

Foster Families

Anyone who owns or has been owned by a schnauzer knows that schnauzers are people dogs. Schnauzers crave human companionship and do best in a family environment.

How the program works:

The female or male "pick of select litters" is sold for a significantly reduced fee to a family that will provide a loving, caring home. The animal lives with this family for it's entire life except during the times when it comes to us to be bred and then, later to have puppies.

Ownership of the dog is signed over to the foster family subject to the foster family signing a restrictive breeding contract. As the foster puppy grows, its health, temperament and conformation is monitored to determine if it is suitable for breeding. Once the animal is of age for breeding, I decide who it will be bred to and when.

Placing dogs in foster homes results in a far better life for a dog. The foster family program is a good deal for the dog, a good deal for the foster family and a good deal for my breeding program. In my opinion, it is one of those "win-win" situations for everyone involved.

If for some reason I decide an animal is unsuitable for breeding, I will ask that it be spayed or neutered. When that is done, my breeding contract is null and void and the animal is able to enjoy life with it's family.

Who qualifies for a foster dog?

I am very selective in who I choose to become foster families. I want to make sure that my dogs go to safe homes where they will be well cared for and not allowed to escape and get lost or get run over by a car. I expect the dogs to be house dogs. I look for people who have had dogs before. The ideal person is one who has had a dog die of old age. This is a person who know how to take care of a dog and is willing to make a commitment for life to one of our dogs.

Foster families need to fill out an application form and be willing to provide references that can be contacted during the approval process.

What are the Foster Families Responsibilities?

- A foster family will generally get a puppy for a significantly reduced fee in exchange for signing over exclusive breeding rights to the dog to us.
- The puppy will come with a name - sometimes the family will be able to select their own name for their puppy.
- They must agree to spend time training the puppy in basic obedience (sit, down, stay, come, walk nicely on a leash).

- They must also agree feed one of the foods I suggest.
- The family should have a fenced back yard.
- The foster family must notify me when the female comes into heat and ensure she is safe and secure during her heat or, if she is due to be bred, bring her to me when requested to do so.
- Must bring the dog back to me every 5 weeks for grooming. Grooming is provided at a reduced rate. My dogs are my business cards so it is expected that my dogs will be kept neat, tidy and properly groomed

How often does a female come into heat?

Females come into season twice a year. I typically only breed a female once a year. As I have more females than I need for breeding, not all of my females are bred every year. A female will generally be retired on or before her sixth birthday. The fact is that if a female is in good health, having a litter keeps her hormones flowing and she stays in excellent condition as a result. How many litters she will have in her lifetime is determined by her overall condition, the quality of her pups, her attitude and temperament as a mother, the ease of labor and delivery for her and how quickly she recovers optimum health after a litter.

How long is a female in heat?

A heat cycle generally last 3 weeks. There will be bloody discharge for the first 8-10 days of her cycle. Then she moves into her "standing heat" which generally lasts 3-5 days. This phase is where she is "breedable" - will allow a male access to her. Until then, if a male tries anything, he will be told off. Once you are through the first 14-15 days, any discharge is miniscule to non-existent and, and for all intensive purposes, she is done her heat although she is technically still in heat until approximately day 21. It's the first two weeks you need to get through. Most people with an intact female will purchase a diaper for the female to wear in the house so that her discharge does not stain the carpet or furniture. Some females will have noticeable discharge and others can nearly get through a heat without being noticed. Each is different, just like human females.

How long is she with you when she is being bred?

I generally breed my females three times, aiming to time those breedings during the days of her heat where I am likely to produce the most puppies. If she is ready for breeding on day 12 of her heat, the family will drop her off to us on day 12, 14, 16 for breeding. The duration of her visit is usually 30-60 minutes each day depending on how quickly the male works.

After getting bred, she goes back to her foster family until 2-3 days before the expected whelp date. She then comes and lives with us until the puppies are born, weaned and start to leave for their own families at about 8 weeks. Once puppies start leaving for their new homes, the female returns to her own family.

How long/often is a male needed for breeding?

Males are generally ready to start their breeding career at 1 year of age. I try to give each of my males at least two females to breed each year: one in spring and one in fall. There will be some years where they may be used more often. Unlike females, a male's breeding life can last 6-8 years. How long he is used as a stud and how often he is used depends entirely on the quality of the puppies he is producing.

