Thank you for being willing to provide a temporary home for a golden retriever in need. Fostering a dog isn’t always easy as dogs may come to you dirty, sick, hurt or fearful. Golden Retrievers are the most loving and resilient breed. You’ll give a little piece of your heart to every dog you foster and in return, after weeks or months, you’ll be given unconditional love by the dog you help transition to a permanent, loving home.

There will be dogs you opt to keep, but please try to have room for “one more” as without families like yours, beautiful goldens may never have the opportunity to find their “furever” home.

Some of our dogs come from owners who can no longer care for their golden retriever. The most common reasons for giving up a dog include:

- Not enough time for the dog.
- Moving.
- Owner is ill or has died.
- Cannot afford the dog.

We are not usually contacted when a golden retriever is at a local shelter, but if you happen to notice a golden in need, please let the Intake/Foster Coordinator know by calling 855.477.3728.

Thank You!

Maggie Too and foster mom Becky.

This Foster Family Handbook was designed as a donation by Angie of Angava Graphics, who is also a past foster mom & the adoptive current mom of GRRSM’s past parvo fur baby, Yoshi pup!
What Information Will I Have About a Dog Before I Decide to Foster?

When Golden Retriever Rescue of Southern Maryland, Inc. is notified of a dog that needs to be re-homed an intake assessment is completed to learn as much about the dog as possible. Questions include:

- **Basic information** about the dog – age, sex, has the dog ever bitten, behavior around kids, cats and other dogs, reason for give up.
- **Medical information** – last vaccinations, type of heartworm/fever prevention, any chronic medical conditions.
- **Behavioral information** – good with other dogs, cats, children.

People who give up their dog do not always provide accurate information, and shelter staff often do not have much information, but we’ll do our best to ensure a successful foster placement.

What Do I Do if I Want to Foster a Dog?

Once you have a home visit and have signed a Foster Agreement, you will be added to the Foster Family Email Distribution List. An email with all of the information that is known about a dog is sent to all foster families. If you are available to foster, hit “reply all” when you respond to the email so other families will know that a foster family has been found. If you cannot foster the dog it is nice to reply as well so it is known that you received the email.

We can sometimes work with an owner on the date the dog will come into rescue, but we need to pick up dogs from the shelter as soon as possible.

Your dog may be vet checked before being placed in your home. However, most of the time you will make a vet appointment that is convenient for you. Keep your foster dog separate from your own animals if you have any indications the foster dog may have a contagious medical condition. It is always a good idea to pick up poop until you are sure your new charge does not have internal parasites.

It is also important to ensure your dog is current on flea/tick prevention. You may also want your dog to have a current bordetella vaccination if you foster young dogs. Bordetella is similar to the common cold and many dogs are exposed to it at shelters.

Review your insurance policy to ensure you are covered for any damage a dog might cause as the rescue does not reimburse for damages to your property.

What Supplies Are Needed?

If you are already a dog owner, preparing for a foster dog will be easy. If you are not a dog owner you’ll need to provide the following supplies for your guest dog:

- **Water/food bowl** – stainless steel or ceramic.
- **Dog bed** – “memory foam” will be appreciated by an older dog. Younger dogs can sleep on folded quilts or blankets.
- **A few toys** – tennis balls, kongs, squeaky plush toy, etc.
- **Treats** – low fat tidbits you can use as rewards, frozen marrow or soup bones, bully sticks, etc.
- **Crate or baby gate** – if you are going to purchase a crate get one big enough for a large dog to stand, turn around and lay down. Crates are available to borrow.
- **Brush**.

Your rescue dog will come with a 6 ft lead, collar, rescue tag, flea/tick and heartworm prevention, a bag of premium dry food and canned food. Sometimes people donate dog beds, chew toys or other items and they will be sent along as well.
Bringing a new dog home is exciting. Start off on the right "paw:"

• BE CAREFUL. New dogs are frightened and can easily be lost.

• Transport your dog home in a crate or tie their leash to a seat back so they don’t jump out of the vehicle before you are ready when you arrive home.

• Keep your golden on leash even in your fenced yard. Don’t let children walk your new dog as it’s too easy for a dog to get away.

• Introduce your new dog to other canine and human family members outside with all dogs wearing a leash. Don’t drop leashes until you know everyone is getting along.

