

MARKETING YOUR FOSTER DOG

For dogs who have been approved to be adopted, how you market the dog you have is up to you!

CRAFTING AN ENGAGING BIO FOR THE BINDER

Begin with a captivating first sentence that highlights your foster dog's unique personality or a favorite activity. For example:

"Meet Max, the couch potato with a heart of gold, ready to snuggle his way into your life."

Whether listed in bulleted format or included in a narrative, make sure to cover the following:

- **Basic Details:** Age, breed, size, and any special characteristics.
- **Temperament:** Describe their demeanor—playful, calm, curious, etc.
- **Skills & Training:** Mention any commands they know or are learning.
- **Ideal Home:** Suggest the type of household that would be a good fit.
- **Health Status:** Note any medical information or needs.
- **Call to Action:** Encourage potential adopters to inquire further.
- Remember, honesty is key. Clearly state any known behavioral traits or needs to ensure a good match with adopters.
- Keep the bios as concise as possible.
- Include disclaimer language: *Please note that the behaviors and characteristics described in this profile reflect our observations of this dog in a shelter or foster setting. These behaviors may not be consistent in a new home environment. Factors such as changes in routine, household dynamics, and individual interactions can influence a dog's behavior*

SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS FOR MAXIMUM EXPOSURE

- **Post Regularly (At least weekly):** Share updates on your personal social media pages, MADACC adoptables Facebook page and relevant community groups. (If you are not on social media, email photos and copy to marketing@friendsofmadacc.org)
- **Use Hashtags:** Incorporate location-based and popular adoption hashtags like #AdoptDontShop and #DogsofInstagram to increase visibility.
- **Visual Content:** Include 3–10 high-quality photos showcasing your dog's personality. Videos can be engaging, but Facebook will sometimes post videos incorrectly.
- **Create a Dedicated Account:** Consider setting up a separate social media account for your foster dog to reach a broader audience.

ENGAGING WITH POTENTIAL ADOPTERS

- Take him/her to dog-friendly places (only for dogs who are also friendly and confident)
 - Spots where people are lingering (ie. restaurant/bar patios, farmers markets, etc.) can be more effective at drawing attention
 - A list of popular places is included in the Fido Field Trip Manual
- Adopt me 'swag' – leashes, collars, leash wraps, bandanas – the more flair the better!

THE ADOPTION PROCESS

EMOTIONAL PREPARATION

If your goal as a foster is to get the dog adopted, the process can be very exciting, but also stressful. Sending a dog that you have cared for (especially those that came in with medical/behavioral issues) into someone else's home takes an incredible amount of strength, compassion and empathy.

Here are a few tips you can use to help prepare yourself for the adoption process, even before it starts:

- **Frame your role clearly:** Instead of thinking of yourself as "Mom" or the permanent caregiver, use language that reflects a temporary, supportive role (e.g., "Ms. [First Name]" or "Foster Caregiver"). This helps you mentally hold the animal's stay as transitional, not forever.
 - Consider the foster the same way you might a friend/family member's dog you are watching for a long vacation. They are a temporary visitor, not a family member.
- **Focus on the mission:** Remind yourself that your role is the "bridge" to a forever home. As one experienced foster put it:
 - "I am here to keep you safe, happy and healthy while we look for your forever family." That mindset frames the relationship as purposeful, and outcome-oriented.
- **Establish emotional boundaries without coldness:** You can care deeply and provide love, but keep in mind your foster arrangement has a beginning and end. Setting boundaries helps protect your well-being and prevents heartbreak when the adoptive placement happens.
 - Have your foster dog sleep in a crate instead of in your bed (great for training as well!)
- **Avoid forming routines that might be difficult for an adopter to follow:** It is absolutely okay to treat the foster differently than your own dogs, for example:
 - Crating the dog during the work day, even if you're home and your dogs are out, is a great way to prepare the dog for a future with a family that is gone all day.
 - Feeding the dog the affordable and available kibble provided by MADACC – even if you feed your dogs something different – makes it easy for future adopters to continue with a familiar diet
 - Restricting access to elevated "people furniture" for the foster dog will make it easier if s/he gets adopted by someone who prefers dogs stay off the furniture.