As I generally breed my females three times during their heat, I will let the foster family know as far in advance as possible when the male will be needed. Details will be ironed out once the female chosen for him actually starts her heat. He will need to be dropped off at my house for breeding and then picked up and taken home the same day, once the breeding is complete.

How much extra work is involved in caring for a pregnant female?

Actual extra care is minimal. Gestation is 9 weeks and pregnancy is nearly undetectable until the female is 4-5 weeks pregnant. She will need 50% more food as of her 5th week. It is important for her to continue normal activity, including daily walks for as long as possible. She will slow down once she enters her 8th week and should be discouraged from jumping up on objects (beds or couches) and may need help getting in and out of vehicles. It is important to be aware that like people, each female is different in how she responds to pregnancy. Some are very active until the day they deliver and others turn into couch potatoes with weeks of being bred.

I will make arrangements to weigh/measure the female at the 4 wk, 6 wk and 8 wk mark of her pregnancy. This helps me to determine how many puppies she will be having. The weigh/measure takes only a few minutes and will be scheduled at your convenience. The female will need to be x-rayed 1 week before her due date for puppy counting. This cost will be covered and paid by me.

Can I be there when puppies are being born?

When a female comes to us to have her puppies, we encourage visits and involvement from the foster family. Families are welcome to attend the birth if they want to. After puppies are born, they can stop by as often as they want to take mom for a walk or play with puppies. The interaction benefits everyone.

A family is not expected to be involved with the birth and care of puppies.

What about grooming my Schnauzer?

I prefer to groom my own dogs. It allows me to touch base with foster families on a regular basis and permits me to observe, first hand, the temperament, structure, growth, coat etc. of our fostered dogs. I provide the grooming for a reduced rate of \$25.00 for our foster families.

What if I already have a dog in my home?

Depending on the personality and age of the dog already in a home, a dog may or may not be placed where there already is another dog. I will never place a female in a home where there is an un-neutered male or a male where there is an intact female. Dogs benefit from having animal companionship whether it is another dog or a cat!

How far away do you place your dogs?

I prefer not to place my foster dogs in homes that are more than a 30 minute drive away. In some cases, where we have an "ideal" family, I will make an exception.

Do I ever place older dogs in foster homes?

Some people know how much work it is to raise a puppy and would prefer not to go through the house breaking and chewing stages of a puppy. An older dog is a perfect solution.

On rare occasions, I have a young adult (and sometimes an older female) that I would like to place in a foster home. These are dogs that have been in foster homes and find themselves back in my home due to a divorce, relocation or sudden and severe family illness. Sometime people simply decide they can't carry on with the program and the dog finds its way back to us.

What about Medical Issues and the dog?

The foster family is required to keep the animal current on rabies and routine inoculations. Flea and heartworm are at the discretion of the family however, if an animal comes to me for breeding or whelping with fleas, the family will be charged for the cost of treating it.

If there are any medical expenses as a result of breeding or litters, this is taken care of by me.

How do I know when a dog should be bred?

I track a female's heat cycles on our computer so we can anticipate when she will come in season next. I plan my breedings based on the information that the foster family provides to me. This is why it is important that the information be accurate and delivered in a timely fashion.

I will be happy to go into detail with foster families regarding the signs of an impending heat and what to look for.

What if we decide that we don't want to be a part of the program anymore?

If at any time something changes in a foster home and they are no longer able to keep a foster dog, there is no problem with them returning the dog to me. When this happens, I will either place the dog in a new foster home or keep it in my home, depending on dog.

Are foster families ever allowed to whelp a litter?

NO. There is too much that can go wrong during a delivery to risk the life of a mother and her puppies in the hands of an inexperienced person.

Under what circumstances do I take a dog out of a foster home?

There are only a few reasons that I would take a female out of a foster home:

- If I find out they are allowing the dog to run loose without supervision
- If the female is accidentally bred or a male accidently breeds a female
- If the foster parents do not tell us when a female comes into season (even if we don't plan on breeding it). I will warn the foster family once and take it away if it happens again.
- If someone is arrested for a criminal offense.
- If someone moves without informing us that they have moved.
- If someone allows a dog to become extremely overweight and does not take steps to correct this.

Visiting us:

Once a person talks with me and it is determined that they qualify for one of my dogs, they are encouraged to bring the dog back to me for grooming every 5 weeks and a periodic visit. I prefer to have this arranged in advance.

A big THANK YOU! to all the families who have been willing to partner with me as a foster family. You are becoming too numerous to mention but you are all invaluable and your love and care for your dog and support for me are greatly appreciated!