



Wee Care Foster Program Questions and Answers

1. What does a foster parent do?
 - a. They provide temporary housing for MHS animals that for various reasons are not ready to be placed for adoption.
2. What kinds of animals need fostering?
 - a. **Underage kittens and puppies.** We often receive underage kittens and puppies without their mother but who are able to eat on their own. Because they were taken away from their mother at too young an age they require more intense care.
 - b. **Mother cats and dogs with a young litter.** We receive mothers with litters that are too tiny to be separated from their parent. They often need anywhere from one to 6 weeks of care until the puppies or kittens can be weaned.
 - c. **Cats that are recovering from surgery** – These are adult cats that recently were spayed. They need about one week of R and R in a stress free environment until they can be put up for adoption.
 - d. **Scared puppies and kittens.** We receive puppies and kittens that were either born in the wild or were just never exposed much to people. They are very fearful and need a lot of socialization. Many of these turn into the most loveable pets!
 - e. **Nervous, fearful cats and dogs.** Many of these are nice animals but are very shy and fearful being in an unfamiliar environment with strangers. They often need time to bond and socialize so they can come out of their shell.
 - f. **Sick cats.** Upper Respiratory Infection is a very common cold that cats and kittens will get. Some come to the shelter with URI and some are exposed to it here at the shelter. It is generally a self limiting, nonfatal disease but because it is so contagious we cannot house these cats due to the increase risk of exposure to our other cats. These cats often need 2-3 weeks of stress free Rest and Recuperation, appropriate medication and lots of TLC.
 - g. **Sick or injured dogs and cats.** Some of the animals we get at the shelter have minor health problems that just need time, proper medication and nutrition and lots of TLC.
3. What kinds of challenges do foster parents face?
 - a. The most difficult challenge can be saying goodbye when it is time to bring them back to the shelter. But we remind foster parents that they have helped save a life and there are more they can now help.
 - b. It is a lot of work cleaning up after foster puppies and kittens. They can pee and poop a lot and are often not good about keeping themselves clean. Not all dogs will be house trained and some cats may miss the litter box.
 - c. Foster parents must be able to give a lot of time to these animals. These are often special needs cases, which mean they may need more time and patience than other pets. Many fosters require a lot of one on one playtime to help them socialize. This is in addition to the time needed to clean up after them, the time to bathe them, feed and possibly medicate them and bring them back to the shelter for rechecks.
4. What are the rewards of fostering?

- a. Other than the obvious, which is knowing you have helped save a life, it has been proven that animals often give back to us in many more ways. It has been shown that petting an animal can lower your blood pressure. Having animals around reduces stress; helps keep people healthier and happier. They can be excellent companions, especially for people who are at home alone.
 - b. Often times people don't want the lifetime commitment of having a pet due to work or travel requirements but have the ability to house a pet for shorter periods of time. They can benefit from having an animal around but without the long term commitment that comes with ownership.
 - c. Some people are only in Maui for half a year at a time and don't want to bring their pets from the mainland but miss having a pet around. They in a sense get to enjoy a pet for short 2-4 week periods, with breaks in between if they need them.
5. Will I be able to adopt my foster animal or adopt it to my friend?
 - a. Yes! In fact this can be a win- win for everyone but most especially the foster animal. All fosters still belong to the MHS so the adoption must still follow the same general protocol as any MHS adoption which includes an application form, Landlord approval if necessary and a Home Inspection if necessary.
 6. If my foster animal needs medication where will I get it?
 - a. The MHS will provide all necessary medications and you will be shown how to administer them.
 7. Do I have to provide all my own food and supplies?
 - a. Whenever possible, the MHS will provide the necessary food and supplies, including canned and dry food, litter pans and litter and food bowls.
 8. What if after a few days I decide that I cannot handle the care of the foster animal?
 - a. We will always take back the foster animal. We understand that fostering can be a lot more work than many might expect. Often times foster parents become frustrated and/or overwhelmed with the accidents and messes involved. Often times a call to the shelter to get some advice helps. We have many experienced foster parents that can offer helpful tips.
 9. So how do I get started if I'm interested in becoming a foster parent?
 - a. You can call the MHS at 877-3680 x 23 and we can get you signed up to attend a Foster Parent Orientation program. You'll learn a lot more details about fostering and can have any questions you have answered.