

A Foster Family's Story..... Patience is definitely a virtue!

I have been fostering dogs for years, my new husband however was not accustomed to this lifestyle. The first time I brought a foster dog into our home, it took him 15 minutes to decide that Bo was not leaving. He was a "problem dog", and he had a sensitive tummy would barf and poo everywhere without warning.

This did not daunt my husband, he was sure the big black dog was a good dog. He was right. Our Bo had a dominance issues and was insecure because he never had a leader in his life. With basic training and solid house rules he quickly became a happy, well adjusted dog. Tummy troubles? We took him off the Wal-mart special and put him on decent food and haven't had problems since. Poor Bo had been to the pound five times in his life simply because no one took the time to properly train him. They left him in the back yard because they didn't want to deal with his issues, which naturally only made them worse.

A few months after Bo settled in, I saw a skinny black thing running on the highway. As soon as my truck door was open she hopped right in. A trip to the vet to be scanned for a chip found contact information so I called her people. I was told that the dog took off and they figured she would be better off where she ended up. They worked too much and left her in a kennel for 13 hours a day.

The pretty little husky mix was so sweet I couldn't take her back to the pound. I knew that as a already graying black dog, her adoption chances were slim to none. I brought her home. Husband says it was destiny, Bo and Emmalee loved each other from the start. It was quickly apparent that we could not place Emmalee in rescue, Bo would be heart broken if his new sister left him.

Two years (and many foster dogs) later, we ended up with a purebred nine year old border collie. Her family had owned her since she was a pup and loved her dearly, but the baby was walking now and the collie was being a collie. Anyone familiar with the breed understands the issues. She didn't fit in very well at our house either at first. Her border collie "eye" made Bo and Em very nervous. She wanted to be alpha and wasn't afraid to scrap with Bo over it. For months we had to kennel one or the other to prevent bloodshed when we left the room.

Not having much experience with the breed, I ended up doing alot of reading on how to handle her. It became a project for my son and I, how to amuse the collie. We tried some agility equipment and not only did the collie love it, Em had a blast too! Kas found her place in the house, she was the kid's dog. When my son asked if we could keep her, I couldn't say no.

We are foster failures, but I wouldn't trade my pack for the most expensive puppy. I often remind them how "unacceptable" they are, the problem dog, the black dog, and the old dog. In a bigger city with a high kill shelter I wouldn't have had the opportunity to even meet them. **Now I couldn't imagine life without them.**

Life with rescue dogs is not simple. Kas requires daily amusement, skipping her play time means she will begin neurotically herding cats and provoking her sibling into roughhousing. She got her CGC (Canine Good Citizen) this year.

Bo and Em go to some sort of class once a year to remind them how to listen. We take them out into public to make sure they are socialized.

I constantly work on Em's recall, something most huskys have issues with.

Bo's fluffy coat requires almost daily maintance.

They helped me foster, the three of them ensure the foster dog doesn't do anything dumb like get in the trash or counter surf. They tatttle if the foster is chasing their cats or pottys in the house. Em, my momma dog, plays or cuddles to make them feel safe. Kas hears then home if they go Houdini on us. Bo guards his women and toys, always ready pounce if the new dog gets too rough.

But a few months ago we had to stop fostering dogs. Bo's back is going out on him, common for the larger dogs. The vet has him on pain meds and his quality of life is still good, but I don't want to stress him out with new foster dogs anymore. I worry that more people don't step up to the plate and foster. I worry for dogs like my Bo, Em, and Kas, who wouldn't have had a chance without rescues.

So now we foster cats, anyone looking for a feline friend?