

Foster Puppy Information



Paws With A Cause[®]

4646 South Division

Wayland, MI 49348

1-800-253-7297

www.pawswithacause.org

Foster Puppy Application Process

- ❖ Review the Foster Puppy Information packet.
- ❖ Complete the Prospective Foster Home Interview Form and returns to PAWS.
- ❖ PAWS reviews the completed Interview Form and invites the Prospective Raiser to attend an Orientation.
- ❖ After the Orientation a PAWS Representative conducts an in home interview to ensure that the home is a safe environment for the puppy, any family pets in the home are puppy friendly, and to answer any questions the family may have.
- ❖ Once the home interview paperwork has been received and approved at PAWS National Headquarters, the Prospective Raiser is added to the list of Raisers waiting for puppies. The wait to receive a Foster Puppy may vary by area and is dependent on Mother Nature's cooperation.
- ❖ When a puppy is assigned the Raiser will be provided with a name list from which to choose the puppy's name.
- ❖ A date and time will then be scheduled for puppy placement.

Information about Paws With A Cause

PAWS, founded in 1979 originally as Ears for the Deaf®, is a national nonprofit organization headquartered in Moline, near Grand Rapids, Michigan. PAWS is a unique organization in that we utilize local Field Representatives who live in the client's community to assist them in becoming a team with their Assistance Dog. In the past 34 years PAWS has trained and placed more than 2,500 Assistance Dogs.

Paws With A Cause trains the following types of Assistance Dogs:

- Service Dogs (to assist a person with a physical disability)
- Hearing Dogs (to assist a person who is deaf or hard of hearing)
- Seizure Response Dogs (to assist a person with a seizure disorder)
- Combination Dogs (Service/Hearing, Service/Seizure, Hearing/Seizure)
- Service Dogs for Children with Autism (to assist a child living with autism)

Foster Puppy Information

Thank you for your interest in the PAWS® Foster Puppy Program. The objective of the Foster Puppy program is to provide a constant supply of dogs for Assistance Dog training. By participating in this program you will be helping PAWS meet the increasing demand for Assistance Dogs. In this project you will learn how to care for and train a puppy that will eventually become a reliable Assistance Dog for a person who is Hard of Hearing/Deaf or Physically Challenged. You will have the opportunity to learn about dogs, how to teach them obedience skills, and have the satisfaction of giving this dog to PAWS for training to become an Assistance Dog. One day the puppy that you raise may increase the independence of someone who wants to enhance the quality of their life.

As a national non-profit organization, PAWS relies heavily upon our volunteers and the generosity of donors who support the work we do for people with disabilities. Our clients pay no fee to apply for or to receive their Assistance Dog from PAWS. However, PAWS needs to raise \$30,000 to cover the cost of breeding, care, customized-training and continued support of each team. The significant majority of funds raised by PAWS come from individual donors. PAWS also receives support from businesses, foundations and community groups (eg: AMVETS, Lions). PAWS promotes a “pay it forward” culture. Once a client achieves certification, we encourage them to consider hosting a Personal Campaign to benefit another client still waiting for a PAWS Dog. We are happy to work with certified clients willing to fundraise on PAWS’ behalf, and have the tools to make it easy. Accepted clients in the waiting pool for a PAWS Dog who wish to host a Personal Campaign for PAWS may do so. However, it is not a requirement to receive a PAWS Dog, nor will it help a waiting client get a dog more quickly.

The puppies selected for this program are from sound stock. The pedigrees of their parents have been researched for temperament and health. Most of the puppies placed in PAWS Foster Puppy Program are Labs, Golden Retrievers or a mix of the two breeds. PAWS also uses some Standard Poodles and small breed dogs. The puppies typically come from PAWS Breeding Program or are graciously donated by Breeders.

By providing these puppies with good care in a loving home and exposing them to a variety of public places they will develop into good, healthy sound dogs. A puppy raised in a home environment benefits considerably as compared to a puppy raised in a kennel.

