



# ***Foster Care Manual***

**Humane Society Calumet Area**

**421 45<sup>th</sup> Street**

**Munster, IN 46321**

**(219)922-3811**

**Intake Center/Lab-219-836-2583**

## WELCOME TO THE HUMANE SOCIETY CALUMET AREA FOSTER CARE PROGRAM

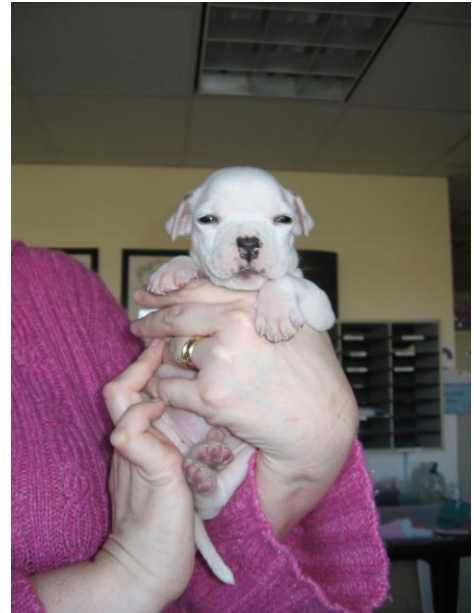
Thank you for opening your home to a shelter companion animal. The HSCA has established its foster care program in order to give young, injured, abused or undersocialized animals a chance to grow or heal and eventually find permanent homes.

### WHAT KIND OF ANIMALS NEED FOSTER HOMES

- Puppies or kittens too young to be adopted
- An abused dog or cat that needs socialization and tender loving care
- A dog or cat recovering from surgery or other injuries
- An abandoned mother with a litter of kittens or puppies
- Any animal when the shelter becomes over crowded or we need to transport in adoptable dogs which are likely to be euthanized at an animal control facility.

### VETERINARY CARE

The HSCA will provide and pay for all necessary veterinary care for your foster animal. The HSCA works with specific vets who often offer special rates for our shelter animals. All vet care must first be approved by the shelter manager or director. The HSCA will not pay for any veterinary care that has not first been approved.



### HOW DO PETS IN FOSTER CARE GET ADOPTED?

Photos and stories of all animals in foster care are posted on the petfinder.com web site. The public can view the animal via the web and then arrange to meet the animal and/or foster parent. Foster parents with dogs may also participate in various off site adoption events at local PetCo and PetsMart stores. Depending on the animals health status.

(Included in the Foster Packet are adoption applications). If a foster parent knows of a friend or family member who is interested in adopting the animal, the foster parent can give them an adoption application and encourage them to fill it out and return it to the Humane Society Calumet Area.

If foster parents wonder whether potential adopters are best suited for their foster animal, or if foster parents find out that potential adopters do not meet the shelter requirements for adoption (they plan on keeping the dog outside, etc.) they should notify the adoption counselor of their concerns. The shelter staff interviews the potential foster for final approval. While the final decision about adoption is up to the Adoption Counselor, the HSCA will take into careful consideration the thoughts and opinions of the foster family. We understand that the foster parent knows the animal and its needs better than anyone else. **NO ANIMAL CAN GO TO A POTENTIAL ADOPTER'S HOME UNTIL THE ADOPTION IS OFFICIAL WITH SHELTER STAFF.** All adoptions **MUST** be approved by the shelter staff. Foster parents may also refer potential adopters to the shelter to complete an adoption an adoption application. Foster animals, as with all animals which are adopted from the HSCA must be spayed or neutered before they can go to their adoptive homes. In some cases foster animals can be adopted directly from the foster parent's home, and other times an animal will return to the shelter where it has the opportunity to be viewed by the largest possible amount of potential adopters.

## **CAN FOSTER PARENTS ADOPT THEIR FOSTER COMPANION ANIMAL?**

You bet! As long as foster parents meet the shelter requirements that are necessary for adopting the animal, foster parents have first choice to adopt their foster pet.

## **HOW LONG DO ANIMALS STAY IN FOSTER HOMES?**

It completely depends on the animal and situation. The average stay in a foster home is two – three weeks. However, some animals may only stay a few days and others may stay for a few months.

Clear goals will be set from the beginning so that both the foster family and the HSCA understand the goal being worked toward for each particular animal whether that is rehabilitation, socialization, recovery from illness, that the animal is old enough to be weaned/adopted, etc. A general period will be set up for the estimated duration of the foster.

