

Dog Speak

Adopt or Foster

Here's what you need
to know.

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In Search of Love and a Home

What you should know about adoption and foster care

By Dara Rubin

Taking care of a dog is no easy task, but if you are up for the challenge it can be extremely rewarding. Dogs are tremendously affectionate, and in the right home they're just another member of the family – with a couple of extra feet and a tail. Adopting or fostering a dog can also be an eye-opening experience knowing that you're helping a dog in need.

"I had seen a documentary on HBO about puppy mills and how they euthanize them because they just don't know what to do with them and shelters can only take in so much, so I was like you know what, I think I want to help," said Rachel Venegas, who has been fostering dogs for the past two years.

"There are so many dogs out there that need a home. There are so many wonderful dogs that pass through our door that have been abandoned for whatever reason, and if you go to a pet store, you are typically buying from a puppy mill and that's just a bad situation," said Vicky Pasenko, co-founder and co-president of the Evanston Animal Shelter.

Whatever reasons you may have for deciding to adopt or foster a dog, there are

many things that first need to be taken into consideration.

"You have to know that you're ready, you have to know that you have the time to devote to the animal, especially a dog. You can't leave them alone and unattended for a weekend if you're going to go out of town and you need to make sure that you're ready to take on that responsibility," Pasenko said.

"You should understand what you expect out of the relationship with the dog. A lot of people come in and they think they want a certain kind of dog but the more you talk to them, it's 'okay, you want a Husky,' which is a high energy dog, but yet you're kind of a couch potato person. A lot of people think 'oh, I'll change my life, I'll start exercising,' but you need to have realistic expectations about what you want to do with the dog and what the relationship will be about," she added.

Whether you choose to adopt or foster, it's all about the love and the home you can provide for these dogs.

As Venegas said, "If you have the time and you really love animals, I think you'll have an amazing experience fostering them."

Vicky Pasenko and Daisy, who was recently found tied up overnight in nearby James Park.

