

# Foster A Shelter Animal — Enrich Their Lives and Yours!

Foster care volunteers provide temporary care for kittens, puppies, dogs, cats and bunnies. Some animals may only need a home for several days, while others may need several months of care. By offering your time, energy, and home to an animal in need, you prepare an animal for adoption into a permanent home as well as help with overcrowding in our shelter. The Santa Maria Animal Center is always looking for foster families to help save more animal lives that would otherwise face euthanasia.

Foster candidates are carefully matched with foster homes according to the candidate's special needs and the foster family's abilities. Whether you work full time or you spend most of your time at home, you will be matched with a foster animal that fits your lifestyle. Many foster families have companion animals of their own. We recommend foster Families keep their own companion animals isolated from their foster animals. A separate room or enclosed area with no carpet works best for a foster animal. For example, a warm spare bedroom or laundry room is an excellent place to foster a cat or kittens.

## What kinds of animals need foster care?

- ◆ Kittens, puppies or bunnies that are too young to be adopted
- ◆ Nursing cats, dogs and bunnies
- ◆ Animals awaiting adoption that need socializing
- ◆ Ill or injured animals that may need regular medication or medical attention
- ◆ Animals susceptible to stress from a shelter environment

## What are the requirements to be a foster parent?

- ◆ Foster applicants must fill out and sign a foster care application
- ◆ Foster applicants must attend a foster parent training session and volunteer orientation

## Are there any expenses incurred by foster families?

Foster parents receive all the supplies necessary to care for their foster animal. Food, bedding newspaper and crates are typical of items sent home with foster parents. We will provide any medicine needed and our veterinary staff is readily available to provide any medical care needed by the foster animal.

Abandoned and abused animals that enter the shelter deserve the best possible chance at finding a loving, permanent home. A foster family has one of the most important jobs at the shelter. Foster families allow animals to receive the proper care and attention they deserve as they recover and wait for adoption. As a foster family you'll not only save the lives of animals in your care, but you'll give other animals coming into the shelter who may not need the same level of medical attention a space on the adoption floor to find their own loving homes. If those aren't enough reasons to become a foster parent, consider these:

- ◆ You'll help socialize a shelter animal so they are more adoptable and better companions
- ◆ You can put that spare bedroom or bathroom to good use
- ◆ You'll delight at joining these pets with their forever family and possibly make new friends along the way
- ◆ Fostering helps you explore many different breeds of dogs, cats and bunnies to help you decide which traits you'd like in your next companion animal
- ◆ If you can't keep a full-time companion animal, fostering for shorter periods is an ideal solution
- ◆ You'll know that you're making a huge difference in the lives of your fosters

**Become a Foster Family at the Santa Maria Animal Center. Together we can save lives!**

*Contact Lisa Kenyon or Stacy Silva, volunteer coordinators for information. 934-6119*

