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Foster Mentor Program Policy

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Purpose:

The purpose of the Foster Mentor Program is to develop effective fosters who:

- \* Follow established policies and procedures;
- \* Provide a safe and nurturing environment for their foster dogs;
- \* Avail themselves of the many CCR resources as needed;
- \* Focus on the well-being of their foster dogs while selecting an adoptive family;  
and
- \* Communicate productively with members of the CCR team.

Scope:

New CCR Foster Homes, Foster Mentors, Intake and Adoption Coordinators

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POLICY

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I. Policy Statement

Every new CCR foster will be appointed a mentor to work with on his/her first foster dog.

II. Procedure

**Process:** When a new foster is appointed by the Foster Coordinator, a mentor will be selected from a pool of experienced, willing fosters. The mentoring process will begin with an introduction to CCR, followed by a twinning process during the first foster experience. During twinning, the Mentor and Foster will work as a team through the entire process of selecting a foster dog, evaluating any special medical or psychological needs, reviewing Applications, and selecting the best fit for the dog. During this period, all emails to the new Foster should be copied to the Mentor. In addition, the new Foster should accompany the person doing the home visit to get a feel for what needs to be verified in the home and how this impacts the final disposition of the dog. If the Foster and Mentor agree that further twinning is not needed for the second or third dog, the Mentor will still be available if questions arise.

- A. **Getting Started:** Within the first week of the Foster being appointed, the Mentor will contact him/her and visit about the new Foster's and CCR's expectations. This will be a good opportunity to explain the roles of the Foster, Intake, Adoption, and behavior specialists. At this time, the Mentor will introduce the Foster to the website and help him/her get set up with a password. It will then be the Foster's responsibility to read all of the information in the CCR Foster Home Resources section and discuss any questions with their Mentor. The Mentor needs to stress that Application review, reference and vet checks, Foster interview, home visits, and meet and greets are all equally important and play a major role in determining the future home of the foster dog. After this has been completed, the Foster will write an email to the Intake Coordinator, copying the Mentor, and stating s/he is ready to receive information about potential foster dogs. If the Foster has particular breed or size preferences, they should be stated at this time.
- B. **Fostering:** The Mentor should periodically check in with the Foster to see how things are going. If problems arise at any time, the Foster should contact the Mentor immediately so they can work together on a solution.
- C. **Adoption Process:**
1. Application Review: As Adoption Applications are received, the Adoption Coordinator will forward them to the Foster, copying the Mentor, and asking for input on whether or not the Applicant seems like a good fit for the dog. When the first Application is received, the Mentor will contact the Foster and discuss the pros and cons. The Foster will then respond to the Adoption Coordinator, copying the Mentor. If it appears that the Foster has a good grasp on what to look for in the Application, the Mentor may request that the Foster respond directly to the Adoption Coordinator, copying the Mentor, on future Applications. If multiple Applications are received in a short time period, the Mentor will help the Foster prioritize which ones are the best fit. The Foster should inform the Adoption Coordinator of the top 3 Applications so work on references and vet checks can be expedited for those.
  2. References and Vet Checks: As information on references and vet checks is received from the Adoption Coordinator, the Mentor and Foster should discuss how this impacts the priority listing of the Applicants and change the priorities as needed.
  3. Foster Interview: The Foster should contact the Applicant when the reference and vet checks are completed. This is a good

opportunity for the Foster and the Applicant to ask questions of each other.

4. Home Visit: The Mentor or another experienced Foster will be appointed to do the home visit(s) and the new Foster should accompany him/her to see what types of information are gathered and how this impacts the decision of who ultimately will be allowed to adopt the dog.
5. Meet and Greet: If the Mentor lives close enough, s/he will accompany the Foster to the first meet and greet(s). If the Mentor does not live close enough, the Mentor will request another experienced Foster to support the Foster Home during the meet and greet. The Mentor and Foster should discuss the results after the meet and greet and determine, together, if this is the best fit for the dog.

- D. **Problem Resolution**: If a problem occurs between the Mentor and Foster, they should make every effort to communicate and resolve the issue on their own. They share a common goal: to find the best care and home for the foster dog, and that should preclude other issues if everyone is able to communicate professionally. However, if they are not able to resolve the issue, they should discuss it with the Foster Coordinator for his/her input. The Foster Coordinator will make the final decision on the issue if the Mentor and Foster are unable to agree.