

Thank you for your interest in becoming a foster parent for Mitten Mutts Dog Rescue! Because we do not have a shelter, we rely on a network of foster homes to house adoptable dogs and puppies while they await permanent homes. Foster homes are a crucial part of MMDR's ability to save a dog's life. Specific questions may be directed to your Foster Coordinator by text..

### High-Level Information

1. We cover all veterinary care while the dog is in our care.
2. We ask that fosters provide food and a crate for use, but we can provide food and lend a crate if needed.
3. Foster dogs must be kept on leash or exercised in a fenced yard at all times. Visits to off-leash dog parks are not authorized.
4. Foster dogs must always wear a collar with ID tag with the foster's phone number. This would be a re-usable tag that you would remove when your foster is adopted and use it on the next foster.
5. When transporting a dog, the dog must be either crated in the vehicle or tethered (you can take the handle of the leash and pass it through the seatbelt and buckle it).
6. All bites, including nips, must be reported to the Foster Coordinator immediately. What may not seem like a serious bite could be the precursor to future behavior and is important for us to know.
7. Each dog comes with a folder containing medical information. This must accompany the animal during all transports and will go home with the adopter.

### What is MMDR?

Mitten Mutts Dog Rescue is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization comprised of unpaid volunteers who are dedicated to rescuing and rehoming dogs in Michigan.

We receive many intake requests from shelters and other organizations, as well as private citizens. When we take in a dog, the dog resides in a foster home, receiving whatever medical care he or she may need. This veterinary care is typically updating vaccines, spay or neuter, heartworm testing and microchipping, though we do often take in senior dogs with various health issues or dogs with orthopedic injuries.

We do not have a physical facility; all of our dogs are in private foster homes throughout the state of Michigan. We believe that this provides the best environment for a dog and allows us to provide realistic information about a dog when it is ready to be adopted.

### Equipment Needs

#### Care Package

MMDR will give all foster dogs a care package either via USPS, or your Foster Coordinator will get it to you. Your care package will include some toys and treats, a blanket, and heartworm preventative. You are welcome to let the dog utilize the toys, treats, and blanket, but please make sure the toys and blanket stay with them once they're adopted, as it will help them acclimate to their new home.

#### Crate

MMDR strongly encourages foster homes to crate puppies (this helps with house training and saves personal items from being chewed!). For older dogs, please use your discretion based on the dog's history. We can lend you a crate if you would like.

#### Leash/Collar

Your foster dog will usually come with a collar. This will stay with it when it gets adopted. Please provide a leash to use while in your home. You do not have to give away your leash. At Mitten Mutts Dog Rescue, we strongly encourage the use of Martingale collars with each dog and this will be what

you receive. A martingale is designed to ensure that a dog cannot stop short and back out of it, which is possible with traditional collars.

Please ensure your dog is leashed at all times outside unless in a fenced area. If you have a fence at your home, we encourage you to keep the dog leashed even inside the fenced area for the first few days to ensure the dog is comfortable and not interested/able to jump the fence. A 30-foot training lead is often useful.

### **Bowls**

MMDR expects fosters to provide a food and water dish to their foster dog. If you have other pets in the home, it is a good idea to provide separate water dishes, as some parasites can be transferred via water.

### **How long will a foster dog be in my home?**

MMDR requires a mandatory 2-3 week quarantine period for dogs coming as strays or from shelters. This quarantine period does not necessarily mean that the dogs must be kept confined and separate from other animals or people; it simply means that we need some time to get to know the dog and ensure that s/he does not become ill. Often times, by the time the quarantine period is over, we have already posted the dog for adoption and are accepting applications. Please note that there could be times where the foster dog is in your home for an extended period of time, allowing you to become even better acquainted!

### **Finding Your Foster a Forever Home**

We request that all fosters text us pictures of your foster that we can put on Petfinder and Facebook. Please text pictures to the Social Media Coordinator (contact information on the last page). Additionally, please provide us with a description of your foster, information about their personality traits, and what type of home you believe would be best for the pet. Remember, this is what potential adopters will be reading so make sure you highlight all of the wonderful characteristics of your animal! We need this information within 7 days. We ask that you accommodate visits with potential adopters and give us feedback. You know your foster pet best and we value your input! We do need to know that if we try and contact you that we will hear back from you within 24 hours. We may need to check up periodically on the foster's health, ensure they get vaccine boosters when due, and be able to schedule meetings with prospective adopters.

