

Adopting a Rescue Pet

During the years before I started doing pet-sitting, and established Happy Pets & People, I worked for about 10 years doing volunteer work for Labrador Rescue here in the Denver area. It was an experience, and taught me a great deal about the world of rescue that I didn't have a clue about before jumping into this mission. And, it does become a mission, no doubt, the stories that you hear and the amazing pets & people you meet humble you and makes you appreciate the bond between pets & people.

In a nutshell, this is how the rescue system works. Rescue groups obtain their pets in 2 major ways, through direct surrender or through a shelter that works with rescue groups. Most have a network of foster homes that care for the rescue pets until they can be adopted. Rescue groups are normally 501(c)3 organizations, and operate on the adoption fees and donations received.

When a person applies to adopt a pet from a rescue group, they normally need to fill out paperwork, including whether they have a fenced yard and a covered pick-up truck. Many times pets become rescued because they have escaped from their previous home. Sometimes a rescue group will make a home visit. The adopters then receive information on pets in the program that meet their criteria and they are able to go visit these pets to determine if it's a good match.

There are some basic things to remember about a rescue pet. While the adopter will receive all the information on the pet that was made available to the rescue group, you will never know the full story of your pet's life before they came to live with you. What that means is that you aren't starting with a clean slate, your new pet has habits that might have been ok before and aren't ok in your home. So, it takes extra patience to re-train your new friend to it's new environment and the rules as well.

Most rescue pets are potty-trained, unless they are quite young. But, they can be confused in a new living space, so could have an accident while learning the new ropes. Sometimes it's best to confine their space, most animals won't mess in the area they live in, then as they learn, the space can be enlarged.

Taking your new rescue dog for a walk, or out in the world, is another area for patience. Remember, you don't know how they react to certain stimuli, such as other pets, loud noises, cars, greeting other people, etc... So, just take it slow and easy.

If you have other pets who were residents before the newcomer, it will take

some time, and maybe the ability to separate them in the event a time-out is necessary. Remember to give your resident pet a lot of extra attention, so they don't feel at all left out.

It's also been my experience that pets know when they've been rescued, they are very grateful, and I've heard more than once "this is the best pet I've ever owned"!

Hope this helps you in your search for a new forever friend!! Patti & Betty