

## An interview with Melanie Ebiware

*What do you love about your job—and what are some of the challenges?*

The two things I love the most are helping the dogs find forever homes and working with the amazing team here.

Helping the harder to adopt dogs is especially rewarding. Fostering dogs like this is critical.

My goal is to NEVER have a dog at our shelter for more than six months tops, if I can help it. We used to have some dogs at our shelter for well over a year. Can you imagine staring at a wire door and laying on a concrete floor for years? It's doggie jail. The biggest challenges are when the dogs fail in their new home or finding the right fit for our special needs dogs with medical issues, are seniors, or have behavioral quirks that need work.

*Why should people consider fostering?*

I cannot begin to explain the positive impact fostering has on a dog's life. Getting in a home can make all the difference. The kennel environment can make behavioral quirks worse. They

### Why I Foster

"Fostering has taught us to live in the moment. It's amazing that these dogs can look at us with such love and trust when they have been so let down. By fostering, we redeem the innocent and make a lasting difference in their world."

**Betsy Hicks**

*How do you match dogs with the best homes/families?*

We ask every foster family what they think would work for them. It's really all about understanding the family. Some people only want to foster a dog they may adopt. We ask them if they could take in puppies, pregnant moms, dogs with special needs, the size and energy level they think they can handle, things like that.

*How do you educate potential fosters about fostering in general and about the specific dog they'll be taking?*

Yes—well, I'm very long-winded but I want to cover all possible areas! We typically give a foster a few choices: Dogs that we need to foster that will also work for their situation.

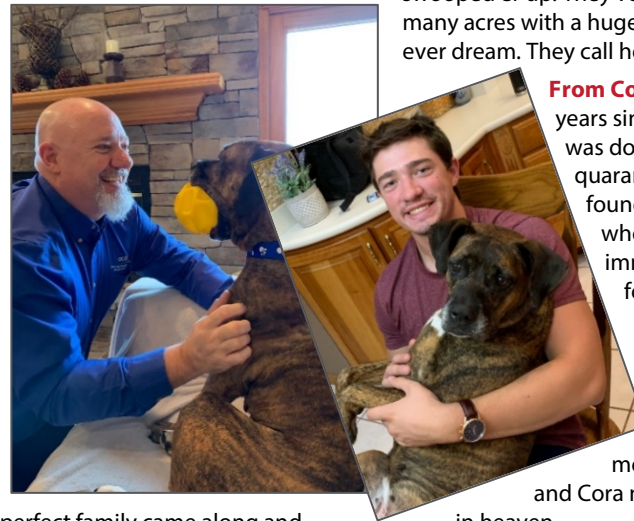
Some foster families don't think they can handle more than 20 lbs. while others can handle 80 lbs. with no problem. We always work within the parameters of the foster family. If they're not successful, we're not successful!

*What do foster families need to know before going home with a dog? Anything COVID specific?*

COVID specific, no. They need to know who to contact in case of an emergency, what to do if issues arise, and that I'm here for them at

## Foster to Family: CLARA now CORA

**Clara** was found wandering the streets with another dog. She was at our shelter for over a year without having an interested adopter. She would leap in the air every time a person walked by and bark so furiously that visitors thought she was wild and aggressive. She even got in some fights because her stress level was so high. All she really wanted was love, attention, and a ball to play with. She finally went home with a foster family that showed her the love and affection she so craved and, within one week, we learned so much about her real personality that we were able to market Clara appropriately. Exactly four weeks after going into foster, the perfect family came along and



swooped er up. They've been living happily ever since—on many acres with a huge pond, and all the balls this girl could ever dream. They call her Cora now and love her to pieces.

**From Cora's family:** It had been almost three years since our beloved Buddy died. I thought I was done with pets but, when COVID quarantines started, I had a change of heart. I found Cora through K-9. She was an adult dog who clearly needed a home and I immediately applied to adopt her. Her foster mom shared tidbits about her behavior and personality, and we couldn't wait to meet her. A week later, Cora came home with us. She bonded with us immediately. Here we are 7 months later, and Cora is a much-loved member of our family. We needed a dog, and Cora needed a family. It was a match made in heaven.

