

The Life-Changing Power of Fostering Dogs

-and the Art of Letting Go

Fostering a dog is one of the most powerful and compassionate acts an animal lover can undertake. When a dog leaves the shelter and enters a foster home, something truly transformative happens. Even though Kingman Humane Society is filled with loving employees and volunteers, it can still be a noisy and overwhelming experience for the animals. However, the moment they step into a calm home environment, they begin to relax, feel safe, and show the personalities that often stay hidden in the shelter setting. I have had over 20 fosters now, and each one of them is a different dog outside the shelter.

Fostering also plays a major role in easing shelter overcrowding. Not to mention that when a foster family opens their home, they free a kennel for another animal in need. Fostering doesn't just impact the dog in your home—it helps the next one waiting for space, and the one after that. It's a ripple effect of compassion.

Fostering allows for invaluable insight about the dog's behavior and needs. A home environment allows shelters to learn things they could never fully assess in a kennel: how a dog behaves with children, how they interact with other pets, what they enjoy, what routines work best for them, and what kind of family would be the right match. Fosters can play a key role in helping us pair a dog with a home where they will truly thrive.

Of course, fostering isn't just about the day-to-day care—it's an emotional journey. Saying goodbye can be bittersweet. You've built a bond, helped a dog feel secure, and watched them grow. Then suddenly, it's time for them to step into their forever family. Keeping in mind that the mission of your work is to find a forever home for your foster, can help. I also find solace in the happiness that the adopters have when they complete their adoption process. When a foster dog finds their forever home, it's a celebration of the work you have done.

To make the transition smoother, I find it helpful to prepare a small send-off kit including the dog's favorite treat or toy, feeding instructions, and routine notes. This helps the dog settle into their new home with confidence. I also encourage the adopters to send me updates on how the dog is doing. There is nothing better than seeing how happy the dog and adopters are. I have been fortunate to get regular updates from several of the people who adopted one of my fosters. It always serves as a reminder of why I have opened my home to fosters.

The impact foster families make is immense. You offer safety, healing, and hope. You show dogs what kindness feels like, and you help them get from where they were to where they are meant to be. Your love becomes part of their story forever. If you feel inspired to foster, Kingman County Humane Society is here to support you every step of the way. Your compassion changes lives, one wagging tail at a time.