## **ARE FOSTER ANIMALS CONTAGIOUS? WILL MY DOG'S OR CAT'S OR MY HEALTH BE JEOPARDIZED?**



It is always a health risk to expose your animal to other animals, whether at the off-leash areas, the vet waiting room, or the common animal areas. But if the foster parents' own animals are current on their vaccinations, maintain a healthy diet and lifestyle, and are not elderly or very young – and therefore their immune systems are not compromised – then the health risk is minimal. If you or someone in your household is immune-compromised, consult your doctor before fostering. If you or someone in your household is pregnant, talk to your doctor before fostering cats. Working or living with animals exposes humans to a group of diseases called zoonoses. A zoonotic disease is defined as a disease transmitted from animals to humans and also from humans to animals. There are about 200 of these diseases. To find out more about them talk to your veterinarian. Proper hygiene, preventative measures and an understanding of these illnesses can reduce the risk of disease.

## **ARE FOSTER COMPANION ANIMALS EVER EUTHANIZED?**

Much energy, love, time, and vet care is devoted to animals in foster care, and the shelter is committed to finding homes for ALL of these animals. Foster parents can feel confident that the shelter will not euthanize animals that are returned to our shelter. Some animals are in foster care because they are seriously ill or injured. If, after medical attention, these animals are too ill or too weak (such as young kittens) to heal and are suffering, then the shelter staff will humanely euthanize these animals. Fortunately, most animals in foster care heal beautifully.

Occasionally animals, especially those that are very young, do not survive and die on their own while in foster care. This can be emotionally draining for a family who has poured much love, energy and time into an animal, but it is a fact that must be considered when making the decision about whether or not to foster. (Young kittens seem especially to have a higher mortality rate).

## GETTING STARTED

All foster parents fill out a foster application which asks questions that will help the foster care coordinators match foster parents up with the appropriate animal for their lifestyle. The foster care coordinator will then conduct a home visit and once a potential foster home is approved will contact the foster parents to describe the animal in need, and a meeting at the shelter is scheduled. Foster parents who have dogs at home and are considering fostering a dog are encouraged to bring their dog(s) to the shelter to be introduced to the foster dog and ensure a good match.

## TIME COMMITMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Commitment and responsibilities depend on the situation and animal. Animals going into foster care have often been through much stress. It is essential that foster parents understand that moving the animal from the shelter to the foster home is also very stressful and emotional. These animals will depend on the foster parent for guidance through this adjustment period. (For example, adjustment periods for dogs can be anywhere from three days to three weeks.) Don't give up on a foster companion animal! Read through this manual and call your foster care coordinator for help. Foster parents must be willing to be patient and commit to these animals because our goal is to keep them in a stable and consistent environment.



## WHERE SHOULD YOUR FOSTER PET STAY WHILE AT YOUR HOME?

**Cats/Kittens:** **INDOORS ONLY! (Do not let your foster cat/kitten outdoors)** We firmly believe that cats belong inside. They will live longer, healthier lives as indoor companions. If you have dogs it is important to have a separate room gated off for the cat to retreat to if it needs space or is afraid of the dog. If you are fostering young kittens they will need to be securely separated from any other companion animals in the home.

**Dogs:** **INDOORS** – Crating is fine and even encouraged for dogs or puppies that are being potty trained. When outdoors, **dogs should be on leash at all times** unless they are in a securely fenced area. Do not let your foster off leash even if you think he/she will stay with you or come when called. Without advanced training, most dogs cannot be trusted 100% of the time off leash. You can never be sure when a distraction such as a squirrel or another dog might cause them give chase, or when something that scares them (a loud, unfamiliar noise, etc.) might cause them to bolt.

**Foster dogs and puppies should never sleep outside or in a garage or shed. Foster animals should be household companions, not outdoor animals.**

**Puppies:** **INDOORS** -- Baby gates are indispensable for puppies! Crates as well. Puppies should be around humans as much as possible for socialization and **should not be isolated for extended periods of time, in an area such as a garage or basement.** They should only be outside when supervised by an adult. Puppies should NEVER go to off-leash areas or be around many other dogs because they are not yet fully vaccinated.

