

Good evening, foster families:

Thank you for signing up to become fosters for Dogs Without Borders! I would like you to know just how grateful we are that you chose our rescue to become a volunteer for. Welcome to our family! With such a large organization, and so many constantly moving and unpredictable facets, I would like to start off with a brief introduction as to who we are and the basic protocol for how and who to contact at our rescue.

Dogs Without Borders is comprised of two full time staff members: Alexis (Adoptions Coordinator and Office Manager), and myself (Foster Coordinator, Foster Mentor/Trainer). We have an Executive Director who oversees the rescue, Galit; our Rescuer, Betsy; and our Volunteer Coordinator, Hilary Gillespie. All of the other positions and members of Dogs Without Borders are volunteers- like you!

At any given time, I am responsible for a minimum of 65 dogs in foster care, which means at least 65 foster families; I am also in charge of all medical scheduling for the dogs, providing training advice, and overseeing a group of volunteer foster mentors. Additionally, I am responsible for the constant influx of new dogs from the shelter or who are being surrendered to DWB. Each and every dog has its own personality which I must learn about so that I can guide our fosters, as well as to assist in the “marketing” efforts of dogs to the right foster homes as well as forever homes. I also send out our weekly foster newsletter, oversee adoption fairs on Sunday, and approve all incoming new foster applications, finalizing foster agreements... and the list goes on. In short, my days are extremely full and my need for organization is critical in order to keep all of our dogs placed and safe.

Because of how short-staffed our rescue is, and how many dogs that are in constant need of my attention, this is the protocol our rescue has in place for getting in touch with me:

1. **Email:** the best way of contacting me is via email ([rachel@dogswithoutborders.org](mailto:rachel@dogswithoutborders.org)). I answer in order of the most urgent situations, starting with actual life-threatening emergencies and then proceeding to medical situations.

For all general questions, fosters are asked to anticipate a 24-48 hour response time; to help assist in this regard, we empower our fosters by providing a collection of handouts which address any variety of issues, from housetraining needs to behavioral situations common to most dogs in a new foster home. We also encourage fosters to Google answers or become friends with the other fosters in our network by joining the private Facebook group “Dogs Without Borders Fosters & Volunteers”. This is a great resource to ask for advice from other veteran fosters, as well as to share stories!

We also have currently four volunteer Foster Mentors who are assigned to assist me in contacting fosters to answer questions and just touch base every week or so.

2. **Phone calls/Text Messaging:** I will schedule phone calls with fosters by appointment ONLY; please understand it isn't that I don't want to speak to you, it is simply the most efficient manner for me to prioritize all of the many calls I have to make throughout the day. If you would like to schedule a call with me, please email me and I will respond with scheduling options.

I will only resort to texting if I cannot reach you for some reason, or if I am in the middle of another call and I need to get ahold of you for an urgent question or answer. Incoming texts will not be answered, unless it is an emergency situation.

Here is the Foster Coordinator contact number; please save this in your cell phone address book: #323-715-3795.

***What is an example of a real life-threatening emergency? Who do I contact?***

Your dog is struggling to breath or is bleeding from an open wound after having been severely injured in an attack or accident or your dog has escaped. In an emergency situation, you can contact our Executive Director, Galit, by phone or text: 323-712-3860. Please save this number in your cell phone address book!

***What is an example of a NON-emergency situation?***

Your dog has fleas, worms, signs of kennel cough (coughing, sneezing, runny nose), droplets of blood in the stool or diarrhea. In this situation, you can email me and I will respond as quickly as possible to arrange for you to pick up medication from us or to bring your dog to the vet, as needed.

Thank you again for taking the time to read this handout! I hope you know just how critical a role you are playing in our rescue's success, and that while things may always be a bit crazy, it is in no way a reflection of my sincere gratitude for the service you are providing. I understand it is an emotional situation, and can at time be challenging, but please know that everything you are experiencing with your foster is not only common and has a solution, but is a small price to pay for the day when your foster dog is ADOPTED... all because of the sacrifices you made.

Fostering is amazing, and I'm so excited you chose to start your journey with Dogs Without Borders!

Many thanks, and best wishes to you!

Rachel Lamb