INTERESTED ADOPTERS

- When someone expresses interest:
 - **Be Honest:** Share your dog's true personality and any quirks to ensure a good fit.
 - **Ask Questions:** Inquire about the potential adopter's experience, living situation, and other pets to gauge compatibility. Potential questions include:
 - Do they rent or own? (If they rent, ask about weight limits and breed restrictions if those might apply to the dog you're fostering)
 - Do they have a fenced in yard? (Importance varies by dog)
 - Have they owned dogs before? (Helps to gauge if they know what they're getting into)
 - Do they have children, cats, other dogs? (Importance varies by dog)
 - Are they comfortable with crating?
 - What kind of training methodology do they use?

- How long will the dog be left alone each day? How will you ensure their energy needs are met when you are with them?

Tip: Feel free to say, 'There's a list of questions I have to ask' if you feel awkward asking certain things

- **Set Up a Meeting:** Arrange a safe, neutral location for introductions – it's best to not invite strangers to your home. Contact MADACC if you'd like to set up a meet-n-greet in the adoption room.
- **Trust Your Instincts:** If something feels off, it's okay to decline. Your priority is the well-being and best fit of your foster dog.

FINALIZING THE ADOPTION

Once a suitable adopter is found:

- **Complete the Paperwork:** Ensure all adoption forms are filled out and submitted to MADACC.
 - This can be done at MADACC or emailed
- Dogs cannot be exchanged until the paperwork is complete and adoption fees paid
- Feel free to share your knowledge of the dog to help ease the transition between homes. Helpful information includes:

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| Diet & Feeding | <i>Food brand, amount, timing, any food sensitivities, treats allowed, feeding method (puzzle feeder, separate bowls, etc.)</i> |
| Behavior & Temperament | <i>Summary of quirks, fears, triggers (loud noises, strangers, other dogs, cats, children), stress signs, what calms them</i> |
| Training / Cues | <i>Commands the dog reliably knows (sit, down, recall, place, touch, etc.), cues you use, how you've shaped them, level of reliability, tips for reinforcement</i> |
| Daily Routine | <i>Typical schedule (wake-up, potty breaks, walks, rest time, enrichment), what changes upset them, quiet time preferences</i> |
| Preferences & Comforts | <i>Favorite toys, games, treats, comfort items, sleeping spots, leash style, what they don't like</i> |
| Precautions & Warnings | <i>Known behaviors to watch (resource guarding, jumpiness, leash reactivity, fear of thunderstorms, etc.) and how you've managed them</i> |

- MADACC adopters have a 5-day trial period – if the adoption does not work out, you are welcomed (but not required) to bring the dog back into your home for foster
 1. If the adopter reaches out for support (medical or behavioral), have them email outreach@friendsofmadacc.org. They are oftentimes able to help the adopter locate (and in some cases pay for) resources to keep the dog in the home.

Post Adoption Support

It is VERY common to have feelings of sadness/regret once your foster dog has been adopted – hopefully those feelings are matched by the excitement you feel for your pup's next adventure. Some things that can help you stay positive:

Acknowledge your feelings: It's normal (and often hard) to say goodbye. Remind yourself that letting them go means you make space to help another dog in need.

Frame your impact: You provided growth, love, stability, and had a direct role in their success. That matters. Keep a journal or log of challenges you overcame and milestones achieved — these wins are meaningful.

Create a ritual (if helpful): Take pictures, write a goodbye note to the dog (it can be private), walk them one last time together, or record a short video memory.

Connect with support: Share with fellow fosters, your support team, or a mentor. Sometimes talking through your experience helps. Allow yourself a break before taking on the next foster.

Reflect & Learn: Ask yourself: What worked? What was hardest? What will I try differently next time? Save notes or feedback for future fosters or staff improvements.

Set intentional spacing: You don't need to jump into the next foster immediately. Give yourself time to heal emotionally, recharge, and set boundaries so you don't burn out.