### **Where do I pick up my foster dog?**

Since our dogs come from many places, you could be asked to pick up your foster dog from another foster home, from a shelter or in extreme cases, possibly from the previous owner directly. We do have fosters throughout the area, so we often can assist in transporting.

### **What do I bring to pick up my foster dog?**

We strongly suggest bringing a crate (or a second pair of hands) for your foster dog to transport them in the car to your home. You'll receive the dog's paperwork folder that should stay with the dog wherever they go. DO NOT bring your resident dog(s) to pick up your foster dog as it is a very stressful and chaotic time to introduce them. It is a good idea to bring a leash and a collar, just in case, but as mentioned previously, we will provide you with a collar.

### **Bringing your foster dog home**

Here's a great article on how to allow your foster to decompress: <http://www.reboundhounds.org/the-first-two-weeks.html>

Once your new companion is home it may take him or her a few days to settle in and adjust, and for you to see their true personality shine through. It is possible your dog has never seen stairs before, or not had a lot of experience in a loving home. Keep this in mind as you introduce your dog or puppy to new people and new things. Sometimes new things can be scary for them. We suggest that you let your

dog take the first week with you to adjust and get to know your family. Try not to overwhelm them with a lot of new people and new situations in the first few days.

Please keep in mind that these animals could be coming from shelters where conditions are tough. We recommend giving your foster a bath when you arrive home. Or, if you prefer, you may take the animal to a groomer to be bathed however we are not able to reimburse for this.

Medications will be provided, if required. It is imperative that you give your animal all medications as directed. If you have any questions relating to the medication you are required to give the animal, let us know immediately.

#### What kind of food should I feed my foster dog?

Depending on where the dog/puppy is coming from, we may or may not be given a portion of the food s/he is currently eating. Sometimes we don't even know what kind of food they were eating. If you are able to incur the cost of providing food for your foster, we thank you! If you require MMDR to provide food for you foster, that's fine too! If you plan on changing to a different food, it is important to mix the old food in with the new food, and switch over slowly to avoid stomach upset. Start by mixing 3/4 old food with 1/4 new food, then 1/2 old food 1/2 new food, then 1/4 old food, 3/4 new food until you are switched over to the new food completely. Adults should eat adult food and puppies should eat puppy food.

#### What about medical care for my foster dog?

At the time of intake, we have a checklist with important information regarding the dog and the basic veterinary care that s/he will need, including microchip, vaccines, spay/neuter, fecal testing, etc. Please pay special attention to the future dates that your foster will need additional veterinary care. We recommend adding those dates to your calendar and/or your phone's calendar so you don't miss them. If there are any concerns, please alert your Foster Coordinator immediately.

We do our best to treat for contagious disease in these animals upon arrival, but on the rare occasion they are carrying an illness that could be spread to you or a resident pet. Your pet(s) should be current on vaccinations, as your veterinarian recommends, and treated with flea/tick preventative and heartworm preventative on a monthly basis to help prevent the transmission of common skin parasites. If your pet(s) should show signs of disease, please contact your regular veterinarian as soon as possible.

Between the poor quality food they have been eating in the shelter and the medications they are on, their stool may be loose. This is common. A spoonful of canned pure pumpkin with meal for a few days, along with good food, should improve their stool. Please make sure to pick up all stool, especially while your foster pup is on medication.

The number one health concern we have with puppies is parvovirus. This is not a risk to fully vaccinated dogs or people, but it is a serious concern if the puppy gets sick. We have seen adult dogs develop parvo, so it is not only something that puppies can develop although it is fairly rare in adults. It can be fatal and catching it right away is extremely important. Signs of parvo are lethargy, not wanting to eat, diarrhea, or vomiting. We need to be notified immediately if your foster displays any of these symptoms. Giving them Karo syrup or pancake syrup can help get their sugar level up until we can get them to the vet.