## Foster to Family: CHUBBS

**Chubbs** was with our shelter for over a year before findings the dad of his dreams. Sadly, he came back after 2 years because his dad was no longer able to care for him. He was so depressed he just laid in the sun on the hardest surface possible—even rocks. It's almost like he didn't feel he deserved a bed or blanket to lay on. When Chubbs went to a foster home, his foster mom quickly learned that walks were the best way to build clearly, we needed to find him a family that could walk him *a lot*. It took about 3 months, but the right family came along and welcomed Chubbs into their home. Now he enjoys several walks a day as well as lounging on comfy beds. They still call him Chubbs.



**From Chubbs' family:** We've had Chubbs for two months now. He's a senior gentleman and somewhat reserved so we've been very patient with him. He spends time "near" us but doesn't like a lot of direct attention. He likes to take his time—with everything but walks. We timed him doing a mile in 17-minutes! We're definitely getting our exercise!! He's developed a special friendship with Roxy, a 10lb mix who isn't even one yet. We call him her sugar daddy. He's a very willing student, even at his age, learning new commands and acting the perfect gentleman when left alone in the house. He's becoming more vocal—telling us how happy he is, and we're so happy to have him.

We're so glad we took a chance on a senior dog. The joy of sharing his "retirement" is beyond description. We would encourage everyone to give it a try!

## K-9 Stray Rescue League is run solely on donations.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, please complete this form & return along with your check to K-9 Stray Rescue League, 2120 Metamora Road, Oxford, MI 48371, call us at (248) 628-0435, or email [K9StrayRescue@yahoo.com](mailto:K9StrayRescue@yahoo.com) and we'll reach out to you. You may also donate online by visiting our website [www.k9stray.com](http://www.k9stray.com)

Enclosed is my donation in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your generous support.*

**Our dogs rely on us, and we rely on YOU!**



## Announcing the first ever K-9 Stray Calendar!!

Filled with pictures, quotes and sayings, major holidays, dog-focused holidays, and even some laugh-out-loud holidays we're sure you'll want to celebrate!

Email us at [K9StrayRescue@yahoo.com](mailto:K9StrayRescue@yahoo.com) to reserve yours!



basically go stir-crazy, pacing and barking all the time, and their anxiety rises so dog-to-dog aggression escalates. And it's incredibly noisy all the time! Heck, sometimes just a good night's sleep can make a huge difference. A foster home provides a much more normal environment so the odds of behavior issues improving go up tremendously.

*Speaking of COVID, what challenges have you faced due to the pandemic?*

We've been flooded with people wanting dogs—it's been amazing. We got some dogs into foster homes that had been completely overlooked previously. Now they had 30 applications! The outlook became much better for our long timers because of the pandemic!

*What makes a good foster family?*

Really, anyone with the drive to help can work well. We can work with all sorts of families, but we're *extremely* careful about fostering with families that have very young kids. Not because the dogs are dangerous, but because they're usually big and *just* learning manners. We make sure both the family and the dog are going to be safe.

### Why I Foster

"For me, it's both the joy of helping a dog get placed in its forever home and the sadness of watching it leave. The effort that goes into it and the pleasure of seeing the outcome—I know I've made a difference in this dog's future, and I look forward to being temporary mom to many more!"

**Marion Muir**

all times. I want them to be successful as well as the dog. That's my goal.

*What challenges do foster families face?*

Initially, it's getting to know the dog, learning how the dog fits in their home. They may encounter quirks that wouldn't have surfaced at the kennel, like guarding behavior, not liking cats, or

just being super high-energy. In one instance, the dog was just too energetic for the home/yard size and had to come back. On the positive side, they learned a lot about the dog and now he's thriving in his forever home. Each dog is unique and not every dog fits every foster family.

*How do you support foster families after they go home?*

First, we tell them to let us know how it's going whenever they think about it and send pictures/videos whenever they can. We also reach out to them often to check in. We want them to know that we're *always* there for them and that they're not bugging us, ever!

*Have you ever said "no" to a foster? Why?*

Of course. It's rare, but it happens. My first priority is always the dogs.