Foster Home Requirements

No previous experience is necessary. PAWS does not require Raisers to have previous dog training experience, just a willingness to learn. PAWS uses positive training methods for its Foster Puppies and the techniques used will be different than typical obedience classes. The Foster Puppy classes at PAWS are building the foundation for a future Assistance Dog.

Fenced-in Area: PAWS Foster Puppies are not allowed to run off leash unless in a completely fenced in area. This is for their safety. While a fenced in area is preferable, it is not mandatory. Puppies need an area to romp and play. If your home does not have a completely fenced in area a large sized kennel run or cable tie out is acceptable.

Obedience Classes: Obedience classes are an essential part of preparing a puppy to become an Assistance Dog. In addition to learning basic obedience skills and providing valuable exposure for a puppy to people and other dogs, these classes provide valuable feedback to Raisers on Foster Puppy handling skills. An experienced trainer can spot mistakes and help a Raiser to eliminate problems that may occur down the road.

All PAWS Foster Puppies are required to attend a series of obedience classes, i.e., Puppy Kindergarten, Basic Obedience and Advanced Obedience. Classes are offered to the Raisers at no charge at PAWS National Headquarters, in the Southeastern Michigan area and in the Lansing area. PAWS Foster Puppy classes may also be offered by PAWS Representatives in other areas. PAWS Foster Puppy classes are a little different than a typical obedience class in that they are designed to prepare a puppy to become an Assistance Dog. If a PAWS Class is not available in a Raiser's area, PAWS requires a class curriculum from class the Raiser takes to ensure that their training methods are similar to those used at PAWS. Proof of attendance at the conclusion of the class session is also required.

Attending classes at PAWS also offers a chance to see other Raisers working with their puppies, exchange ideas and experiences, and is a great way to gain proper perspective on goals of preparing a puppy to become an Assistance Dog.

Exposure: PAWS requires all Raisers to take their puppy out on public outings at least three times per week. Proper and frequent outings are of the utmost importance in raising a dog that is to become an Assistance Dog. It is important that a Foster Puppy be exposed to many different sights, sounds, environments and people to ensure its success as an Assistance Dog. The public outings can be a trip to the park, to obedience class, a restaurant, to the grocery store, or even just out running errands. Anywhere a PAWS client may go in their daily travels are places that the puppy needs to go to prepare it for when it is placed as an Assistance Dog. The puppy may eventually be paired with a Librarian who is surrounded by children all day and the dog may be required to lie quietly under a desk. Or, it may be paired with a business person who travels to work by train or subway in a busy city. The more that a puppy is exposed to public places when young, the more comfortable it will be when it encounters these situations as an Assistance Dog. Public exposure should begin as soon as the puppy is placed in a Raiser's home. These initial outings should be short, simple trips.

Foster Puppies do not have the guaranteed access rights of an Assistance Dog and Raisers must ask permission before bringing their puppy into a public place. Many places of business will grant permission. Foster Puppies are ambassadors for PAWS and are sometimes the first time a person

encounters Paws With A Cause. Therefore, a Foster Puppy must remain under control while in these public places and must be wearing its Future Assistance Dog cape to identify it as a Foster Puppy. All Foster Puppies and their capes should be neat and clean in appearance whenever they appear in public. Foster Puppies should display a good public image so they will be invited back. With frequent outings and training this can be accomplished.

Health Records: When the puppy is placed in a Raiser's home PAWS will supply a medical history listing the dates and type of vaccines that the puppy has received. Foster Puppy Raisers are responsible for the routine veterinary services needed for the puppy on a yearly basis. PAWS Staff Veterinarian is able to provide routine veterinary care (vaccines, spaying/neutering, hip x-rays, etc.) at no charge if Raisers are able to provide transportation to our National Headquarters.

