

## How to Run a Successful Foster Program

### Where to Start

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Read "[Foster Care: How Can You Develop a Program That Really Works?](#)" from No More Homeless Pets Forum and "[Starting a Foster Program](#)" from Tompkins County SPCA.

View "[Starting a Feline Foster Care Program](#)" by Diane Blankenburg of the Nevada Humane Society<sup>1</sup> and "[How to Build a Successful Canine Foster Program](#)" by Jennifer Mazzocchi of Mayday Pit Bull Rescue & Advocacy. These recorded webinars are available on [PetSmartCharities.org](http://PetSmartCharities.org) under [Resources](#).



### Foster Application Forms, Agreements and Manuals

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See [our documents](#) to set up a foster program. We have brochures on pet fostering, foster care manuals, foster handbooks, foster agreements and applications, and more.

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<sup>1</sup> This presentation can easily apply to a dog or a cat foster program.



## Get the Word Out

Promote your pets needing foster homes with:

### Flyers



You can create and send personalized custom flyers and postcards with direct mail, thanks to the [United States Postal Service](#)'s business solutions. You can copy our flyers and materials but in exchange we ask that you credit the Pet Foster Network on your website.

The [PetBond.com Flyer Maker](#) also allows you to create a PDF flyer including a photo and description of an animal that is up for adoption, needs a foster home or a sponsor, or has been lost or found.





# AFRAID OF LONG-TERM COMMITMENT?


Try fostering! The Pet Foster Network needs volunteers to provide short-term in-home care for friendly dogs, cats, rabbits, horses, and other animals in need until they are adopted. All veterinary care is paid by the fostering

organization. Food and litter may also be provided. Fostering can last from a few weeks to several months. To learn more about pet fostering or to find a foster program near you, visit [www.petfoster.org](http://www.petfoster.org) or call 919.425.2330.

THE NEWS-OBSERVER  
NEWSOBSERVER.COM  
 Life enriched.



In your newsletter



## The Pet Foster Network


[HOME](#)
[FOSTER A PET](#)
[DONATE](#)

**Lilly and her companions need your help today**

Lilly is very shy but sweet. We have been hoping to find foster homes for Lilly and her companions since June, but we have not find foster homes yet for all of them.

**Can Lilly stay at your place for a while?**  
Contact Penny Jeffrey at [pigpalsnc@yahoo.com](mailto:pigpalsnc@yahoo.com) or (919) 219-7762 for more information.


**All vet care and food are provided** by Pig Pals of NC.




[Lilly](#)

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**Some other pets needing foster homes**



[Callie](#)



[Dino](#)



[Katie](#)

Here are some of the pets that are currently looking for a foster home. **All veterinary care is paid by the fostering organization. Food and litter may also be provided.** All pets listed on our website are also available for adoption unless otherwise noted.

Please note that these are only some of the pets needing foster homes. To find a foster program near you, use our [foster program locator](#).



## On Facebook




**Pet Foster Network** Anna is a very cute and lucky little pig. She is a cancer survivor and is doing very well. Anna is shy but sweet. Can Anna crash at your place for a while? All vet care and food are provided!



**The Pet Foster Network - Foster Me**  
[www.petfoster.org](http://www.petfoster.org)  
 Some of the Pigs Needing Foster Homes Now The information listed for each animal was provided by individual caregivers or animal rescue groups and was not generated or verified by the Pet Foster Network. Foster arrangements will be private arrangements between individuals and/o

371 Impressions · 0% Feedback  
 November 19 at 1:25pm · Like · Comment · Share · Promote

## On your website


Maggie  
Photos by Diane Lewis

HOME
What We Do
Our Animals
What You Can Do
Learn More


**Animal Protection Society of Durham**  
 2117 E. Club Blvd  
 Durham, NC 27704  
 919.560.0640

**HOURS of OPERATION**  
 Mon & Tues 10:30am-5pm  
 Wednesday 10:30am-6pm  
 Thurs & Fri 10:30am-5pm  
 Saturday 10:00am-2pm  
 Sunday CLOSED

Visitation with the animals ends 1/2 an hour before closing time.