Read the full interview on our Facebook page:  
[www.facebook.com/k9strayrescueleague](https://www.facebook.com/k9strayrescueleague)



**I'm a good dog**

**I just need a chance to show you**

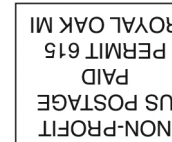
Please remember our dogs in your year-end gifts

[K9stray.com](http://K9stray.com)



Rescued is our favorite breed

**K-9 Stray Fall/Winter 2020 Newsletter**  
The Fostering Edition



K-9 Stray Rescue League  
2129 Metamora Road  
Oxford, MI 48371





# Fall 2020 Newsletter

## People Are Adopting 'Pandemic Pets' During COVID

and it's restoring our faith in humanity

Hello K-9 friends and family,

As crazy as 2020 has been, it sure has flown by. Looking back on the last 10 months, we can reflect on how blessed we were to be at home with our beloved dogs. Our pooches went on more walks, slept in more often, and probably received a few extra table scraps. I'm positive we made their days brighter just as they helped us to maintain our sanity. What would we have done without them?

When COVID-19 hit we knew we had to create a process which allowed fostering and adoptions to continue safely. Our mission is to help every deserving stray secure a better future with loving families who will give them forever homes. Many more of you were home and wanting to take in a dog in need. We started taking applications after people "virtually" met our dogs on PetFinder. Physical meetings were by appointment only to keep everyone as safe as possible. Our teams worked through the new processes with potential fosters and adopters and today, this is everyone's preferred method. As of this writing, 265 dogs have been adopted into loving families this year! A whopping 82 of these came through our foster program, giving these special dogs the extra TLC that they needed to fit into their forever families.

Truly, fosters are heroes. At the kennel, we give the dogs all the love, walks, enrichment, and attention possible; but nothing compares to a home environment. Finding each of our dogs the perfect home



can be tough—adopters expect us to know everything about the dog they want. Are they housetrained? How are they with cats? We can't often answer these questions based only on seeing them in a kennel environment. Our fosters are amazing, generous people and we need more just like them! We need you! The selfless act of opening up your home and love to a homeless dog could be the reason that dog finds a forever home.

2020 is almost at a close. The new year brings with it the hope that we will see the sense of normalcy we once had. For now however, please sit back, cuddle up with your pup, and enjoy the stories of hope, love and dedication in our end-of-the-year newsletter focused on the joy, challenges, and special requirements of fostering dogs. My 2021 wish is for you to make it the year to be extraordinary. Take a chance on those puppy dog eyes. The worst that could happen is love.

Justine Hubbard, President, K-9 Stray Rescue League

## Fostering in the Age of COVID-19

Consolidated from PetFinder, the Pedigree Foundation, and NYC Second Chance Rescue

Is it okay to foster? How do you reach out to ask? While Coronavirus/COVID-19 has many of us practicing social distancing, quarantining, or working from home full time, there are still thousands of dogs that need our help. Fostering can still be completed safely and it's one of the best ways to help shelters in need right now.

When there isn't enough room in the shelter or a special case arrives, foster families come to the rescue. Foster families take in dogs too shy or too hyper for kennel life. Or, they may have been abused or neglected and need to gradually learn what love feels like in a one-on-one environment. One thing is for sure, by giving a dog a temporary home, you are changing their life and making them more adoptable!

### Fostering advice during COVID-19

- **Be flexible.** We're all getting used to the new normal, and different shelter/rescue groups may be handling things different ways.
- **Ask questions!** Foster counselors will be happy to work with you or talk through any concerns you may have.
- **Don't give up!** New COVID-driven fostering processes can take additional time, and shelters are extraordinarily busy trying to adapt. Patience is the key.
- **Speaking of patient...** If you do bring home a foster dog, it can take time for him to acclimate and relax in a new environment, so don't give up on your new friend too soon.
- **Fostering isn't free, but it's close:** Fostering is a great way to practice the responsibility of having a dog without immediately shouldering the expenses that come with it.
- **You will be their biggest fans and help them get adopted:** Prepare to champion your dog (and the shelter) to others. You're not only promoting the shelter and their efforts, but you are also helping the dog get adopted!
- **Each dog will be a different case:** Some will come to you from a socialized home and will instantly fit in. Others will come broken and literally beaten and will need lots of time and love to come out of their shell. Each has its own rewards.
- **Consider your current pets:** Talk to the adopter/foster counselor. Be *incredibly* careful when you introduce your own pet and your foster.