## **BRINGING YOUR FOSTER ANIMAL BACK TO THE SHELTER**

When the foster period is over, contact your foster care coordinator to arrange a day and time for you to return your foster pet to the shelter. Because of your close contact and attachment to the animal, you will be able to describe any special personality traits and features, habits, routines, etc. Fill out the “I have been in a Foster Home” form and give it to the foster coordinator. You may also paste any photos of your foster animal to the card for the potential adopter to see.

## **PREPARING YOUR HOME FOR YOUR FOSTER CAT**

### **Cats/Kittens**

When fostering cats or kittens with a cold, the shelter recommends they be separated from foster parents' own cats until they have no lingering symptoms. Foster cats or kittens can be kept in a separate room, like a laundry room or bathroom or walk in closet. Introducing a cat into a new home is extremely stressful for most cats- a cat's typical reaction is to run and hide. You can help ease the cat's stress by setting up a safe haven for the cat before he/she arrives.

### **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

- ❁ Litter Box. Cats will instinctively use a litter box. A deep litter box is less messy with cats that really like to dig. An uncovered litter box is more readily used by all cats than a covered one.
- ❁ Litter: Do not use clumping litter with kittens under 6 months. It can cause serious health problems if eaten, which most kittens do! A kitten may even die if the clumping litter forms a blockage in the intestines. It can also cause blockages in the respiratory systems of very young kittens that breathe in the fine grains of litter. Inexpensive clay litter provides a gratifying digging sensation and is widely accepted by most cats and kittens.
- ❁ Crate: You can borrow a crate from the shelter. It will provide a familiar smelling, dark, quiet home.
- ❁ Food: The food you feed your foster care is important because the saying “You are what you eat,” applies as well to cats as to humans. It especially applies to cats whose immune systems have been compromised. **ONLY** feed your foster the food provided by the shelter.
- ❁ Water: Water should be made available at all times. Use shallow bowls with young kittens as they could fall in and not be able to get themselves out.
- ❁ Heating pad or hot water bottle: (usually only used with very small kittens) Always keep on lowest level and keep a towel over the heating pad, (between kittens and heating pad).
- ❁ Toys: Play mice, balls, etc. Do not give catnip to kittens. All toys should be thoroughly disinfected before giving to another animal to use. This will reduce the risk of cross contamination.

## INTRODUCING A CAT TO A NEW HOME

**Cats or kittens that are being fostered because of illness or are very young should be kept separated from the resident animals. Do not allow contact between resident animals and foster animals.** There are many illnesses that can be transmitted to your own animals, so take precautionary measures after tending to your foster animal. Wash your hands thoroughly before and after having contact with the foster animal.

## MEDICAL CARE

### **MEDICAL CARE HAS TO BE APPROVED BY THE SHELTER DIRECTOR!!!**

**We are not able to reimburse you for any expenses!! If medical treatment is necessary you must contact the shelter and we will inform you how to proceed. We work with specific veterinarians that provide our medical care.**

If you have been given medication from the shelter lab please follow their directions. If you have any questions please call the foster care coordinator.

### WHAT YOU WILL NEED FOR BOTTLE FED KITTENS

- ❁ Carrier
- ❁ Towels
- ❁ Small washcloths
- ❁ KMR (a milk replacer)
- ❁ Bottles and nipples
- ❁ Heating pad
- ❁ Clay litter
- ❁ Notebook or paper to track food intake



### HOW TO FEED BOTTLE FED KITTENS

**This is a guide but please follow the instructions given by the lab if they are different than these.**

1. Make sure that the nipple is big enough. Milk should drip out when the bottle is held upside down.
2. Use KMR as prescribed by the lab.
3. Hold kittens to bottle feed in the same position they would be in if they were nursing on their mom: their feet should be on the floor or on your lap. **DO NOT HOLD THEM ON THEIR BACKS LIKE A HUMAN BABY-** they can aspirate milk.
4. Feed the kittens every 2-3 hours until 2 weeks of age. Then every 3-4 hours until the kittens are 4 weeks old. If they are sleeping wake them up to feed them.
5. Stimulate kittens to urinate and defecate immediately after feeding. To do this, use a piece of gauze or a cotton ball, dip it in warm water and ring it out. Rub gently on the lower abdomen (just in front of the anal-genital area).
6. Make sure to clean the kitten after every meal. This is something the mother cat would do and simulates her behavior. Use a cotton ball dipped in warm water and wrung out, clean the face especially around the chin where the milk drips, the head, and the rest of the body.

