



Welcome to the Sonoma County Animal Shelter Foster Program!



You are an important part of our mission at Sonoma
County Animal Services!

We have two primary functions:

- 1) to protect our community through law enforcement and education and
- 2) to ensure that animals in our agency are provided with compassionate individualized care until they can be reunited with their families, placed into new homes or humanely euthanized.

Department of Health Services

Director – Rita Scardaci

Public Health Division

Director – Ellen Bauer

Animal Services

Director – John Skeel

Shelter Services

Supervisor – Ann Joly

Community Engagement and Volunteer Program

Manager – James Dress

Operations

Manager – Brian Whipple

Field Services

Supervisor – Kevin Davis

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You are an important part of our mission at Sonoma
County Animal Services(SCAS)!

Foster Families allow kennel stressed, misbehaved, under socialized, underweight, and injured animals to become or remain adoptable and healthy while helping to relieve the strain on the shelter. This helps to increase adoptions in the shelter and in foster homes.

Why foster care is so important...

- Overpopulation in the shelter is hard on everyone, especially the animals. There have been times when there just isn't enough room for all of the animals brought to the shelter.
- Many animals at the shelter have suppressed immune systems, and are very susceptible to disease. They may also become carriers and quickly spread disease to other shelter residents.
- Most young and some adult animals entering the shelter have had little contact with people. When they return from foster care, they are more friendly, social, adoptable pets.



How the process begins...



- SCAS is an “open admission shelter” which means we accept every stray animal that comes to us (except for the felines that can become part of the Community Cat program).
- Staff makes foster recommendations for special needs animals to the foster coordinator who then calls foster families best suited to care for the needs of individual animals or litters.
- When foster volunteers receive a request to foster, they can then discuss with the foster care coordinator the needs of the animal(s) and their availability.

Why should you Foster?



- Fostering is a great opportunity for children to learn responsibility and compassion.
- Fostering allows you to work hands-on with homeless animals in the comfort and convenience of your own home.
- Fostering is ideal for people who appreciate the contributions companion animals make to our lives, but may not be able to make a long term commitment to a pet.

What Supplies do I need in order to Foster?



- SCAS will be able to assist you with some supplies in order to foster.
- We cannot reimburse you for any purchases made for your foster pet, but save your receipts because they can be used as a tax deduction.
- You must use our veterinary staff for medical issues or check ups.



The Foster Process



- SCAS retains ownership rights to animals in foster care until the adoption process is completed.
- You are encouraged to find adopters for your fosters, but remember all potential adopters must abide by all SCAS adoption policies and contracts.



Adoption Fees



– Current adoption fees can be located at

<http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Health/Animal-Services/Adoptable-Animals/Adopt-a-Dog-or-Puppy>

<http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Health/Animal-Services/Adoptable-Animals/Adopt-a-Cat-or-Kitten/>

<http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Health/Animal-Services/Adoptable-Animals/Adopt-a-Bunny-or-Small-Animal/>

This includes a vaccination, leukemia test (felines), spaying or neutering, microchip, and worming.

– Adoption fee specials can be located at

<http://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Health/Animal-Services/Latest-News/>

These events occur and change depending on the shelter environment and population.

Other considerations regarding foster care...



- There can be health risks to your own pets during foster. Your pets should be vaccinated and healthy.
- Foster pets should not interact or visit with your own pets without a proper introduction. This is to prevent injury to the fosters as well as to your own pets.
- Families should be prepared for the impact new animals may have on their routine and belongings. Be prepared for unscheduled vet visits, extra time spent caring for fosters, including caring for foster pets throughout the night.
- It can be difficult to return animals for adoption. Remember, you have provided these animals with a new beginning, and an opportunity for them to make another family as happy as they've made you.
- Fostering can be an emotional experience. Illness and death of a foster can be devastating, and while we consider it to be a final option, euthanasia may be necessary. Fosters should consider the impact this would have on their family, and discuss this possibility with their children.