• Stay home with your new dog. Don’t take him/her to meet family or friends. No soccer games, dog parks, etc. Let your dog get to know their new home for a few days.

• Show your dog where their water bowl is located.

• It is common for a new dog to have a couple of accidents in the house the first few days. It doesn’t mean they are not house trained. Offer frequent trips outdoors and use positive reinforcement.

• If you are bringing a new dog into your home with another dog/s, have a water spray bottle, bitter apple, air horn, etc nearby. Remember don’t put yourself in the middle of a scuffle which may happen as dogs figure each other out.

• Prepare for anxiety. Your new dog or your resident dog/s may feel unsettled. It might be good to give everybody a bit of melatonin, CBD oil, or rescue remedy for a few days.

• Routine is important to your new dog. The first day is often a challenge as your new pup doesn’t know what to expect.

• NO bones, chewies or high value toys if you have another dog until you are sure everyone gets along.

• Provide a quiet, safe area for your dog to rest and show him/her where it is.

You never get a second chance to make a first impression.

• Introduce your new dog on neutral ground away from your property. This is especially important if you think your dog may be protective of your property.

• Many find it helpful to immediately walk their new foster dog and resident dog. Your new dog becomes familiar with the neighborhood, can relieve him/herself, if necessary, and both dogs see that you are in control.

• Next allow your dog to explore your fenced yard. This allows him/her to become familiar with the yard and “mark” his new home. (Keep leash on.)

• Enter the house and show your new dog around. By the way, your dog will explore everything, so dog-proof your house (place shoes inside closets, put electrical cords out of reach, move prized objects to higher ground).

• If you are introducing a male dog to your home and he lifts his leg, give him a firm “No” to disrupt the action, and then take him outside immediately.

• Your dog will be excited and anxious about his new temporary home. Don’t be surprised at panting and pacing, housetraining accidents, excessive drinking or chewing, or gastric upset. Tell every member of your family to resist the temptation to overwhelm a new dog. Give him some time and space to get settled.
Every effort is made to have owners who give up their dogs get a current vet check and provide a copy of the dog's medical records before turning their dog over to Golden Retriever Rescue of Southern Maryland, Inc. Before adoption, all dogs should:

- Be spayed or neutered if necessary (including blood work/pain medication.)
- Have a current rabies vaccination. (Send proof to new family at adoption.)
- Have a current DHPP (distemper, hepatitis, parvovirus, parainfluenza and send proof to new family at adoption.)
- Have a heartworm test if not on prevention and send at least a one month's supply to the new family at adoption. (Be sure to note the next due date.)
- Worm/parasite test/treatment if needed.
- Be treated for flea/tick prevention. Provide at least a one month's supply at adoption with due date noted.
- Be treated for minor problems such as skin/ear infections/worms.
- Have at least a one month supply of medications for chronic conditions such as seizures, arthritis, and thyroid, if needed.
- Blood work for a senior golden or one that appears ill.

Treatment for other medical problems, unless emergent, must be approved by Golden Retriever Rescue.

(Note: It's a good idea to take a copy of this list when you go to the vet.)

When you make an appointment for you foster dog, tell them you are with Golden Retriever Rescue of Southern Maryland. Register the dog under the rescue and not under your name as charges will be billed to the rescue.

If there are questions about veterinary care that you are unable to answer please refer the vet staff to the Intake/Foster Coordinator 240.925.8817.
Your new dog may have an “accident” during the first couple of days at your home. They may urinate submissively, be unsure of how to “ask” to go out or they may be overwhelmed or stressed by their new environment. To house train:

- **Watch for signs** of discomfort, restlessness or circling. Take your pup out frequently.
- **Praise when s/he goes potty.** Give a treat or kibble to reinforce the behavior. If fifteen or so minutes pass without pottying, bring the dog inside and then go back out.
- **Confine when you can’t watch...in a crate or a part of the kitchen.**
- **Realize that dogs can’t "hold it" for long periods.** Even adult dogs may need a mid-day dog walker if you work long hours. Puppies need to urinate and defecate frequently, so they’ll need to go out at least every 4 hours to get house trained.

**Crate-train.** Many use a crate to house train. It is based on the premise that dogs don’t like to mess in their sleeping area. Use a crate large enough for your dog to lie down and turn around. Don’t leave a dog in a crate for more than four hours without a break.