**APS Sponsors**  
 Diamond Sponsor  
**The Herald-Sun**  
 Trusted & Essential  
 Gold Sponsor  
**WUNC 91.5**  
 NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC RADIO

Source:  
<http://www.apsodurham.org/>




**Featured Pets**

- APS is entered in the Triangle Christmas Tree Challenge! ... [Read More](#)
- December's Volunteer of the Month – Nan Mullenneaux ... [Read More](#)
- Help some special cats find a home for the holidays!  
 For the month of December only many of our cats ... [Read More](#)
- Treats & Toys for Tails!  
 A food and toy drive for homeless pets at APS The ... [Read More](#)
- Shop to Give and Help Homeless Pets!  
 ... [Read More](#)
- Tails at Twilight 2011, Save the Date!  
 APS announces date for ... [Read More](#)
- APS Launches New Monthly Giving Program  
 APS Cares for 7,000 homeless, abandoned and abused pets every ... [Read More](#)




**SEYMOUR** is a handsome, 5-6 month old Lab/Pit mix who's very focused, gentle and social – just an all-around nice puppy! He's quite playful (he likes to chase a ball and ... [Read More](#)

All Adoptable Dogs



**Rigsby** is our featured cat for December!! His adoption fee has been reduced to \$25 for DECEMBER ONLY to help him find a home for the holidays. ... [Read More](#)

All Adoptable Cats



**UPDATED 12/03/10!!**  
[Click here to read Finnegan's blog!!](#)  
**FINNEGAN** is a handsome Hound mix who's a little under a year old. He's friendly and playful, and though he's ... [Read More](#)

All Foster Animals

www.petfoster.org


Post foster parents positions at your local volunteer centers and Retired Senior Volunteer Programs (RSVP), and on web sites such as VolunteerMatch.org, Idealist.org, justvolunteers.org, and Servenet.org.

Local newspapers may have a community or volunteer section where you can post your event or program for free. Also ask them if they can post your ad (flyer) as a public service advertisement. Offer to write a column for free.

Radio and public TV stations run free public service announcements (PSA). Periodically send them via email a 10-seconds and 30-seconds ad<sup>2</sup> which they can read on the air.

Convert your flyer into a [postcard](#). Mail postcards to civic clubs, public libraries, churches, veterinarians, daycares, physical therapy and rehabilitation centers, major companies and of course, your target audience in your community.

***Back of postcard (the front is the same as our flyers)***

<h2 style="margin: 0;">SPREAD THE WORD!</h2> <p style="margin: 10px 0;">Please help the Pet Foster Network promote the joys and needs of pet fostering by posting this card in your workspace, church, library, gym, hair salon, coffee shop, etc. More flyers are available to download on our website at <a href="http://www.petfoster.org">www.petfoster.org</a></p> <p style="margin: 10px 0;">The Pet Foster Network helps local animal rescue groups and shelters to recruit as many pet foster parents as possible in North Carolina.</p>	 <p style="margin: 0;">petfoster network 6040-A Six Forks Rd, #131 Raleigh, NC 27609</p>
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<sup>2</sup> See appendix A



You can create and send personalized custom flyers and postcards with direct mail, thanks to the [United States Postal Service](#)'s business solutions.

Ask significant sized staffed local companies if they would be willing to promote your foster program to their staff.

### **The Use of Mentors in Foster Programs: The Case of IAR**

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Independent Animal Rescue (IAR), an all volunteer non-profit organization in North Carolina, uses mentors to carry their foster program. They presently have more than 250 cats in foster homes. They are able to be so successful, thanks to one foster coordinator and 10 mentors in their foster program.

#### **How it works:**

The IAR foster coordinator hand picks the really good foster parents, the ones who follow rules<sup>3</sup>. He asks these good foster parents if they would like to become mentors. Mentors:

- Provide new foster parents with foster manual/packet and talk them through the basics (because people do not read);
- Are the ones responsible for training new foster parents;
- Match pets with new foster parents;
- Help foster parents do the write-ups (See tips on [kennel cards](#))
- Are the ones to call if foster parents have a question/problem (unless an emergency).

The foster coordinator has monthly group training sessions<sup>4</sup> for new (8-10) foster homes. These meetings are friendly, inclusive, open meetings where the joys and needs of pet fostering are discussed. All new foster parents are required to attend a monthly meeting before getting an animal. After the training session, interested new foster parents are assigned to a mentor. The new foster parent then meets with the mentor one on one.

Mentors make sure that the first fostering experience of new foster parents is positive and easy. That is the key to retain foster parents.

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<sup>3</sup>For IAR, librarians and nurses are their best foster parents because they are professionals who care and follow rules. IAR periodically sends letters to these targeted audiences asking them to become foster parents.

<sup>4</sup> For anyone considering fostering who wants to find out more, and for current foster parents who want more information on pet care and IAR procedures.



## What works in recruiting foster homes: Tips from Holly Sizemore

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The Pet Foster Network asked Holly Sizemore, former Executive Director of No More Homeless Pets in Utah, what worked for them in recruiting foster homes. NMHP in Utah is working to end euthanasia of homeless dogs and cats statewide. Here are her answers:

"Foster homes are definitely the gold of all our work, aren't they. You know, interestingly we have found that grass-roots efforts to recruit foster homes work best. Our most successful:

1. At adoption events, about 20 % of the animal's cages will have a very bright but small star-shaped sign that just says "I need a foster home, ask how you can help". We have some wonderful foster homes who don't mind if we move their foster animal to a new foster home and give them a new animal from the shelter, so even if we have that animal in a foster home we will sometimes put the sign on knowing that it will help recruit new fosters. If we put too many stars out it doesn't seem to work, 20% seems to be the magical and unscientific number.

