTION

Foster Carer

Objective

The purpose of a GAP Foster Carer is to provide temporary in-home care for Greyhounds that have entered GAP, but are not yet deemed suitable for adoption. A period of foster care may be recommended for reasons including respite following surgery; adjustment from life as a racing or kennel dog to a family pet; further socialisation (e.g. adjustment to cats or children); or a period of supervised behavioural rehabilitation. Greyhounds in foster care may have either passed or failed their Green Collar Assessment prior to being fostered. Greyhounds recommended for foster care following a failed assessment are placed with appropriate, experienced carers, and supported with a behavioural rehabilitation training plan. Foster Carers provide essential care for the Greyhound, as well as enrichment activities such as walking, and interaction with new objects and experiences not encountered in racing life. The work of our Foster Carers supports GAP to achieve higher rates of permanent adoption of Greyhounds into suitable homes.

Key Duties & Responsibilities

Requirements of Foster Care are influenced by Victorian legislation, under the Code of Practice for the Operation of Shelters and Pounds. Key duties expected of our carers are:

- Provide all immediate needs of a Greyhound under your care including feeding, walking (if appropriate), socialising, grooming, training, and administering of any medications
- Collect and return Greyhounds to our kennel locations (Seymour, Mount Mercer, or Baxter) using your own transport, or at scheduled collection times at either The Meadows or Sandown Greyhound Racing Clubs. Pick up and drop offs are always by prearrangement.
- Attend any scheduled training sessions either with or without your greyhound, as part of your training plan (for longer term Behavioural Rehabilitation Foster care)
- Promptly report any sick, injured, or deceased greyhounds via the emergency contact provided
- Maintain cleanliness of animal housing areas, feeding, and drinking utensils
- Administer medication only as directed within your Foster Care Plan, and follow any instructions indicated by vets and GAP staff
- Provide feedback in the Foster Care Plan on the greyhound's temperament, responses to other animals, children etc., to assist in determining the most appropriate adoptive home
- Spend time providing environmental and social enrichment for the greyhound per the Foster Care Manual and the Foster Care Plan provided for each dog
- Ensure you adhere to the Foster Care Agreement, Volunteer Agreement, and any other relevant GRV policies you have signed or acknowledged, which are available to view on the volunteer portal

Key Skills and Selection Criteria

GAP recruit volunteers in accordance with the equal opportunities act, and welcome and encourage applications from suitably qualified candidates. Key skills and criteria required for the Foster Carer role are:

- Passion and commitment to animal welfare and Greyhounds as pets
- Ability to undertake relevant screening checks as required
- Experience of previous ownership, volunteering, or employment with dogs, especially Greyhounds
- Willingness and physical ability to control an animal up to 40kg
- Ability to read, understand, and follow all instructions provided in training materials
- Ability to transport Greyhounds securely in an air-conditioned vehicle
- Ability to house a Greyhound safely in an appropriate and secure environment
- Ability to allocate time each day to providing basic care for the Greyhound, as well as some enrichment activities (such as short walks). This does not exclude fulltime workers.
- Ability to communicate via email and submit feedback for each dog on an electronic form
- Foster periods are 3 weeks, or up to 3 months for a behavioural rehabilitation foster (BRF). Carers should commit to foster at least one dog each year and update their availability on our intranet

Training and Resources Provided

- All new volunteers are required to attend a two-hour induction session at GAP in Seymour. These sessions are held regularly and volunteers may choose the session that suits their availability.
- Foster Carers are required to read and understand a written training manual provided, view some video resources, and complete a short quiz before commencing
- Skills sessions are held periodically throughout the year for foster carers. These are generally held at GAP Seymour, or a metropolitan racing club, on either an evening or weekend.
- Visual training resources are available on the volunteer intranet to provide information on relevant topics, including Greyhound first-aid and prey drive behaviours
- Carers providing Behavioural Rehabilitation Foster care may be allocated one-to-one training sessions for them and their greyhound, with an approved trainer, at a convenient location and time
- Carers are provided with dry dog kibble and any medication required for the foster period
- Carers are also provided with a basic pet first-aid kit, lead, muzzle, and a dog coat in winter. Toys may be loaned from GAP also. We ask carers to provide a bowl and old blanket or pet bed.
- In the event of an emergency, carers may contact the emergency phone number provided 24/7
- Foster Carers connect with other carers for support and tips via a Facebook page as well as mentors

Reward and Recognition

Foster Carers provide invaluable support to GAP. To show our appreciation to carers for their ongoing commitment, we have a special reward and recognition program which includes:

- Special gifts for fostering milestones of 5, 10, 20, 30, 50, 75 and 100 greyhounds!
- Exclusive invites to special volunteer recognition events during National Volunteers Week in May, our end of year Thank You in December, and smaller events throughout the year.
- The option to provide your email address to the adoptive family of each greyhound you foster, so they may tell you how their greyhound is settling into his or her new life!