

## TAKING YOUR NEW FRIEND HOME

First of all, we'd like to thank you for adopting from Friends for Life. We are available for any questions and comments that you may have regarding your new companion, our level of service and any other concerns or questions you may have. We hope to assist you with anything that may come up over the next few weeks as you and your new friend are getting to know each other. Our aim is to make every adoption as successful as possible, so don't be afraid to call us! You have not only saved one life, by adopting your companion from us, but you've saved another life by opening up a space at our shelter that's badly needed by another dog that's still out on the streets! Give yourself a pat on the back for adopting a rescued animal and committing to caring for your new dog!

### INTRODUCING "ROVER" TO THE NEW HOME

When you first get home don't just take him through the front door and let him loose in the house! If you already have a dog, hopefully your dog has met with his new companion, but even if he has, please follow these tips:

- \*start by taking both dogs for a walk around the neighborhood to calm and relax them
- \*go into the backyard, keeping both dogs on lead and let them get to know each other
- \*drop the leashes and let them walk around together until they calm down
- \*take the leashes off and let them play for a while
- \*put the leashes back on
- \*keep the existing dog outside and take the new dog into the house on the leash
- \*start at one spot in the house and allow the dog to smell everything while he's being monitored
- \*if the dog tries to "mark" anything, give a firm correction and take him back outside
- \*after the dog has urinated outside, take him back into the house where you left off
- \*let him smell the whole house in this manner and watch for any unacceptable marking behaviors
- \*after the new guy has smelled the whole house, bring your existing dog in on a leash
- \*your dog may be a bit jealous of the new guy, so keep both dogs on lead for a while
- \*let both dogs walk around the house for a while and get to know each other
- \*when both dogs have calmed down, take the leashes off of both dogs and monitor their interaction
- \*make sure to do frequent trips outside as your new companion is very excited!

If you do not already have a dog for your new companion to meet, we still recommend to follow these steps of introducing your new dog buddy to your home. This will allow him to get to know your neighborhood, yard and home in a slower manner hopefully making it a bit easier for him to adjust.

We highly recommend, for the first few weeks to a month, that the dogs do not share food, toys, treats or bones. Separate them completely - one indoors and one out - for these activities. Usually there are no issues with sharing water, but if there is, you may need to put one water station inside and one outside. The two dogs have so many "doggie" issues to work out and sharing of these items will only cause friction in their relationship at this point and possibly lead to fighting. They both need to work out their boundaries and get to know each other right now! After a few weeks, begin introducing treats and toys slowly when the dogs are both together and monitor their actions very closely. They have their whole lives to share, so don't rush things!

We also highly recommend that the dogs not be left alone together for the first few weeks. Separate them by leaving one dog inside and one dog outside or ask your adoption counselor if there is an extra crate that we can loan to you for a few weeks while the dogs are adjusting to each other. While you're at work or shopping, you'll know that they are both safe and can be reunited upon your return home.

The first few days, your new dog will be a bit confused. Make sure to closely monitor all door activity and all gates in the yard are kept closed. If your dog does get out, please call our office immediately so that we can be on the look out for him, too. He's going to be on the nervous side, so make sure to take lots of bathroom breaks outside and monitor his actions in the house closely. It's not unusual for the dog to have strange eating patterns or loose bowels for the first few days until he settles in.

## **DOGS AND CATS**

If you are taking home a dog from our shelter to live with your cat, please take the following advice. We've tried our best to ensure that the dog you are adopting is safe to be around cats, but there are many factors involved in the relationship between cats and dogs! Sometimes cats are scared of new dogs, the chemistry is bad or you have a dog that likes to play with cats and your cat is not interested in interacting with your new companion. To safely adjust your new companion to living with your cat, please take your time! When first introducing Rover to the kitty, have him on a leash and be ready for some fireworks between the two. If the cat runs away, do not allow Rover to chase him or bark at him. Rover may be reacting to the kitty's natural instinct to fear dogs and may get excited that he was able to get a rise out of the kitty.

It's best for the first few weeks that all interaction between Rover and your cat is supervised closely. Completely separate the two animals while you are not home or unable to monitor their actions. It will take time for everyone to become friendly with each other. Relationships are not built overnight and it will take a while for everyone to learn how to get along together sharing the same home. If you experience any serious aggression problems with the dog that you adopted from us, please call our shelter! Volunteers experienced with cat/dog relationships are always available for any questions or concerns that you might have.