2. Just recently we found using social networking in combination with our super adoption events has been amazing in recruiting new fosters. I think it is the "event" aspect that really makes it work. Our super adoption events bring together shelters and rescue groups from throughout Utah for a mega-3-day adoption event. We have about 1,000 animals present with a goal of adopting out 400. Each day we send out tweets and Facebook notifications as to our results for that day. We of course talk about how amazing and successful the event is going, but we also state that at 4:00 pm Sunday some of the unadopted animals may face returning to a euthanizing shelter (since the shelter likely filled up over the course of the weekend) and being killed. We asked interested parties if they could foster, to please show up Sunday @ 4:00 pm. It is a bit crazy, I must admit (having them fill out the foster home application on the spot) but last super adoption it resulted in getting about 15 new foster homes for a number of rescue groups. I don't think you'd necessarily need a super adoption to make this work, just some "event" type thing...kitten season or simply an appeal saying that a shelter is faced with an inordinate number of animals and needs help, etc. The key is to only use that kind of method a few times per year."

### Most Effective Recruitment Tool: Pet Foster Parents

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Pet foster parents are effective recruiters because they share information about the need for foster parents through word-of-mouth and can promote the idea of fostering just by their presence in the community. Offer incentives to foster parents for successfully recruiting other foster families. Use foster parents as facilitators during pre-service foster parent training classes.



## Recruit Your Adopters

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Your adoption database is a potential gold mine for foster homes. Chances are if a person has passed your adoption screening process, they will probably pass your foster home screening process. Be sure to include foster home recruiting information in every adoption packet you send out.

## How Did You Hear About Us?

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Ask people how they heard about your foster program. The answers tell you what is working best in terms of reaching people and how you can improve getting your message out.

***Our online application form is where we find out more about our foster homes.***



**\* Required Fields**

\* **First Name:**

\* **Last Name:**

\* **City:**

\* **County that you live in:**

\* **State:**

Daytime Phone Number:

\* **Evening Phone Number:**

\* **E-mail address:**

\* **Re-enter E-mail address:**

\* **How did you hear about the Pet Foster Network?**

Friend

Animal Rescue Group/Shelter

Veterinarian

Flyer/Postcard

Facebook

VolunteerMatch

Petfoster.org

Newspaper:

Radio Station:

Other:

\* **Do you wish to subscribe to our e-newsletter?**

Our newsletter features tips on pet fostering, pets needing foster homes, PFN news, and chances to win prizes.

\* **Would you like to help us recruit more foster parents?**

Are you Male or Female?

How old are you?

What is your income level?

Do you have pets?

Where do you live?

Do you have children?

Do you have a regular Veterinarian?

Comments:

***Keep statistics of your foster homes in order to know who your target audience is, as well as what works and what do not work in recruiting foster homes.***