### Fostering a Mom Cat and Kittens:

1. Feed the mother cat as much as she will eat- you cannot over feed her when she is nursing. Offer canned and dry food and lots of fresh water daily.
2. Change the litter box daily.

## **REMEMBER IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS CALL US IMMEDIATELY!**

### **FOSTER CARE GUIDELINES FOR DOGS**

**PLEASE REMEMBER THAT THESE ARE JUST GENERAL GUIDELINES AND THAT ALL DIRECTIONS FROM THE LAB SHOULD BE FOLLOWED EVEN IF THESE CONFLICT WITH WHAT IS IN THIS MANUAL.**

When your foster dog or puppy first arrives to your home he/she will need to be kept in a single room. So find a room where you can confine him/her. It would be ideal if it is a room where you and your family spend a lot of time, since dogs are pack animals and like to spend time with you. Use a baby gate to block off the entrances to these rooms. It is also recommended that you have a crate in this room for when you are away from home.

### **DOG PROOFING THE ROOM**

Walk into the room where your foster dog will be and look around.

Do you have room for the crate?

Do you have quick access to the outside for bathroom emergencies?

Is there anything that can be chewed that you don't want chewed? (Furniture, electric cords, etc.) Are there breakables on the table that may be bumped off with a wagging tail?

Are plants up and out of reach? Some plants are toxic to dogs.

Once you have set up the crate make sure and put a blanket or something soft for the dog to sleep on. (A shirt or blanket with your scent can be comforting as well.)

### **ITEMS YOU MAY NEED**

- ❁ Food & water bowls
- ❁ Food & Water
- ❁ Crate (you may borrow one from the shelter)
- ❁ Bedding (old blankets or towels that are washable)
- ❁ Toys (be cautious with rawhides and use only when you can supervise the dog)
- ❁ Baby gates

### **FEEDING YOUR FOSTER DOG**

**THIS IS JUST A GENERAL GUIDELINE PLEASE FOLLOW ALL THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY THE LAB IF THEY DIFFER FROM THE ONES STATED HERE.**

Create a consistent schedule for feeding your foster dog. Create a separate space for your foster dogs to eat. **DO NOT FEED WITH YOUR OTHER PETS.** Keeping the foster animal separate from your other animals will keep them from arguing over food. Please do not feed them any people food. You don't want to start a habit that the adoptive parents may not want. Some dogs also have very sensitive stomachs and the slightest change may upset them.

## **INTRODUCING THE FOSTER DOG TO YOUR OWN DOGS**

Do not first introduce your foster dog to other dogs in your home. Have a friend (preferably not a family member, since dogs can be territorial of family members) take your foster dog on a leash and you take your dog on a leash and walk side by side on neutral territory. Let them sniff one another, while you hold the leash so you can take control of either dog quickly. Talk normally to your friend- letting the dogs know that you are fine, they are fine, and everything is fine. Walk around a while letting the dogs become friends. When they have become friends then you can go back home. Be aware that your home is considered by your family dog as their “turf”, and that they are not always eager to welcome strangers into their home. So be alert and make the introductions gradually and calmly. You may want to leave the leashes on the dogs so that you can get immediate control. Be sure to give your own dog LOTS of love and praise.

Do not over stimulate the foster dog. Remember that the foster may have just had a surgery and may not want to socialize. Allow him or her plenty of time to adjust. You may need to keep the foster and your dog separated, follow the directions given to you by the lab. **ESPECIALLY UNTIL THE FOSTER IS SPAYED OR NEUTERED!**

## **INTRODUCING THE FOSTER DOG TO CATS**

Please remember that dogs are predatory animals. It is a natural instinct for a dog to want to chase a cat- so be prepared. Make sure to have a safe haven available for the cat, and keep the animals under supervision. Do not ever let the dog intimidate the cat by barking or chasing. Let them interact together for a few minutes at first, and gradually allow more time if it seems to be going smoothly. Never force them together and do not allow the dog off leash around the cat. Never leave the foster alone unsupervised with your animals.

## **EXPECTATIONS OF BEHAVIOUR**

Allow time for adjustment. It usually takes about 24 hours for a dog to settle in- sometimes it takes longer. Watch their behavior closely. Your foster dog may have been traumatized before he came to you. You will be teaching him that people are good and can be trusted. You should handle and work with him everyday. If he shows any signs of aggression or fear, such as growling over food or toys, biting, or hiding, please contact the shelter.