**Feed on a schedule.** Feed your dog the same times each day. Take him or her out after feeding. Young puppies are usually fed three times a day; older puppies and adult dogs twice a day.

**Keep a potty routine.** Take your dog outside first thing in the morning, when you get home from work, within an hour after the dog eats, just before bedtime, and following vigorous play. Young puppies may need to be taken outside every two hours.

**Don’t end the walk outside when your dog potties.** Or s/he will learn that outdoor fun ends when s/he goes potty. This is why some dogs hold it until they are brought back inside. After your dog “goes,” praise, give a treat and keep walking a bit longer.

**Interrupt vs. scold.** Typically, a dog goes because s/he just has to. If you catch in the act, interrupt with a loud, startling NO! and an immediate trip outside. Use a loud, deep, firm voice. When s/he resumes relieving herself outside, praise lavishly.

**Punishment teaches only fear.** Never shove a dog’s nose in his mess or smack a dog which teaches only to fear hands. A dog is unable to associate past behavior with a punishment s/he is now receiving. He can associate the pain and anger with the person administering the punishment.

**Clean up.** Use an enzyme-based pet odor neutralizer like Nature’s Miracle or Simple Solution to eliminate the urine scent.
It’s best if your dog sleeps in a room with the pack - you and your family. The dog should have her own bed to sleep on.

The first few nights, you may want to confine your new dog in a crate in the bedroom, but start teaching your dog house manners so that you can provide increased freedom. It is not unusual for your new dog to bark or whine while confined the first night or two. Dogs want to be with their pack members.

Place the crate or bed where your dog can see you. If s/he barks at bedtime, correct with a firm "No Bark!" Praise softly when she quiets down. Safe chew toys will give your dog something to do until s/he falls asleep.

Eventually you’ll want to wean your dog from her crate. Pick a night after an active day and keep the crate door open. You can transition to just a dog bed from there.

**Grooming Basics**

Use a commercial ear flush or a mixture of one part white vinegar to four parts warm water to clean the ears. Pour a small amount into an ear. Gently rub the solution into the ear by rubbing the base of the ear. Let your dog do the “doggie ear dance” and then wipe with a soft, dry cloth or cotton pad. Zymox is a great over the counter product if you think your dog has an ear infection.

Many dogs are hesitant to have their nails trimmed. Don’t try to trim your foster dog’s nails until you both are comfortable with each other. If the nails are so long that they interfere with the dog walking or if the dew claw is cutting into the dog’s skin arrange to have a vet trim their nails.

Brush your dog’s teeth. It’s so much cheaper than getting them professionally cleaned and most dogs actually like to get their teeth brushed with poultry or beef flavored toothpaste. Use a regular, soft, human brush. Start slowly. The first couple of times simply let the dog lick the tooth brush. Slowly work up to brushing canines and then the rest of the teeth. Focus on the outside of each tooth.

**Bedtime**

Your foster dog may be very dirty when she comes to you. Please give him or her a bath. This may be the first bath the dog has ever had! If your dog is very matted, tick covered or for some reason you are unable to bathe your dog, talk with the Intake/Foster Coordinator to make arrangements for payment to have your dog groomed.

Lift your dog’s ears and note if there is a smell. Wipe the ear canals gently with a soft cloth or cotton pad. If you notice a blackish discharge, the ears are very red, or the dog is hesitant to let you touch her ears it likely she has an ear infection.
Assess Your Foster Dog

As you get to know your dog, determine what his/her needs are to be successful with a permanent family. Do you have a youngster who needs the security of a large, physical fence in order to expend energy? Does your dog enjoy playing with other dogs? Does your dog like children? Get along with cats and other small animals? Does your dog need someone home much of the day otherwise they get anxious, bored or destructive?

It's helpful to have a list the factors your guest dog will need to succeed so then only families that meet most of your criteria will be allowed to meet your dog.

Once you get to know your foster dog, write a description and forward to the intake coordinator to post on the web site. Please send pictures/videos to post on the web site to attract potential adopters as well.

Only approved families will be allowed to contact you. However, when potential adopters contact you they are often very eager and do not ask all of the questions they should to make an informed decision. On the following page, shown is a form you can use to guide you as you get to know your foster dog and discuss your dog’s needs with prospective families.