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
		%-age	YTD	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1			125	19	31	7	5	7	8	10	10	6	8	14	
2	<b>Total Referrals</b>														
3															
4	<b>1. Animal to foster?</b>														
5	Dog		99	16	21	7	3	5	6	7	10	4	8	12	
6	Cat		16	3	5			2		3		1		2	
7	Horse		0												
8	Rabbit		3		3										
9	Pocket Pet		3		2				1						
10	Guinea Pig		0												
11	Bird		0												
12	Farm Animal		3				1		1						1
13	Other		2				1					1			
14															
15	<b>2. Heard about PFN</b>														
16	Friend		15	4	4	3					1	1			2
17	Rescue/Shelter		14	2	1	1	1		1	1	2	1	2		2
18	Veterinarian		6	1					1	1	1	1			1
19	Flyer/Postcard		2						1						1
20	Petfoster.org		44	7	11	2	4	3	2	7	3	1	2		2
21	Newspaper		5	2	1										2
22	Radio station		2					1					1		
23	Other		5	2				1	1	1					
24	WRAL		7		7										
25	Disney Give a Day		9	1	7	1									
26	Facebook		5					2	2					1	
27	Google		6								2	2	1		1
28	Animal Planet		1								1				
29	Didn't reply		4										1		3
30															
31	<b>3. Gender</b>														
32	Male		18	4	5	2		1	1	2	1		1		1
33	Female		94	15	24	4	3	6	6	6	9	5	5	11	
34	Didn't reply		13		2	1	2		1	2		1	2		2
35															
36	<b>4. Age</b>														
37	18-29		53	6	7	5	2	5	2	5	6	4	3		8
38	30-39		23	5	8		1	2		1	3	1	2		
39	40-49		15	2	5				3	1	1				3
40	50-59		17	4	7	1	1		1	1			1		1
41	60-69		5	2	2				1						
42	70+		0												
43	Didn't reply		12		2	1	1		1	2		1	2		2
44															
45	<b>5. Income Level</b>														
46	0-25k		33	2	7	3		5	2	4	2	2	3		3
47	26-40k		27	3	4	2	2	2	1	3	4	2	2		2
48	41-55k		6	3	1						1		1		
49	56-75k		9	2	3				1	1	1				1
50	76-100k		15	4	6				3		1				1
51	over 100k		9	2	4							1			2
52	Didn't reply		26	3	6	2	3		1	2	1	1	2		5
53															
54	<b>6. Have pets?</b>														
55	Yes		80	15	19	3	4	5	6	8	7	2	4		7
56	No		32	4	10	2		2	1	1	3	3	1		5
57	Didn't reply		13		2	2	1		1	1		1	3		2
58															
59	<b>7. Housing</b>														
60	Single family home		72	13	24	1	3	3	5	5	5	3	3		7
61	Apartment		31	4	4	4		4	2	4	1	2	2		4
62	Condo/Townhome		8	2	1						4		1		
63	Didn't reply		14		2	2	2		1	1		1	2		3
64															
65	<b>8. Children?</b>														
66	Yes		40	8	14	1	2	1	3	3	4	1	1		2
67	No		74	11	15	5	2	6	4	6	6	4	5		10
68	Didn't reply		11		2	1	1		1	1		1	2		2
69															
70	<b>9. Regular Vet?</b>														
71	Yes		81	16	23	2	4	5	4	7	7	2	5		6
72	No		32	3	5	3		2	3	2	3	3	2		6
73	Didn't reply		12		2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		2



## Be Prepared

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Have your foster program information posted on your web site, including your foster parent application, foster care manual, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), and flyers visible for people to download.

### ***FAQs on our website***

[What is a pet foster parent?](#)

[Why are pet foster parents needed?](#)

[What are the joys of fostering?](#)

[Where are the pets that need foster homes?](#)

[Who should foster a pet?](#)

[How long is a foster period?](#)

[What happens if the pet doesn't get adopted? Do you end up having to keep it?](#)

[How long do you keep it for?](#)

[Are there requirements people should be aware of before becoming pet foster parents?](#)

[What does it cost to foster a pet?](#)

[What kind of support will I get?](#)

[If I foster a pet, will I be able to take a vacation?](#)

[Will I get too attached to my foster pet?](#)

[Will I get an animal with behavior issues?](#)

[Will I have a say into who adopts my foster pet?](#)

[How do I see pets that are available to foster?](#)

[I already own a pet. Can I still foster?](#)

[Can I adopt the animal I foster?](#)

[How can I volunteer to become a pet foster parent?](#)

[I am less than 18 years old. Can I foster a pet?](#)

[I have chosen an organization I would like to foster for. What's next?](#)

[What happens after I fill out the Foster Application Form?](#)

[I do not live in North Carolina. Can I still foster a pet?](#)

[Can I read comments of pet foster parents?](#)



## Great foster programs

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[LAP Virtual Foster Program](#) in Atlanta, Georgia

[Foster For A Day Program](#) in Ohio

[Safe Harbor Prison Dog Program](#) in Lansing, Kansas

[Senior Citizens Foster/Adopting Program](#) of the Hudson County Animal League

[The Panda Program](#): A hospice foster program for dogs of Stray Rescue of St. Louis, MO

[Rent-a-Pet Program](#) from Stray Rescue of St. Louis, MO

## Additional Resources

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[Foster Care: A Critical Link Between Shelters and Forever Homes](#) by American Humane Association

<http://www.petfoster.org/resources.html>

## Questions?

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Contact Barbara Lapointe, Pet Foster Network, at [barbara@petfoster.org](mailto:barbara@petfoster.org)



## Appendix A

*Example of radio PSA***The Pet Foster Network**

www.petfoster.org

**Public Service Announcement**

Contact: Barbara Lapointe  
(919) 425-2330  
barbara@petfoster.org

Please air through June 1, 2010

30-seconds:

Afraid of long-term commitment? Try fostering! The Pet Foster Network needs volunteers to provide short-term in-home care for friendly dogs, cats, or other animals in need until they are adopted. The length of fostering can vary from a few days to several months. All veterinary care is paid by the fostering organization. To learn more about pet fostering or find a foster program near you, visit [petfoster.org](http://petfoster.org) or call (919) 425-2330.

10-seconds:

Afraid of long-term commitment? Try fostering! Volunteers are needed to provide short-term in-home care for friendly pets. Visit [petfoster.org](http://petfoster.org) or call (919) 425-2330.