Foster Care Manual provides information about...



- Illnesses, symptoms of disease, causes, and other health concerns
- Basic care of animals
- Sanitation and cleaning procedures and advice
- Socialization and development stages of animals
- Emergency advice and contact information
- Foster resumes and adoption procedures



Helpful tips...



- Bleach should be used to disinfect laundry and fostering area, using 1 part bleach, and 32 parts water. 3-5 minute sanitation time. Surfaces should be cleaned with a detergent first.
- Do not give kittens milk. We can provide milk replacer if necessary.
- Do not use sand litter for kittens.
- Use shredded newspaper when caring for an animal after surgery.
- You can always use a heating pad, or hot water bottles to make foster pets more comfortable. Wrap these tools with a towel and be careful that the fosters don't chew the pads or cords.

Socialization and Play Time...



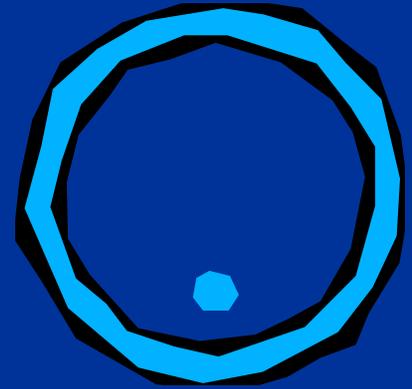
- Sleep is very important to infant kittens and puppies. Avoid waking them to play or handle them.
- **Fosters kittens and puppies must be kept inside at all times.**
- REMINDER: Foster pets should not interact or visit with your own pets without a proper introduction. This is to prevent injury to your pet or the foster pet.
- **Your pet(s) should be vaccinated and healthy to prevent illness.**

Kennel Cough, URI and other conditions...



- Please use your “foster intuition” and if something doesn’t seem right, contact one of the technicians at the shelter ASAP.
- Diarrhea, vomiting, hair loss, sneezing, and lethargy should be reported to a shelter tech.
- Lack of appetite, hiding, failure to groom, and weight loss should also be carefully monitored and reported to a shelter tech.
- Illness and dehydration can be fatal to kittens and puppies very quickly.
- Kennel Cough is the common name for a highly contagious canine upper respiratory disease commonly seen in dogs who are exposed to many other dogs in places such as animal shelters and boarding kennels. Symptoms such as dry cough (honking), gagging , and runny nose may indicate kennel cough.
- URI (upper respiratory infection) is often referred to as a “cold” in cats and kittens. It may be highly contagious to other cats, and can threaten the entire population in a shelter environment. Symptoms such as sneezing, runny eyes, squinting eyes, appearance of the 3rd eyelids, and lethargy may indicate URI.

Questions, Concerns and Emergencies...



- If you have a question or concern about your foster animal(s), please call the shelter and speak to a technician at any time. We are here to support you and your family.
- In the event of a medical emergency, please try to stabilize the animal, contact the shelter and bring the animal to the shelter or to an otherwise authorized emergency vet to be examined as soon as possible.
- There is no such thing as a silly question or an unnecessary worry. If you think you might see a problem or simply want to know more about your observations, call the shelter and speak to a technician.

When nature takes it's course...

- If an animal passes in your care, please notify a shelter technician and return the body to the shelter ASAP. We will perform a necropsy to determine the cause of death, and to hopefully prevent further illness.
- Fading kitten syndrome is very difficult to diagnose, and is usually not treatable. It's often a result of poor nutrition during pregnancy, birth defects, or other drug or environmental factors.
- About 20%-40% of kittens born will not survive past 12 weeks of age.



THANK
YOU!



Your time, dedication, and compassion is very much appreciated by the entire staff at Sonoma County Animal Services. We are grateful for the amount of effort and emotion you put into your foster animal(s).

You are truly making a difference in the lives of the animals you foster!