The puppy will routinely have its first DHLPP vaccine before placed. This vaccine is then given in four week intervals until the puppy reaches sixteen weeks of age. PAWS also vaccinates for Bordetella (Kennel Cough) at approximately twelve weeks of age and the Rabies vaccine is given at approximately sixteen weeks of age. PAWS requires that all Foster Puppies remain on year-round heartworm preventive. This may be provided to the Raiser by PAWS at cost.

Raisers are also responsible for spaying/neutering at six months of age. Some puppies may remain intact if being evaluated for use in PAWS Breeding Program. PAWS Breeding Program Coordinator will then evaluate the puppy while it is being raised in the Foster Home to ensure that it has the qualities that we are looking for in our Breeding Stock. These evaluations may include, but are not limited to, size, type, structure, health and temperament of the individual dog and the litter as a whole.

Once a puppy is released from consideration in PAWS Breeding Program, the Raiser will receive a letter which instructs them to contact PAWS or their Veterinarian to have the dog spayed/neutered at their earliest convenience. If the puppy seems to be a good candidate for PAWS Breeding program and has passed all of its temperament and health evaluations it may be left in the Foster Home or placed in another home to be used for breeding purposes.

Feeding the Puppy: PAWS Foster Puppies are weaned onto IAMS Smart Puppy (in the yellow bag). Puppies remain on this diet until they reach approximately sixteen weeks of age and are gradually switched over to IAMS Proactive Health Mini Chunks. PAWS feeds the IAMS diets because of their quality, affordability and availability for our clients. Raisers should not change their Foster Puppy's diet without first consulting with PAWS.

PAWS does not allow its Foster Puppies to have chew toys made of animal parts such as rawhides, cow hooves, pig ears, etc. These may be preserved with chemicals that aren't healthy for puppies and the puppy may tend to guard these items from people and other dogs. Kongs and Nylabones are recommended.

Expense Records: Raisers are encouraged to save the receipts for any expenses they incur while raising a Foster Puppy. At year end they can submit a total of their expenses and mileage to PAWS and we will provide a letter to submit to their tax preparer to determine if they qualify as a charitable donation for tax purposes.

Other dogs in the home: Having other dogs in the home can be an asset while raising a Foster Puppy as it prepares the puppy to properly behave around other dogs. PAWS requires that there be no more than three other dogs in the home and the other dogs in the home must be puppy friendly.

The other dogs in the home must be at least a year of age when the puppy is placed. We also ask that Raisers do not bring a new puppy into the home while raising a PAWS Foster Puppy.

Toys and Games: While it is important to puppies with appropriate chew toys, it is also important that Raisers control the toys. Foster Puppies are not allowed to play tug of war with people or with other dogs. Puppies should have free access to Kongs and Nylabones to satisfy their urge to chew. Puppies should not have free access to soft toys, as those should be saved for interaction with people. Raisers are encouraged to play fetch with soft toys so the puppy associates playing with soft toys as an interaction with people. This is a way that the client can interact and play with their dog to help in the bonding process once the puppy is placed as an Assistance Dog.

Furniture: Allowing a Foster Puppy on the furniture or to sleep in a Raiser's bed gives them the impression that they hold an equal position in the household. To be a good leader a Raiser must control this from the very beginning by making those areas off limits. Furniture should be for people, not for the puppy. If this a rule from the very beginning, the puppy will stay on the floor, even when not supervised.

Feeding Time: Foster Puppies should never be fed from the table. A Foster Puppy should lie quietly, without begging, at the Raiser's feet or under the table. Foster Puppies are never allowed to have people food unless it is used in the form of a training treat at a training session. Teaching a puppy to sit and wait before it is fed is also a good way to establish leadership with a puppy.

Crating: PAWS provides each Raiser with a plastic crate for their puppy. This is where the puppy should sleep at night. Foster Puppies should also be crated when alone and unsupervised. The crate is an important tool for each Raiser to use in training their puppy. The crate can help to aid in housebreaking and is the one thing that is consistent in the Puppy Raiser's home, at PAWS while the dog is in training and when first placed with the client. Raisers should remain in the crating habit even when they feel that the puppy is completely trustworthy in the home. The puppy should be happy and comfortable in its crate.