Send a completed copy of this form home with an adoptive family.
# Dog Information Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
<th>COMMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is the dog reliably house trained?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do they let you know they need to go potty?</td>
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<td>2. Does the dog have run of the house?</td>
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<td>3. Is the dog crate trained?</td>
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<td>(No more than four hours)</td>
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<td>4. Does the dog get along with other dogs?</td>
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<td>5. Does the dog get along with cats?</td>
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<td>6. Does the dog get along with children?</td>
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<td>7. What commands does the dog know?</td>
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<td>8. How does dog let you know he/she needs to potty?</td>
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<td>9. Has the dog had obedience training?</td>
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<td>10. Is the dog leash trained?</td>
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<td>11. Does the dog like to ride in the car?</td>
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<td>12. Does the dog have any of the following behaviors? If so, how</td>
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<td>- Chew inappropriate items</td>
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<td>- Dig</td>
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<td>- Jump Up</td>
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<td>- Mouthy – grab arm, clothes</td>
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<td>- Other</td>
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<td>13. Does the dog have any fears?</td>
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<td>14. Does the dog have any dislikes?</td>
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<td>15. Does the dog like to play in water?</td>
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<td>16. Where does the dog sleep?</td>
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<td>17. What type of exercise does the dog get?</td>
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<td>18. Describe any health problems or concerns the dog may have.</td>
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<td>19. Heartworm/flea Preventative due</td>
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<td>20. Distemper vaccination or preferably titer is due</td>
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<td>21. Rabies vaccination due</td>
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<td>22. Feeding Instructions</td>
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<td>(Brand of food, amount &amp; times during the day, include treats.)</td>
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<td>23. Last bath</td>
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<td>24. What does the dog really enjoy (toys, games, walks, etc.)?</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. How does the dog let you know they need to go potty?</td>
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Please call with any questions or concerns:

Provide a copy of this form to the adoptive family.

(FOSTER CAREGIVER’S PHONE NUMBER)

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Becky gives a kiss goodbye as her past foster dog, Tacy, gets ready to leave for her journey to her forever home.
Meet Potential Adopters

Any family who contacts you will be an approved adopter. You select the family that best meets your foster dog’s needs.

Potential adoptive families should come to your home to meet your foster dog to get a true picture of your dog. Dogs act differently at home than they do in public.

All family members including dogs (not cats) should meet your dog. Provide honest information about your dog. Note how they interact with your dog and how your dog interacts with them. Suggest they take a short walk or go outside to play. If you don’t feel comfortable with the family, tell them another family is coming to meet the dog and you will make a decision about which family is best for your dog within a few days.

If you feel comfortable that the family and your foster dog are a good fit (remember, another Golden Rescue member has done a home visit with this family and given their blessing) complete the adoption agreement. Keep the signed agreement and remind adopters a copy of the agreement is in their adoption guide.

Adopters are told to bring a tag with their contact information. Have them put the tag on the collar before leaving your house. If they don’t bring the tag, you do not have to complete the adoption or you may use a permanent marker to write their contact info on your dog’s collar.

Send Your Foster Dog to His/Her Furever Family With:

- A completed Dog Information Sheet.
- Proof of rabies vaccination.
- Proof of Distemper vaccination.
- Copies of vet records.
- At least a one month supply of heart worm prevention.
- At least a one month supply of flea prevention.
- A month supply of any medications the dog is taking for chronic conditions.
- A week or more supply of food.
- A collar and 6 ft leash.
- Any transitional items such as toys you want to send with them.
- Your telephone number or email address in case they have questions.
- Tell them you will contact them the following day by phone.

A copy of the adoption contract follows. It, along with the check, should be sent to:

GRRSM
PO BOX 6 • Great Mills, MD 20634
GOLDEN RETRIEVER RESCUE OF SOUTHERN MARYLAND, INC.
ADOPTION AGREEMENT

This Adoption Agreement, effective on _____ (DATE), is between Golden Retriever Rescue of Southern Maryland, Inc., and _____________________________ ("ADOPTER") _____________________________, whose home address is _____________________________.

This Agreement states the terms under which Rescue will provide and Adopter will accept a dog for adoption. Adopter and Rescue, intending to be legally bound, agree as follows:

1. Since a dog may come from an unknown genetic background, the Adopter agrees that Rescue shall not be liable for any medical conditions that may affect the dog, including but not limited to, eyes, hips, heart, allergies, or any other medical or temperament problems. Adopter acknowledges that the dog is provided AS IS AND WITHOUT WARRANTY OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE OR ANY OTHER WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED.