## **CRATE TRAINING**

For adult dogs, we highly recommend the use of a crate to safely allow your new dog to become accustomed to your home, work schedule and ease anxiety. Most of the dogs coming from our shelter are familiar with crates and find them comforting. Speak with your adoption counselor to see if we have any extra crates that we can loan you for a week or so to help your new companion adjust to your home.

By giving your new companion a crate, you are giving him his own personal space to relax and feel comfortable in. Consider your dog's crate his "den" and be respectful of it. Don't allow your children to crawl in the crate with him, coax him out or in any other way invade "his space". Many dogs will retreat to the crate if the kids become too rowdy or simply needs a rest or wants to chew his bone in comfort without distractions.

Before putting Rover into the crate he should have been exercised and had time to eliminate outside. The crate should be set up inside the house, in a cool and quiet area away from any windows that direct sunlight would shine onto the crate and make it too warm for him! To get Rover into the crate, show him a bit of a yummy treat and throw it to the back of the crate and more than likely, he'll follow it right in! Close the door and tell him what a good boy he is. We use the phrase "crate up" here at the shelter and most of the dogs are familiar with it and will respond to the phrase. You may need to give him a little collar tug to get him to go into the crate, but still praise him for going in and allow him to have the treat. If you are planning on being gone for more than an hour or so, you may want to leave a little bit of water in a bowl in the crate for him, but don't leave too much! Leave a couple of chew toys or bones in the crate for him to play with but rawhides are not recommended! Not only do rawhides make dogs very thirsty, but they may become sticky and if he tries to swallow it, it may become lodged in his throat! Nylabones, hooves, Boqda Velvets, rope toys and many other toys and bones are safe for use while the dog is not monitored.

The first thing you do when you return home is take your dog out of the crate and take him immediately outside to do his business. Play around and work off some of his energy! He probably slept while you were gone and has lots of energy to work off now that you're home.

### HOUSEBREAKING WITH A CRATE

Most of the dogs here at our shelter come from unknown pasts. A great many of them are naturally housebroken - meaning they know to eliminate outside already due to their natural instinct. We attempt to get all of our dogs into foster homes, but unfortunately there are more dogs than we have foster homes, so we don't always know for sure if a dog is trustworthy in the housebreaking department or not.

Using a crate for housebreaking is the easiest way to make sure your new companion won't have any confusion as to where he is supposed to eliminate. By using the crate, you will be able to shape his bathroom habits and hopefully minimize accidents in the house!

Before putting your dog into his crate, make sure he has been fed, watered, played with and has eliminated outside. Use a bit of a good smelling treat to lure him into the crate while using a command or catch phrase such as "go into your house". We use the phrase "crate up" here at the shelter and he may be familiar with it enough to go into the crate without a hassle. If needed, give your little buddy a push into the crate, close the door and praise him for going in! As soon as you return home from your outing, the first thing you do is go straight to the crate and take Rover out on a leash to his bathroom area. Use phrases such as "let's go potty" or "outside to do your business" as you're walking him to the backyard so that he'll get used to your commands. Stay with him until he eliminates and praise him. At this point, you can allow Rover some free time in the house, but don't leave him unattended for very long. Keep an eye on your new buddy while in the house for the first couple of days. If you are busy cooking dinner or working on a project and can't keep an eye on him, put him into the crate again until you are able to devote your attention to him. If he happens to have an accident in the house, don't bother scolding him - it won't do any good because he doesn't know yet where the correct place to eliminate is! Clean the area thoroughly and keep a closer eye on him for a while! Rubbing his nose in it or scolding him will only upset him and make him apprehensive of eliminating in front of you. You want him to be comfortable about "doing his business" near you so that you will have the opportunity to praise him for his GOOD habits! Using the praise method instead of correction will allow you to have a fully housebroken dog in a shorter amount of time!

Puppies will need to eliminate quite frequently while older dogs can wait for a little longer. If you have adopted a young dog, make sure that he goes out every hour or so, after eating, after drinking, after waking from a nap, and often during playtime. Young dogs don't fully develop muscle control to be trusted in the house without a potty break for long until they are 4 to 6 months of age.

How long is too long to keep Rover crated? Well, there are many answers to this question. Dogs are not nocturnal creatures, so while you are sleeping, he will probably be sleeping, too, and will probably not need any potty breaks at night unless the dog you have adopted is under 4 to 6 months of age. Mature dogs can go throughout the night without a break. During the day, a good way of calculating the time that your companion is crated is his age in months up to 8 months. An 8 week old puppy should be allowed to remain in his crate for over 2 hours at a time, a 4 month old puppy should not be allowed to remain in his crate for more than 4 hours, etc. Each dog matures at a different rate, so this is only a general guideline for you to use for the comfort of your dog. It's not healthy for a mature dog to go for more than 8 hours at a time without a potty break.