Greetings: Foster Puppies must learn not to jump on people, even when they are young. We work on controlled greetings at classes and request that Raisers not allow people to pet their puppies while in public until the puppy is at least six months of age and mature enough to remain focused on the handler during the greeting.

Housebreaking: When the puppy is first placed in a home it may need to go outside to relieve itself about every 30 minutes while it is awake. We encourage taking the puppy out on leash, through the same door and to the same area of the yard. Stand in one spot in the yard and the puppy has the radius of the leash to find its spot to relieve itself.

Returning the puppy to PAWS: Foster Puppies are typically returned to PAWS for their formal Assistance Dog training at approximately 18 months of age. Foster Puppy Intake Day is normally scheduled the first Monday of the month and all the puppies in the litter may come in for training together. After the dogs arrive at PAWS they are temperament tested to assess their trainability. The temperament test will show the Trainers how the dog reacts to different situations, what the dog already knows, and its strengths and weaknesses. After the temperament test the dog will receive a complete physical from PAWS Vet Staff and will then be assigned to a Phase One and a Phase Two Trainer.

The Phase One Trainer will work on basic obedience skills and public access training. The Phase Two Trainer will teach the dog the all-important skill of retrieving; picking up items as small as a credit card or a dime, or as large as a hammer or a pipe. Phase One and Two are taught simultaneously and typically take 8 – 10 weeks.

After the dog passes its Phase One and Phase Two evaluations it will then move up to Phase Three where it will be assigned to a third Trainer who will then assign it to a client and begin teaching it the specific tasks that the client requires of their Assistance Dog. Each PAWS Dog is custom trained to meet the needs of an individual client. Phase Three of training can take from 3 – 5 months depending on the number of tasks the client requires of their Assistance Dog.

Once the dog has finished its training at PAWS it will be placed in the client's home. The client will begin to learn how to care for their Assistance Dog and they will learn to work together as a team. PAWS is a unique organization in that in most cases we don't require that the client come to PAWS to receive training with their Assistance Dog. We have a PAWS Representative that lives in the client's community and will work with them until they are a certified PAWS team. Certification can take up to 6 months.

PAWS also provides lifetime support to the team and will recertify the team every two years. At certification they will ensure that the client and dog are working together, that the dog is healthy, its vaccines are current and that it is at an optimal weight. We will also add any new tasks that the client may require if needed.

As you can see, raising a Foster Puppy is a commitment, but is also a very rewarding experience. The PAWS Foster Puppy Program has enlisted a number of volunteer Foster Puppy Raisers around the country who open their hearts and their homes to begin laying the foundation that it takes to "build" an Assistance Dog. We need many more Foster Homes to meet the demand from people who are so greatly in need of an Assistance Dog to help them to gain independence. We need loving homes to prepare these puppies for what they are destined to do.

Raiser Quotes:

"We love it! And will gladly do it again. We love dogs and wanted to find a way to volunteer so that our whole family could participate. We could do this in our home, on our own time (as long as the puppy allows) and on our own schedule ... so to speak. In all seriousness, it has been one of the best experiences of our lives...we love puppies and the joy that they bring...the pouncing and puppy breath. We love taking them places and teaching them that it is okay 'out there' and that they are safe." – Greg and Missy

"The Foster Puppies have been a great addition to my life. They gave me a reason to get out of bed; to have another being depend on me. They have kept me physically active. And, they have given me a chance to be social; not only with my PAWS group, but also with the general public." – Lisa

"I love raising this puppy. I love having a companion when I go out in public and no one else wants to go. I love it when people in general come up to me and thank me for what I am doing!" – Korie

Frequently asked questions about the Foster Puppy Program

Does PAWS require that I have a fenced yard? While PAWS does prefer that Raisers have a fenced yard for the puppy, it is not a requirement. However Foster Puppies are not allowed to run free outside of a completely fenced area. If you do not have a fenced yard you must agree to secure a tie out or a free standing kennel run for the puppy's exercise and break times or be willing to leash walk the puppy for these times.

