

potty outside is usually all it takes to reinforce this important lesson, and they do love the attention when they have done well.

Learning new things can sometimes be quite scary for greyhounds but quite comical for us as parents. Learning to go up and down stairs might well qualify for an episode of “Funniest Videos” if anyone were watching. From the beginning Dave and I have introduced our dogs to the stairs one step at a time, with one of us in front and one of us behind, actually guiding each paw up the stairs one at a time. There have been a few occasions when the dog has put the brakes on halfway up or down, but with a little bit of patience and a great deal of encouragement they always make it to the end. I love that look of confidence the first time they do the stairs completely on their own and I tell them how good they are. That tail wagging just never stops! If my dogs could talk they would be telling me “I did it Mom!”

The comedy and tragedy continues as each dog learns the lay of the land around the house. I can’t help but chuckle as I rub a sore nose because they have run into the sliding glass door in their haste to get outside (they don’t have glass doors where they come from) or reassure a skittish one that the tile floor really is OK to stand on after they have once landed almost spread eagle on same said floor. It is difficult not to smile at those big brown eyes as you explain that the trash can is not another food bowl but is a “No, No”. Then there is cause for celebration when for the first time your dog decides that it is OK to take a treat from your hand when previously it has been to shy or has not known

how to. Simple things that you and I take for granted can be so foreign to them. However, it doesn’t take long before each one is comfortable in their surroundings and will blindly follow you anywhere, including across the dreaded tile floor.

The best part of fostering is getting to know the individual personalities of each of the dogs. Their characters are as unique as are their coloring. It is such a delight to see if this dog is an alarm clock or a late sleeper. Does this one like to toss and pounce on their ‘stuffers’ or are ‘stuffers’ for snuggling only? Is this one going to be a packrat (we have had some who would stash socks, slippers and what ever else appealed to them) or will they save only bones and chew toys? Every day becomes an adventure with these dogs as their comfort level increases and their personalities emerge.

I realize now there is no specific ‘type’ of person who fosters. I understand now why it is that those who have gone before me as foster parents are able to do what they do. To bring one of these sweet natured, affectionate animals into my home, to teach it, to play with it, to make it a part of my family is a joy and a blessing. My reward is tremendous. I can’t save every greyhound, nor can I adopt them all, but I can provide a safe and loving environment for a greyhound waiting for a forever home. He will learn what it means to be a pet. I know that as each of these dogs leave for a forever home, their new greyhound mom and dad will continue the discovery experience that I have started. And me, well I get to do it all over again. What a wonderful feeling!



We Need Foster Families For Ex-Racing Greyhounds

www.gpamo.org



A non-profit, volunteer-run organization dedicated to retired racing greyhounds and their placement in responsible loving homes.



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wanted! foster homes for retired racing greyhounds

When we receive greyhounds from the tracks and greyhound farms, they are given any medical care they might need, their required vaccinations, and a bath and some basic grooming. Then they are off to one of our foster homes until we are able to find a permanent home for them. The foster home provides the greyhounds with "doggie" training to make the transition from track to home easier for the greyhound and his or her new family.

The greater number of foster homes we have available, the greater number of greyhounds we are able to rescue from the track. As a foster parent, you will help a newly retired racing greyhound adjust to life in a home.

how do you know if you qualify to be a foster parent?

1. Do you love being around other greyhounds besides your own?
2. Are you able to volunteer generally two to eight months to help a greyhound who has spent his/her life on the track to adjust to the luxury of retirement in a home?

If you can answer yes to both of these questions, you could become part of a very special group of people that open up their hearts and homes for retired racers.

responsibilities of foster families

As a foster parent, you will help a newly retired racing greyhound to adjust to life in a home. **Your job is to:**

- 🐾 Provide a safe indoor environment for the greyhound.
- 🐾 Housebreak the greyhound.
- 🐾 Provide guidance and training such as answering to his/her name; walking on a leash; teaching the greyhound what is not acceptable.
- 🐾 Help the greyhound learn to cope with new things like sliding glass doors, stairs, tile floors, and many new and exciting things the greyhound will discover in a home. Remember prior to retirement his home was a dog crate.
- 🐾 Socialize the greyhound around people, children, and other animals.
- 🐾 Provide a profile on your foster greyhound's personality so we are able to find the most suitable home possible. Also, keep us informed of how your greyhound is adjusting or call us if you need any help or guidance.
- 🐾 Attend Show & Tells and other events where we're promoting greyhound adoption.
- 🐾 Provide the greyhound with much love, understanding and guidance.
- 🐾 We can provide food for your foster or you may donate that yourself as a tax deductible donation.

how can i foster a greyhound?

If you would like to volunteer to foster a greyhound for GPAMO, or if you would like to receive more information, please call **Alane Shultz at 417-839-3138** or email **AlaneGreyhound@gmail.com**.

adventures in fostering

by *Chelly Bennett Gilbert*

I never considered myself the foster parent 'type'. It was beyond me how anyone could bring an animal as sweet and gentle as a greyhound into their home; teach it, play with it, love it, and make it a member of the family and then give it away. How awful that must feel!

Looking back at my own journey into fostering, I see now that it was a natural progression. I couldn't wait until the kids had all moved out and taken their various pets with them and then it was my turn to choose the family pet. My husband Dave and I adopted Mugsy on a beautiful February day and I was totally in love. We agreed that we would give Mugsy plenty of time to become acclimated to his new home before we even thought of adopting another (at least a year). I checked the website of our local rescue group at least once a week to see what events were taking place and to look at the pictures of the dogs available for adoption. I wanted to adopt them all. Before three months had passed we adopted Libby and this time Dave and I agreed that she would be the last. Still I continued to visit the website, each time wanting to adopt each of those precious hounds into my home. Before another three months had passed we were foster parents to our first of many, JC. I was now surrounded by these wonderful dogs and couldn't be happier.

What changed my mind about fostering? The dogs did. I so wanted to be the one to introduce these shy but curious animals to the world of being a 'house pet'. When the greyhounds come into my home, often straight from the racetrack, they are totally naive to the world beyond their crate. Watching their reactions as they learn new things can be quite comical as well extremely heartwarming. I never imagined myself as a teacher, but that is what I have become.

The first and most important lesson we learn is potty training and this is usually quite easy since these dogs are used to living in a kennel or crate. It's just a matter of teaching them that their new home is a much larger crate and must stay clean. Words of praise when they