- **In the end, you might just adopt:** Ever heard of a "foster failure?" It's not what not sounds like! Sometimes you fall in love with the dog and end up adopting it. Be open minded, and if your foster dog is the right fit for your family, adopt away.
- **The goodbye will be hard:** Goodbyes stink—there's no way around it. Loving and caring for a dog who was in bad shape is emotional and a significant bonding experience. Watching her join her new family is bittersweet. Always remember that you've made a tremendous difference to a dog in need.

### To my foster dog, with love

*I am the bridge between what was and what will be. I am the pathway to a new life.*

*I am made of mush because my heart melted when I saw you—matted, sore, limping, depressed, lonely, unwanted, afraid to love.*

*For one little time you are mine. I will feed you with my own hand. I will love you with my whole heart. I will make you whole.*

*I am also made of steel because, when the time comes, when you are well and sleek, when your eyes shine, and your tail wags with joy – then I will let you go.*

*Not without tears, but without regret. For now, you will be safe with your forever family and a new lonely, unwanted pup needs a bridge.*

### Who We Are

A 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 1990 primarily to rescue well-tempered, adoptable dogs from county shelters' euthanasia lists; to provide a humane, and loving environment for rescue dogs until permanent homes are found; and to educate the public on responsible pet ownership.z

### Show your K9 Pride!!

#### Our store is now open!

Now you can wear your commitment to rescues. Full of cool stuff for you, your car, your kids, and more!

<https://k9stray.itemorder.com>



### Foster to Family: LUCY

**Lucy** came from a home with 9 dogs. She was surrendered because she'd become intolerant of all dogs. She was at our shelter for almost a year before being adopted at the Detroit Zoo event by a family that really loved her. Unfortunately, they lived in a subdivision where she constantly encountered other dogs and it became too much for them to control. They brought her back and she sat at our shelter for an additional year without finding a new forever family. She got so excited to get out of her kennel and go for walks that she would jump, scratch, and mouth at the person taking her out. She was difficult to get under control until actually on the walk. Very few volunteers were even willing to walk her because it was so difficult at the start. She was very vocal and wild acting whenever a person came by her cage. She was only saying "Pick me! PICK ME!!" but sadly, her actions just scared adopters off. Finally, Lucy's lucky day came when she went into foster with a loving (and very understanding) family. With consistency, the jumping and excitement before walk time settled down. The foster mom (who had a broken wrist) was even able to harness Lucy with one hand.



After only a week, Lucy's life was turning around for the better! She had endless booty scratches and walks—she was very happy. We were able to market her differently too, changing how volunteers viewed her which, in turn, changed how they spoke to potential adopters about her.

We changed her PetFinder write up and within 4 weeks from being in foster care, the right family came along and took our big, beautiful Lucy home forever. They live in a secluded area near a huge lake.

Now, Lucy has traveled all over Michigan, stopping at every state and metro park along the way. She goes boating and gets to swim as much as her heart desires. She even has a life jacket for when they go on Lake Michigan. They still call her Lucy!

### Where your money goes

Administrative Expenses  
20%

Fundraising Expenses  
3%

Programs & Services  
77%

### In Loving Memory...

The K-9 Stray Rescue League family expresses our deepest condolences to the families of those who have passed this year and thank them for remembering our dogs during their most difficult time.

Eddie Gordon DuSablon	Brenda Ward
Percy Allen Teschendorf	William Clogg
David Alexander	Donald Glaspie
WL Jackson	Steve Porter
Marilyn Bossardet	Yvonne Brown
Janet Overley	David Powell
Judith Harbour	Bob Hubbard
Kathryn Hepler	Paul Damkoehler

### Meet the K-9 Family

**Melanie Ebiware** is our amazing foster coordinator, an adoption counselor, runs large adoption events like the Detroit Zoo's *Meet Your Best Friend* day, AND one of the leads that oversees the daily kennel operations—wow! Married with three daughters, 2 dogs (1 is a K-9 alum), and one dog-skeptical cat, Melanie lives about 45min from the K-9 kennels. She's a career hair stylist, which is how she became aware of K-9. "I have two clients that were and still are heavily involved at K-9" says Melanie. "They would tell me stories while sitting in my chair, so I decided to get involved. I took on the foster coordinator role to have a bigger impact in the dogs' lives." She's been with K-9 for 4.5 years now and we don't know what we'd do without her!