Can I request a specific breed, color or sex for the puppy that I will raise? The majority of the puppies placed in PAWS Foster Puppy Program are Labs and Golden Retrievers. PAWS will do its best to meet your requests; however a puppy of another breed or sex may be available sooner. You can choose to take one of these puppies or wait for your preference to become available.

We have allergies in my family, are there any puppies that need fostering that are hypoallergenic? PAWS does periodically have a non-shedding or hypoallergenic breed in our program, however the wait to receive this type of puppy may be longer due to limited availability.

Are there any small breed dogs that need fostering? PAWS occasionally has a small breed puppy available, however the wait to receive this type of puppy may be longer due to limited availability.

I work outside the home, can I still raise a Foster Puppy? The majority of our Raisers do work outside the home. They stop home at lunch time for the first month or so to let the puppy out to relieve itself or make arrangements with a friend or relative to do so. All PAWS puppies are crate trained and the puppy should remain in the crate whenever someone is not available to supervise it.

Are Foster Puppies treated the same as pets? Different rules apply to the Foster Puppies than would for the average pet. Foster Puppies are not allowed to run free, they are not allowed on the furniture and are not allowed any people food unless it is used in the form of a training treat. When raising a Foster Puppy we must keep the end result, the client, in mind in everything we do.

Do Foster Puppies have the same access rights as an Assistance Dog? No. Foster Puppies do not have the guaranteed access rights of an Assistance Dog. The Raiser must ask permission to take the puppy into a public place and can be denied access or asked to leave.

Can I take my Foster Puppy to work with me? Some Raisers are able to bring their Foster Puppy to work with them, however you would need to ask permission of your employer and it would need to be a safe environment for the puppy.

My child wants to raise a Foster Puppy; are there age requirements? Raising a Foster Puppy is a volunteer effort that can involve the whole family. However, it is a big responsibility and a parent must be willing to step in and assist the child with the puppy's care and training. A parent or guardian must also sign all documents.

What happens to the puppies that are not able to be placed as Assistance Dogs? PAWS always tries to find another working career for the dogs whenever possible. Some of the dogs career changed from PAWS program have gone on to become working dogs for US Customs, Police Departments, Arson Detection Dogs, Explosive and Drug Detection Dogs, Leader Dogs for the Blind and Crisis Response Dogs. If another working career is not suitable for the dog it may be offered to the Raiser as a family pet or placed with someone who is on the PAWS Career Change Dog list

How long would the puppy be in my home? Puppies are typically placed in the Foster Homes at around 8 weeks of age and would stay with the Raisers until they are approximately 18 months of age, depending on the dog's maturity and readiness to come in for training.

Is it ok to have other dogs in the home? Having other dogs in the home can be helpful in raising a Foster Puppy as it teaches them to not be distracted when working around other dogs. However, we require that there be no more than three other dogs in the home and other dogs in the home must be at least a year of age and puppy friendly.

Can I take my puppy to the dog parks or doggy day care? PAWS does not allow Foster Puppies to go to dog parks or doggy day care. We cannot control how the other dogs there play and we don't want the puppy to become defensive or pick up bad habits from the other dogs. PAWS only allows two dogs off leash at a time to play in a completely fenced area to avoid the puppy picking up on the pack mentality. It is far more important for the dog to bond with people than with other dogs.

I live in an apartment. Can I still raise a puppy? If you do not own your own home you must obtain permission from your landlord for the puppy to reside there.