## **BEDDING**

To help your foster dog get used to his crate, set up your foster dog’s bed in his crate and place the crate where you will be leaving it. If you are fostering a puppy you may want to place a warm hot-water bottle wrapped in a towel next to them. Make sure that the sides of bedding are tucked in firmly so the puppies don’t get trapped and suffocate in the folds of the bedding.

## **SOCIALIZATION/PLAYTIME/EXERCISE**

Lots of human contact is important for recovering, sick, injured or neglected dogs. Human handling is especially important for the healthy development of puppies.

Playtime is a reward for your foster dog. Be sure to give him several minutes of playtime periodically through the day. Do not play tug of war or wrestle with any dog, because this game may teach aggressive behaviors that we do not want the dog to learn. If you have a shy or fearful dog, do not throw the toy towards the dog, because he may think you are throwing things at him and become more fearful.

If you are fostering a puppy make sure that he has lots of new experiences, so that he is well socialized and will be adaptable as an adult. Since it is best not to take puppies out in public



until he is fully vaccinated, bring new experiences to him. Have friends over and invite them to play with the puppy. (Always closely supervise children with puppies).

## **MEDICAL CARE**

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## **INJURED DOGS**

Injured foster dogs will have specific needs. They will most likely be recovering from surgery and will come with veterinary orders. Generally fracture, cast, or other surgery patients may need to be confined to a crate to limit mobility. This type of fostering usually requires several visits to the vet. Be sure that your schedule allows such appointments. As with all fosters, watch for signs of illness, since injured foster dogs are under additional stress and are more prone to illness. Lots of human contact is important for healing injured dogs. Active play should be limited, but cuddling, petting, talking, brushing, and massaging are all good social activities for a recovering animal.

## **SOCIALIZING**

These cases will generally have very specific needs regarding behavior/training/socializing, and a shelter staff member will be available for consultation. For example, a dog with behavior problems may need work, a fearful dog may need socializing/confidence building.

## **MOM DOG WITH PUPPIES**

A small quiet, warm, easily cleaned room (laundry room, bathroom, family room, or kitchen) is best for a mother and pups. Clean bedding should be provided, and food and water nearby. A child's small plastic baby pool, lined with a blanket makes a wonderful, safe den for mama and babies. The mother dog should be allowed outside on leash (or supervised in a fenced yard) twice daily to eliminate. The puppies should not go out at all. The mother will spend most of her time early on nursing, cleaning up, and caring for her pups. Later, as the pups become more mobile and less demanding on her, she may enjoy more time away from them and active play with people and toys. As pups become more mobile, check their living area for hazards and puppy proof the area.

## FEEDING

The mother dog requires extra nutrition for adequate milk production. Feed three times a day. Be sure that all the puppies are nursing and steadily gaining weight. Newborns depend entirely on mom's milk receiving valuable antibodies in the first milk (colostrum). When the puppies are three weeks old, begin offering a low bowl of moistened puppy food. Be sure to offer this at a time when the puppies are hungry, and, if necessary, separate the mom so she won't eat all the food. By four weeks of age they should be eating some mushy meals. By six weeks of age puppies should no longer need mother's milk and should be eating soaked dry food.

## MEDICAL CARE

Call your foster care coordinator if you see any signs of illness in mother or pups.

### **MEDICAL CARE HAS TO BE APPROVED BY THE SHELTER DIRECTOR!!!**

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## SOCIALIZING

Be aware that the mother dog may be protective of her pups, but most mother dogs will allow a calm, gentle approach by adults and picking up/handling of pups. Puppies need a lot of human contact. Puppies usually thrive on the human contact.

## ORPHAN PUPPIES

PLEASE REMEMBER THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE AND TO FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS GIVEN TO YOU BY THE SHELTER!

## ITEMS YOU MAY NEED

- ❁ Carrier
- ❁ Towels
- ❁ Wash clothes
- ❁ Puppy milk replacement
- ❁ Bottles/Nipples
- ❁ Dishes with shallow sides
- ❁ Hot water bottle or Heating pad
- ❁ Timer/ticking clock
- ❁ Flea comb
- ❁ Baby shampoo
- ❁ Possibly a kitchen scale that weighs in 1 oz increments



Since the mother is not available, the foster parents must provide all of the mother's functions: feeding, warmth, cleaning, and stimulation to urinate/defecate.