By crating Rover at night, you'll be getting a "free" 8 hours of crate training nightly. He will also become accustomed to his crate more quickly. Inhibiting accidents in the house at night will make the job of housebreaking go a lot faster and your new companion will understand what's expected of him. Don't think of crate training as punishment! Crate training is humane and uses the dog's natural instinct to den to your advantage. Dogs will not soil the area that they sleep in and actually take comfort in the crate as being "his area" to relax in.

## **OBEDIENCE TRAINING**

Since many of our dogs come from the streets, they do not have any schooling on commands such as "sit", "down", "stay" or any of the other things that are crucial to dogs living closely with humans in our homes. On a day to day basis, the commands that you will learn through obedience training will help you and your new companion understand each other and will make your lives much easier! Obedience training not only allows you to control your dog's actions, but it also builds your companion's confidence and strengthens the bond between you both. Your dog will have a better understanding of your body language sooner and will learn the tones of your voice more quickly. By enrolling your new companion in school immediately upon taking him home, you will increase the possibilities of him remaining in your home. 90% of dogs turned in to shelters have NOT been obedience trained! We've also found that dogs adopted from our shelter and taken immediately to obedience training have a greater success rate in their adoptive homes and bond more quickly than dogs that are not taken through training until problems arise! Use obedience training as a preventative instead of viewing it as a cure-all to problems! Obedience training is fun for both you and your dog!

You can call our shelter for referrals to obedience classes that have been previewed to ensure high quality training and cost effectiveness. The average obedience training course will last for 8 weeks and will cost around \$50. There is a wide variety of training methods and thoughts on training. Classes should be praise oriented and enjoyable for both you and your dog and the trainers should be knowledgeable and creative when confronting problems or issues with your companion. If you have serious problems or aggression issues, please call our shelter for a referral to a more all-encompassing training school. Basic obedience training is only a starting point for most dogs to begin learning to behave properly in home and social environments. Many times, a succession of training classes will assist you in correcting problems such as chewing, jumping on people, pulling on the leash and other day to day issues that arise.

You will need to make the commitment to work with your dog EVERY day while the training is taking place. A simple 10 to 15 minutes per day will keep your dog learning properly and will prepare him for the weeks ahead in school. Consider it homework! It's awfully difficult to catch up with the other dogs in school if he hasn't gotten the command from last week down pat!

Be relaxed during training! If you are anxious and nervous, he'll pick up on your anxiety and be nervous himself and the training will not go well. Focus on your dog, watch him and help him to understand what it is that you need for him to do. Be patient and understanding. Many of the dogs coming from our shelter have never taken commands from humans regarding their behavior and it's hard for them to understand what it is that you want. Be upbeat and enthusiastic and make Rover excited to work and spend time with you learning new things.

At first, you'll feel like you're all thumbs with trying to control your dog, watch the trainer, paying attention to where you're walking, keeping proper distance from the other dogs and handlers and learning how to show Rover what it is that you want from him! The first few classes are very stressful for both you and your new companion, but things get easier and more relaxed as time goes on and the classes progress. During class, your dog will learn to pay attention to you, even when there are a lot of other dogs around, lots of other activities nearby, and different smells and sounds than what he's used to. It's a good idea to arrive to class a little early and walk around so that Rover will have an opportunity to check things out before the class begins and you both have to get to work.

It will take a few weeks and several class sessions before you notice the difference in your dog and his behavior. It's amazing to see a dog that's been abused or neglected begin to build confidence and start to comprehend and react to your voice commands. Using your newly learned obedience skills will make living with your special rescued dog much easier and safe. You'll be able to ask him to "stay" while walking out the door instead of having to block his attempts to escape through an open door. Your guests will be able to enter your home without having Rover jumping all over them while walking in the door. Instead of pushing him off of the counters repeatedly while you're preparing dinner and he's trying to steal all the good smelling food up there, you'll be able to ask him to "sit" and watch you work. There are so many daily activities that obedience training comes in handy!