What are my expenses in raising a Foster Puppy? Raisers are responsible for the day to day expenses in raising a Foster Puppy. These expenses include food, toys, Veterinary care; including vaccines, spaying/neutering, year-round heartworm preventive and an OFA preliminary hip x-ray. If you live in the vicinity of PAWS National Headquarters and are able to transport your puppy there for its Veterinary care, PAWS is able to provide this at no charge or our cost. PAWS is happy to provide Raisers with a taxable donation letter for the total of your puppy raising expenses at year end.

What happens when I go on vacation? There may be another Raiser in the area that would be willing to puppy sit for you.

Who names the puppy? If the puppy comes from PAWS Breeding program the litter will be assigned a letter (for example all the names would begin with "A") or a theme and Raisers will be provided with an approved name list from which they may submit three names. If the puppy is donated by a Breeder the Raiser can choose any three from the approved name list. Names that are on the list are easy to pronounce with no more than two syllables, and contain a long vowel. PAWS does not use names that are common people names, of an ethnic origin or anything that may be considered "politically sensitive" or may be offensive to anyone. PAWS will then assign the puppy a name from the three that you have submitted, based on names that have been previously used and dogs that are currently in the program.

Am I required to complete reports on my puppy's progress? PAWS requires that you follow up with the PAWS Representative in your area at least once per month and we also send out a quarterly questionnaire which gives us valuable input on how your puppy is progressing. The questionnaires can be completed on PAWS website or can be mailed to you.

After my Prospective Raiser Home Interview, how long is the wait to receive a puppy? While PAWS does its best to provide Raisers with a puppy within a time frame that is accommodating to their schedules, sometimes Mother Nature doesn't cooperate with us. On average the wait to receive a puppy in Michigan is 2 – 10 weeks.

Please note that Raisers will be required to sign an agreement with PAWS that states that they agree to such things as:

- To physical and financial responsibility for the puppy while caring for it, although the pup remains the property of PAWS.
- To promptly notify PAWS if, for any reason the raiser is unable to care for the pup as agreed.
- To never allow the puppy to run off-leash unless it is in a fenced in enclosure.
- To enroll the puppy in a series of obedience classes either through a private instructor or through classes provided by PAWS.
- To complete the puppy's vaccine schedule per PAWS protocol and provide PAWS with a current copy of the puppy's medical history for their records.
- To waive any right that the raiser, their heirs, executors, administrators, assignees, or successors might otherwise have to be reimbursed by PAWS and/or its Staff, Representatives, Puppy Donors, or Volunteers, for any injury or damage that they, their guests, or property might suffer either directly or indirectly, as a result of the actions or inactions of the puppy.

Raisers living in Michigan: When the puppy reaches approximately 18 months of age, the Raiser must schedule an appointment to bring the puppy to the Training Center near Wayland for evaluation, training and/or placement. A copy of the puppy's complete and updated medical records must be sent to PAWS prior to transporting to the Training Center.

Raisers outside of Michigan: When the puppy reaches approximately 18 months of age, the Raiser must schedule an appointment with an authorized PAWS Representative in order for the puppy to be returned to Paws With A Cause for evaluation, training and/or placement. A copy of the puppy's complete and updated medical records, along with an OFA quality preliminary hip x-ray must be sent to PAWS prior to transporting the dog to the Training Center.

If you are interested in raising a Foster Puppy after reviewing this information, please complete the Prospective Home Interview document and return it to PAWS National Headquarters. We will then contact you to invite you to attend a Foster Puppy Orientation meeting in your area.

Julie Thorington, National Foster Puppy Coordinator

Paws With A Cause®

4646 South Division
Wayland MI 49348
1-800-253-7297

Jthorington@pawswithacause.org
www.pawswithacause.org

Mission: Paws With A Cause enhances the independence and quality of life for people with disabilities nationally through custom-trained Assistance Dogs. PAWS increases awareness of the rights and roles of Assistance Dog teams through education and advocacy.

Vision: To encourage independence for people with disabilities by sustaining and strengthening our position as a leading provider of quality Assistance Dogs.