It is absolutely imperative that you give your foster animal all medications provided as directed for the entire time directed. All medications are provided in consultation with our veterinarians who examine the pet. If you are uncomfortable and unwilling to give any of the medication, you must return the pet immediately. MMDR will pay for any necessary vet care while the animal is in foster care, but all veterinary visits must be approved by your Foster Coordinator prior to the visit. Please email us at

mittenmuttsdogrescue@gmail.com or contact your Foster Coordinator with any medical concerns.

#### **Do you provide heartworm preventative and flea/tick preventative?**

Yes. We count on you to let us know when your foster is due for their monthly preventatives. Please contact your Foster Coordinator to let us know your foster is due and we'll get it to you. Be sure to note on their medical paperwork dates that heartworm and flea prevention is given

#### **Which vaccines are required for my foster dog?**

We are now following the AAHA recommended vaccine protocol. The rabies vaccine must be given by a veterinarian, but the other vaccines are given by the rescue as needed. Fosters will need to coordinate with their Foster Coordinator to get their foster vaccinated.

#### **What if there is a veterinary emergency with my foster dog?**

The first step is to notify your Foster Coordinator by text and phone call immediately. If you are unable to get a response within a couple of minutes, please text and call the board members (info at the bottom of this document). We recommend adding everyone to your phone as contacts so you are prepared should something ever be needed in an emergency situation.

#### **Are foster dogs ever euthanized?**

Some dogs are in foster care because they're seriously ill or injured. If, after medical attention and veterinary consult, the dog is found to be too old or too weak to heal and is suffering, then the rescue's board will decide if it is best to humanely euthanize him or her. Fortunately, most dogs in foster care heal beautifully. On rare occasions, a dog in foster care may start to exhibit potentially dangerous behavior that was unknown or suppressed when the dog was at the shelter. MMDR may determine that this dog is too dangerous and will humanely euthanize the animal or seek an alternative facility for its care. Your safety is our #1 priority. You must always inform MMDR if your foster dog exhibits any aggressive behavior.

#### **How do I introduce my foster dog to my resident dogs/cats?**

It is always best to introduce dogs on neutral territory. Try to keep leashes loose and let the dogs approach each other from the side, rather than putting them face to face. This is a more natural way for them to greet, and how they will choose to greet on their own if off-leash. Watch for any stiffening of their bodies; stiff body means that the dog is uncomfortable, best to calmly walk away and give them some space. Loose, wiggly body posture is good and should be encouraged.

Here is a great article on how to introduce dogs: <https://thegooddoglifeblog.com/2012/03/22/how-to-introduce-new-dogs-to-your-pack-pt-1-the-walk/>

It is a good idea to feed the new dog in a crate or in a separate room to avoid any issues over food. The same goes for bones and other high-value items, such as treats and toys, it is best to give them to the dogs in separate spaces.

To prepare your cat for your foster dog's arrival, you should designate a safe space for them. Putting up a baby gate that the cat can get over or under but the dog can't, is a good way to make sure your cat has a safe place to retreat to. When letting them meet for the first time, it is a good idea to have the dog on a leash. Don't force the cat to make contact if it doesn't want to, and make sure that it has an easy out, and doesn't end up cornered. Cats respond differently to meeting a dog, some are friendly, some run away, and some may go after the dog if they feel threatened. Because of this, and because of the sharpness of the cat's claws, it may be a good idea to trim your cat's nails prior to the arrival of your foster dog.

#### **What if my dog and the foster dog don't get along?**

Although we strive to match our foster dogs with an appropriate foster home, there are occasions when dogs - just like people - don't get along. Please keep in mind that our dogs have often just been

removed from the home they grew up in or from a stressful shelter, so it may take a few days for them to get comfortable and for their true personality to shine through. If after a few days you feel the placement is not going to work, please contact your Foster Coordinator and let them know that the placement is not working. Because foster homes are limited and are not always readily available, it may be a day or two before the dog can be moved, or the dog may have to go back to the shelter it came from.

#### What do I do with my foster dog if I am going on vacation?

Please notify us as soon as possible if you have a vacation planned. We can try to locate an alternate foster for you, or arrange for the dog to board at one of our approved boarding facilities.

#### What if someone I know wants to adopt my foster?

All potential adopters must fill out an application and go through the adoption process. Please have the interested party fill out an Adoption Application. You can also inquire as to whether or not your foster has a previous application pending.