## **FEEDING ROVER**

Just like with people, diet is very important to your new buddy! Making a decision on the brand of food you feed is difficult, but it's well worth the trouble. Most premium foods can be found at PetsMart or PetCo and there are several home delivery companies available as well. By purchasing a lower quality food, you are not saving money in the long run! Many lower quality foods that are available through grocery stores will lead to many more trips to the vet, upset stomachs and much more cleaning up of the yard and grooming issues. Dogs that are fed high quality foods generally have healthier coats, smaller stools, lead healthier longer lives, and have fewer visits to the vet. The dog that you adopted from us has probably had a hard life and will need the extra nutrients that a premium quality food would offer. Your adoption counselor is available for discussion regarding the foods that would be best to get Rover on the right track and keep him there! Here's a listing of some of the foods that our shelter recommends: Iams, Nutro, Avo Derm, Nature's Recipe, Solid Gold, and Innova.

Whether to "free feed" Rover or to have scheduled eating times is a personal decision. It's best that until your new buddy is completely housebroken that he has set eating times (what goes in comes back out!). Also, if there are other dogs in the home, their relationship should not be stressed by having to share food bowls as most dogs are highly territorial of their food. It's best to have Rover on a scheduled eating pattern for the first few weeks in the home and once he has settled in, if you need to change over to free feeding, you can do so at a later date. Having a set feeding time is usually preferred with most dogs. Just like us, when dogs become bored, they will go to their food bowl! This could lead to an overweight dog very quickly. Also, if you are free feeding, it's less likely that you would notice skipped meals - which is the number one indicator that Rover could need a trip to the vet. If there are more than one dog in the home, it's especially important to have set feeding times and separate bowls.

## **VET CARE**

We've worked hard to make sure that the dog that you adopted from us is healthy and well cared for. We do recommend that within the first few weeks of his new life with you, that you make a trip to the vet with him for a general exam. It's a good time for your vet to meet your new companion and check him over. It's a bad idea for your vet to meet your dog for the first time when he's ill and the vet has no prior records on Rover. Many dogs differ in their heart rate, body temperature, breathing patterns, etc. just like people do and your vet may not be able to accurately decipher what's normal for Rover and what's part of the illness if the first time he meets him is when there is something wrong with him. Your first trip to the vet with Rover is also a good time to discuss dental care. Many times digestive problems or erratic behavior can result from bad teeth and gums and it's best to start immediately with routine dental care when you bring Rover home.

During your first visit to the vet with Rover we recommend that you have him checked for heartworm and begin prevention. Heartworm is becoming more of a problem in Arizona due to the numbers of people moving here with their dogs that may already be carrying the parasite. Heartworm is spread by mosquitoes and it only takes one bite of an infected mosquito to spread it to your dog! Prevention is easy and relatively inexpensive. Treatment of an infected dog for heartworm is very expensive and is very hard on the dog and it seems silly to play Russian Roulette with your new companion! Prevention is the answer! Friends for Life is available if you have any questions regarding heartworm prevention.

If you should need help in finding a veterinarian in your area, please feel free to call our office for assistance. We work with many wonderful vets around the Phoenix area and would be happy to refer you.

## **MAKING THE HOME SAFE**

When adopting a dog, especially a young one, it's best to go through your home and "puppy proof". Make sure that electrical cords are well hidden, houseplants are put up (especially the dangerous ones!), anything breakable is put away for now, and bottles of cleaning agents (such as bleach, drain openers, and laundry soaps) are out the Rover's reach. Check the garage for dangers as well. Make sure anti-freeze, oil, sharp or dangerous items, more cleaning agents and anything breakable are all put away out of the dog's reach. Dogs are naturally curious about their environment and tend to explore things with their mouths. They will chew or drink anything that they find and it's best if they just are unable to come in contact with anything that may cause them harm!

## ROVER AND POOLS

If you have a swimming pool in the home, especially one that is not fenced off, please read the following guidelines. Many dogs each year drown in their swimming pools at home because their owners do not realize the dangers involved! Do not allow your dog to have time in the yard unattended until he is fully pool trained!

You can easily make two "beacons" for your dog to look for while in the pool by filling two empty milk jugs with water or sand (so they won't fall over or fly away). Put two pieces of brightly colored fabric such as bandannas or towels into the openings of both. Place the two containers on the pool deck by the pool steps. Now, put Rover into the water. He may flail about or become anxious, so make sure you are close to him. It's best if someone can be in the water with him to help him find the way to the steps, but if not, make sure to have a long lead on his collar to help him around. Call him over to the steps and help him and out and give LOTS of praise for exiting at the steps! Repeat the exercise several times on the first day. He will begin to get the message and start looking for the "beacons" where the steps are. He needs to learn the entire swimming pool, so make sure when you are putting him into the pool that you choose different locations for entry. From Rover's swimming level, everything will look pretty much the same! Since his perception of the water is right at the water's level, the "beacons" will be above his view and easy to see - which is why they are so important.