## SAFETY/CONFINEMENT

These pups should be set up in small living quarters (such as a crate with bedding) easily kept consistently warm- at about 80-90 degrees F. They will pile on each other to keep warm, but a hot water bottle and warm bedding are needed. Heating pads can be used but keep on lowest setting with several layers of bedding between the pad and the pups, and should be monitored closely.

## **FEEDING**

Puppy milk replacer should be used according to the directions. Generally feeding every 2-3 hours is needed in the beginning. By three weeks of age, feeding every 4-5 hours with a night break of eight hours should work well. Milk replacer can be fed by dropper or syringe or bottle as pups accept it and need larger feedings. Some of the pups may be too weak to suck from the bottle and you will need to feed them with syringes. If you need to syringe feed the puppies, drip the formula SLOWLY into the sides of their mouths, and give them time to swallow. Going too fast can cause liquid to go into their lungs and cause pneumonia. Do not hold pups on their back or allow them to suck too fast (this can lead to aspiration of formula into the lungs). The puppies should be tilted forward and slightly up, as if they were nursing on their mother. Never try to bottle feed an unconscious or semi-conscious puppy. Feed until the puppy's tummy feels tight and full. Sick puppies will not eat eagerly. And you will have to feed them slowly and often to ensure that they are getting enough food.

After each feeding you must stimulate bowel and bladder movement. Use a warm, damp cotton ball, or later a cloth as volume increases. Gently massage their genital areas in a circular motion, and do not stop until they have finished eliminating. Note the color of the urine. If it is light yellow or straw colored, that is normal. If it is bright canary yellow, the puppy is dehydrated and needs fluids right away. Cottage cheesy stools or diarrhea are also an indication of illness. Call your foster care coordinator if you see these symptoms.

As the pups grow and become more mobile, weaning time approaches. Weaning can be started at three weeks by offering formula in a low dish with or without canned food mixed in. We use Science Diet puppy food. Be sure to offer when the puppies are hungry, so they will make their best effort to lap/lick/eat. Supplement with bottle feedings as needed until pups are lapping consistently from a dish. By 4-5 weeks no more bottle feedings should be needed. At four weeks, offer dry food soaked in water with can food mixed in, or formula may be added. Begin offering dry food at five weeks when the puppies are hungry near meal time so they will start to try the dry food. Continue feeding soaked dry food until seven weeks or so. By eight weeks, the puppies should readily eat dry food.

## **CLEANING**

Initially, newborn puppies should be kept in a crate and bedding should be changed as needed. The process of stimulating urinating/defecating, then cleaning or soaking up urine/feces with cotton balls or cloths should keep puppies fairly clean. As pups become more mobile and learn to defecate and urinate on their own, a larger crate or a small papered gated area like a kitchen or bathroom may be used to confine them. Keep area free of feces and urine. The weaning process can make for messy feet and faces-wash them with a warm wet cloth as needed. If you must bathe the puppies, make sure that they are thoroughly dried after bathing, to avoid chilling, which can lead to illness.

## **SOCIALIZING**

Handle newborn pups as much as possible to get them comfortable with humans.

## **PUPPY DEVELOPMENT**

It is important to start handling and manipulating the puppies right from birth. Although their ears and eyes are still sealed, their sense of smell is already relatively well developed. The wild stress they may experience when being picked up accelerates body growth, reduces emotionality and possibly increases their resistance to certain diseases. Moreover, they become imprinted to human scent.

The growing puppies should be handled every day, and gentle grooming should be started at 4- 5 weeks. As they become more aware of their environment, they should be exposed to as many stimuli as possible (vacuum cleaner, young children, men, women, other friendly animals, loud noises, etc.) However, you must pay attention that they do not become too stressed, over stimulated, or tired. Short car trips will get puppies used to traveling. At first all puppies should experience things by themselves to learn to cope with life later on.

From the age of eight weeks on, the puppy is ready to learn “human” language and the rules of human society. Socialization with other dogs and humans has to be continued. With any introduction, be aware of the possibility of transmission of infectious disease—use good judgment.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO BE A FOSTER FOR THE  
HUMANE SOCIETY CALUMET AREA !!!**

**If you have questions please call us at (219) 922-3811.**