#### What if I want to adopt my foster dog?

Please let us know IMMEDIATELY if you are considering adopting your foster! Once we have started working on applications for your foster dog, it will be very difficult to stop the adoption. If your foster is available, we will give you instructions on how to pay the adoption fee and submit the adoption contract.

#### What's the actual adoption process? What's my role?

Here are the steps involved in Adoption:

- 1) **Potential Adopter:** Submits an application for adoption on our website.
- 2) **Foster Coordinator:** Reviews application and contact references.
- 3) **Foster Coordinator:** Emails application to **Foster** to review; request home visit to be completed.
- 4) **Foster Coordinator or Foster:** Contacts potential adopter to schedule meet&greet, home visit (sometimes), potential adoption date and communicates planned adoption date to **Foster/Coordinator**.
- 5) **Foster Coordinator:** Emails a copy of the contract to the **Potential Adopter** to review prior to adoption and also emails the contract, and any other documents to **Foster**.
- 8) **Foster:** At the time of adoption, go through the folder's contents with the adopter. Have the adopter sign the remainder of the contract, sign as the MMDR volunteer. Have the adopter submit the adoption fee via PayPal to [mittenmuttsdogrescue@gmail.com](mailto:mittenmuttsdogrescue@gmail.com). Suggest they use the Friends & Family feature on PayPal so we don't have to pay fees. Take adoption photos!
- 9) **Foster:** Get the original copy of the contract to the Foster Coordinator (or scan and email a copy to [mittenmuttsdogrescue@gmail.com](mailto:mittenmuttsdogrescue@gmail.com)) and send photos to the Social Media Coordinator.
- 11) **Foster Coordinator:** Upon receiving word from the adopter that they want to finalize the adoption, sign the contract and email to them. Attach the signed copy in Petestablished.

#### Adoption fees

\$250: 6 months and younger

\$200: 7 months-6 years

\$150: 7 years +

\*Very rarely we will waive the adoption fee if the dog is sick, has behavioral issues, etc.

\*Always check with your Foster Coordinator before quoting an adoption fee to a potential adopter.

#### Do I need to train my foster dog while s/he is in my home?

This is a broad statement, but we need to make our fosters as adoptable as possible while they are with us. This may mean brushing up on "sit," "down," learning not to jump on guests or walking on a loose leash. We realize that these are not overnight processes, but a dog that is beginning to learn basic obedience is a lot more impressive than a dog who acts like they have never heard the word "sit" in their life. If you have specific training questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

## Recommendations and References for Basic Training Issues

### Crate Training

In today's day and age, most adopters work part or full-time and like to be able to safely leave their dogs crated while they are away. It's not always easy and usually the first few times in the crate, a new dog will hoot and holler. Just like a baby learning to self-soothe and cry it out, you have to ignore the noise and reward them by letting them out once they are quiet for at least a few seconds.

Here's a helpful link on associating the crate with good things:

<https://www.twincitiespetrescue.org/blog/introductory-crate-training-games-dogs/>

### House Training

Today's preferred method of house training is crate training. A crate used for house training should be just large enough for the dog to stand up, turn around and lie down in. Dogs typically won't soil in the same area that they sleep. Training pads and papers are not recommended as this sends a mixed signal - it's okay to go to the bathroom in the house "sometimes". It is best to send a clear message.

Keep a close eye on your dog/puppy in the house, if they start sniffing around looking for a place to void, take them outside. When they do go to the bathroom outside praise them excitedly and feed them a treat. If they have an accident in the house, whoops! There is not much you can do about it after the fact. But, if you catch them in the act, you can make a loud noise to disrupt them and promptly bring him/her outside. Praise them as described above if they finish what they started inside, outside.

The umbilical method - this is a handy way to make sure your dog doesn't go out of sight to go the bathroom in the house when you are not paying attention. Use their leash to attach them to your belt loop or keep them attached to your chair.

Belly bands- belly bands are used with male dogs to prevent "marking," or urinating in the house to claim their territory. Many foster homes use these as a precautionary tool, but many times they are not necessary. Your Foster Coordinator will have some available for you if you wish to use.