Repeat this exercise several times per day for the first week. Be patient and understanding (especially if he hates the water!), but realize that this is a very important learning process that could save Rover's life one day. Every summer, as the weather warms up, make sure to give Rover a refresher course and make sure he remembers how to get to the steps! Leave the "beacons" up for as long as possible until you know that Rover is capable of finding the steps 100% of the time. Even if he doesn't seem to enjoy swimming, there's always the possibility of his falling into the water at night or if he's playing and isn't paying attention to where he's going. If your pool is fenced off, there's less possibility of Rover going into the pool area, but it could still happen! Don't rely on gates being closed for your dog's safety! If your dog happens to fall into the pool and is not pool trained, he will not know to try to find the steps. With the straight walls and slippery surfaces of the pool, he will be unable to get out at the sides of the pool and will panic and eventually get exhausted and drown. Don't let yourself get caught up in "that would never happen to me" syndrome! Thousands of families each year lose their beloved pets to swimming pool drowning because they were uneducated regarding this very important part of pet safety.

## ROVER'S TOYS

There is such a wide variety of toys available on the market today to keep your companion entertained. It will take some learning on your part to find what interests your new companion! Keep in mind your dog's breed group, even if he's a mixed breed doggie. Hounds like to use their noses, gun dogs like to retrieve, herding dogs like to chase, terriers like to dig out and "kill". Use Rover's natural inclinations in play and you'll end up with a very happy dog!

For chewing and general around the house entertainment, keep an assortment of different textured toys around. Booda Velvets, hooves, nylabones, "lambswool" toys, sturdy latex squeakers and veggie bones will give your new companion lots of variety and keep him interested. It's a good idea to rotate bones and toys on a weekly basis so that he doesn't become bored and use your couch or shoes for chewing! We never recommend that you leave a dog unattended with rawhide chew bones. They become soft and sticky and should Rover decide to try to swallow the "whole thing", it could become lodged in his throat and cause him to choke. If you have a highly intelligent dog, look into purchasing "smart toys" such as kongs, Buster Cubes, and automatic timed release food dishes. Kongs bounce and bounce and you can also place treats inside of it and the dog will work for hours trying to get all the treats out. You can use peanut butter or "Cheese Whiz", soft jerky treats or even canned food inside of it. Keep in mind that you'll need to wash these toys on a regular basis, though, when using food rewards in them. Buster Cubes are a toy that you put hard food into and the dog must learn to push the cube around and intermittently the food will fall out. These are great especially for the hard players that kill all other toys or for dogs that are highly food motivated. Timed release food dishes are really made for cats and vacationing owners, but can be used to give your dog treats while you are away from home. Set the timer to release every day at the same time and put a few treats in to the dish and close the door. It will open at the pre-set time and give your dog something to look forward to each day while you are away from home. If your dog likes to dig, consider making him a sand box and hiding hard treats and bones in the sand every morning before leaving for work. He will become more interested in digging in "his" box than in the flower garden. This is especially good for terriers and hounds that like to dig and search for things. Never give your dog shoes or other items such as this to chew. Not only will it confuse him (why's it ok to chew these shoes and not THOSE shoes) but they are also dangerous as they have been chemically treated and have many parts that are not digestible and could make Rover sick. Do not give your dog real bones to chew. Cooking bones changes their chemical makeup and causes them to become brittle and they will splinter. Your dog may cut his mouth on them or swallow a sharp piece of one and may end up at the vet sick or in very serious condition! For the health and safety of your new companion and your family, stick with products specially designed for dogs that you can purchase from pet supply shops!

## IN CLOSING

Again, we thank you for adopting a dog from our shelter. Our volunteers have worked very hard! There have been many wonderful people involved with the dog you adopted from us and we all have tried to do our very best to ensure the happiness of you and your new friend. Your new dog has touched and been touched by many. From the time that we saw him scraping out an existence on the street, to the many hours possibly spent by the volunteers during his rescue. There have been volunteers seeing to it that he was taken to and from the veterinarian to care for his medical issues. Many hours have been spent by our volunteers seeing to it that he was safe, comfortable, well fed and nicely groomed in our care. We have spent time with him learning his habits, personality traits and abilities. Your adoption counselor worked very hard in hopes of making a good match between your new companion and your family. All of the volunteers with F4L wish you and your new companion many happy years ahead. We all greatly admire your decision to adopt an animal that at one time had a very bleak future and thank you for giving him a second chance for a wonderful life.