



MIDWEST LABRADOR RETRIEVER RESCUE, INC.

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FOSTERING OVERVIEW

Midwest Labrador Retriever Rescue, Inc. (MLRR) is always in need of foster homes for our rescued Labs. The number of available foster homes limits the number of dogs that we can rescue. Labs may have to be placed on a waiting list until a foster home is available. Unfortunately, some dogs have a limited amount of time before a shelter or animal control will have to put them down. Clearly, foster homes play one of the most significant roles in MLRR's rescue efforts.

Becoming a foster home

The first step to become a foster home is the completion of our Volunteer Form, which includes a section specifically about fostering. Upon receipt of the volunteer form, an MLRR representative will schedule a home visit to meet your entire family to discuss fostering in more detail. Following the home visit, the MLRR representative will write a summary of the visit and submit it to the MLRR Board of Directors to help them determine whether you have the right situation to be a foster home.

Getting a foster dog

Once you have become an approved foster home, our Foster Home Coordinator will contact you when she has a foster dog lined up. We tell the foster family everything we know about each dog. Sometimes the information is limited, particularly if the dog is coming from a shelter. We temperament test our dogs before taking them into rescue to be as sure as we can that the dogs are not aggressive toward people or other dogs; however, as with any dog, we can make no guarantees. We do not take dogs with any known history of biting. We may ask you to pick up the rescued Lab from a Chicago area shelter, animal control, or from the previous owner. Sometimes another MLRR volunteer will bring the dog to you, or meet you somewhere in the middle. During the fostering process, advice and assistance is available from other MLRR volunteers.

Caring for your foster dog

We ask that while the foster dog is in your care, you treat for him or her as part of your family. You will be responsible for providing food, shelter, and most importantly love to the rescued Lab. Fostering a dog generally lasts a few days to a few weeks. In many cases you will also be asked to take the dog to a local veterinarian for routine medical care, such as vaccinations, spaying or neutering, and any other necessary medical treatment. MLRR will pay for the medical care, and we ask that foster homes go to a veterinarian with which we have worked out discounted pricing. A foster home can approach their own vet, if they prefer, to see if they can establish vet care with a discount through them.

Fostering may sometimes involve dogs that are not housebroken or that have not had much training. We rely on our foster homes to keep us posted as they learn more about their foster dog. During the fostering period, the foster family learns a good deal about the dog's personality and current level of training. This information is very important in helping us match the foster dog with an adoptive family.

Adoption of a rescued Lab

Before someone can adopt one of our rescued Labs, they must go through a thorough approval process. They first complete a detailed four-page adoption application; then an MLRR volunteer performs a home visit and assesses the family situation to see if they are a good candidate to adopt a rescued Lab from our organization. Only **after** an adoption applicant has been approved can he or she meet one of our available dogs.

When we have an approved applicant that seems to be a good match for a Lab in foster care, we give the foster home the name and phone number of the potential adopter to contact. The foster home discusses the dog with the potential adopter over the phone, and then makes arrangements with the family to come and meet the dog (usually at the foster home) to see if they are interested in adopting him or her. If they decide to adopt the dog, they will sign an MLRR adoption contract and pay the standard adoption fee at that time.

If you are considering adopting a rescued Lab for yourself, please be aware that foster homes cannot adopt a Lab from MLRR within 6 months of the time they start fostering. If your primary goal is to adopt a Lab, then please complete an adoption application instead of a fostering application.

Help save a dog's life

This is a brief overview of fostering. If you are interested (and we hope you are), please complete a volunteer form and mail it to us. During the home visit, you can get all of your questions answered in detail, and other aspects of fostering can be discussed. Fostering a rescued Lab can be an incredibly exciting and rewarding experience. There is nothing more wonderful than seeing your foster dog go home with the "perfect" adoptive family, and knowing he will be cared for and loved for the rest of his life. Please help us give a rescued Lab a second chance. **We look forward to hearing from you!**