### Puppy Biting and Chewing

Teething puppies will be nippy, and they will chew on various objects. Puppies play and wrestle with their mouths. While this is normal behavior, those sharp puppy teeth can be painful!

There are several ways to deal with puppy biting. One is to make a yelping noise if they nibble too hard. This is how puppies signal to each other that a bite is too rough, and most puppies respond quite well, and will remove their mouths when they hear it.

You can try holding still. A moving target is more fun than one that doesn't respond. While this can be difficult to do, it is effective. If standing still is not an option, remove yourself from the room the puppy is in. They will learn that rough play makes their person disappear. This is a way of using negative reinforcement to change the behavior.

An alternative is to remove the puppy. Just as young children sometimes get over tired and act up, puppies do as well, and sometimes guiding them quietly to their crates for a time out and a nap is the best course of action.

Other options are redirecting the play, instead of wrestling, get a ball and play fetch, or give the dog an appropriate chew toy such as a frozen Kong or bully stick.

### Socialization and Handling

Puppies have a window of socialization where they are most open to being exposed to new experiences, people, and objects. This window of socialization is generally from 8 weeks to 16 weeks of age. It is important to take advantage of this window to help your dog become a well-adjusted adult, fostering as many positive experiences during this sensitive period as possible. Please make sure your foster dog has seen the veterinarian and received all age-appropriate shots before allowing them to meet unfamiliar dogs.

Try to think of as many things as you can that your foster dog may be exposed to over his/her lifetime, some examples are: stairs, umbrellas, winter coats, hats, gloves, men with beards, hooded sweatshirts, people of different ages and races, crutches, wheel chairs, walkers... The more exposure the better but, always have high value food rewards on hand to help your dog associate these new and potentially frightening things & experiences with something positive. Additionally, it is a good idea to introduce your foster dog or puppy to other dogs, both big and small, as well as cats and any other animals they might encounter in their new life.

If your puppy seems nervous, don't push him/her to get too close to what they are afraid of, instead, let them approach on their own terms. Encourage them and feed them as they make positive progress. You are your foster dog's advocate and guardian, stick up for them if you need to, they aren't always understood when they try to use their body language to express their feelings.

Also take this time to get your dog used to all different kinds of handling - make it fun! Feed them while you touch their paws, press on their toes (as would be done during a nail trim), look in their mouths, play with their ears, etc. This will make vet visits, and giving medications if needed in the future, less scary and more routine.

It may be that you end up with a foster puppy who is in their crucial socialization window, or, you may be fostering an older dog who may not have had the best socialization when younger. Please let us know if you experience any behavioral issues with your foster.

### Additional Info for Fosters

We recognize that this is A LOT of information to take in. We like to prepare all fosters for every situation, just in case, but usually everything works out just fine! Please do not hesitate to contact your Foster Coordinator about anything, and remember to send all the pictures you can handle to the Social Media Coordinator. 📷 Fostering is sometimes very tough, but saving a dog from a bad environment and handing them off to a loving home is extremely rewarding. Our hearts break a little every time, so theirs don't have to.

THANK YOU FOR OPENING YOUR HEART AND HOME TO FOSTER A MITTEN MUTT!

### Important Contact Information

Website: in progress!

Public Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/MittenMuttsDogRescue/>

PRIVATE Volunteer Facebook Page: You must be invited- MMDR Volunteer Page  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1926916687407052/>

Email: [mittenmuttsdogrescue@gmail.com](mailto:mittenmuttsdogrescue@gmail.com)

### Board Members

Mary Lynch

President

989-860-0430

Kelly Hekler

Vice President

Foster Coordinator- Lansing Area

517-719-0723

Stacey Abbs

Secretary

Foster Coordinator- Bay County Area

989-450-3502

### Social Media Coordinator

Jessica Rottiers

989-860-3224

### Treasurer

Lindsay Sinicki

865-360-8919

### Partner Veterinarians

Animal Alley Veterinary Hospital

7319 Tittabawassee Rd #2

Saginaw, MI 48603

(989) 792-4800

Bay Valley Animal Hospital

6015 Westside Saginaw Rd.

Bay City, MI 48706

(989) 686-0703

\*We are open to using other veterinarian partners if they are willing to work with us on pricing. Please contact your Foster Coordinator.