2. The Adopter shall provide the dog with humane care and maintain it in accordance with all the current and future state, county and municipal laws and ordinances where the Adopter resides.

3. The Adopter shall provide the dog with necessary veterinary care as needed for sickness, disease, injury, or aging. The Adopter shall also provide a veterinarian visit for the dog at least annually for a health examination, rabies vaccination as required by law, heartworm test and prescribed preventative, fecal parasite test, and any other treatment as necessary.

4. The Adopter shall provide the dog with a securely fenced yard or other humane means of exercise. The dog shall not be kept chained or tied out of doors or allowed to run at large, nor shall it be kept outside while the residence is unoccupied.

5. If for any reason the dog cannot reside with the Adopter, the Adopter must return it to Rescue. The dog shall NOT be given away, sold or exchanged without the prior written permission of Rescue. In the event of the Adopter’s death, the dog shall be returned to Rescue or to an approved adoptive family.

6. The dog shall reside at and live inside the Adopter’s dwelling.

7. The Adopter shall keep the dog as a household pet and shall not use it as a guard dog, hunting dog, or any other type of service dog.

8. The Adopter shall ensure the dog wears an identification tag at all times and shall provide a collar for the dog to wear at all times when allowed outdoors.

9. The Adoption fee is non-refundable and are as follows:
   • $100 for a dog provided by Rescue.
   • $400 for a golden age one to ten.
   • $500 for an altered golden retriever under the age of one year.
   • $100 for a senior or special needs golden.

10. Adopter agrees to release, indemnify, hold harmless, and defend Rescue and its trustees, officers, employees, agents, and volunteers, whether current or former, from and against any and all claims or liabilities, including court costs and attorney's fees, arising out of Adopter’s adoption and ownership of a dog provided by Rescue.

11. The Adopter consents to examination of the dog by Rescue during reasonable hours, with or without notice. The Adopter also consents to reclamation of the dog by Rescue at any time, with or without notice, for failure to comply with the terms of this Agreement or for any misrepresentation(s) made by the Adopter on the Adoption Application. In circumstances in which the health or life of the dog is not in immediate danger, the Adopter may be given a notice period with a reasonable opportunity to remedy any violations of the terms of the Agreement.

12. The Adopter agrees to pay Rescue any and all reasonable expenses, including court costs and attorney fees, incurred by Rescue to enforce the terms and provisions of this Agreement.

13. This Agreement shall be governed and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of Maryland without reference to conflict of laws principles.

14. If a provision of this Agreement is found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unenforceable, it shall not affect the other provisions, and this Agreement shall be construed as if such invalid or unenforceable provision were omitted.

AGREED TO AND ACCEPTED:

I (We) _____________________________ the Adopter/s, enter into this Adoption Agreement and acknowledge receipt from Golden Retriever Rescue of Southern Maryland, Inc. of the dog named and described as: Dog’s ID# _____________________________ Sex _____________________________

I (We) _____________________________ acknowledge having read and agree to abide by the provisions of the Adoption Agreement as set forth herein.

SIGNED _____________________________ Date _____________________________

SIGNED _____________________________ Date _____________________________

Street Address _____________________________ City _____________________________ State/Zip _____________________________

Home Phone _____________________________ Work Phone _____________________________

Email _____________________________

Golden Retriever Rescue of Southern Maryland, Inc. Volunteer Adoption Representative:

Name _____________________________ Date _____________________________

Foster Family Guide
Melissa sat on the floor, unable to sit straight and tall like her mother had always admonished her to do when she was a child. Today, it would be impossible. And tomorrow... it probably wouldn’t be possible then either. Her mind was too busy thinking about the dog that lay across her lap. When he came to be with her, he had no name. She remembered that day very well. The first sight of him was enough to break her heart into little pieces.

His fur was very thick; so thick that she had to wiggle her fingers down to feel his bony body. And as she pulled her fingers away again, they were coated in old dirt. Golden he was supposed to be. But on that day he was dirt and dust. He sat in the back of her car panting continuously, ears laid outward for he had lost his courage and couldn’t keep them proud and tall.

He sat motionless, waiting and limp. But the thing that was the most disturbing was the look in his eyes. They were quiet eyes, sunken into his head - and they watched her. They were alive with thought. He was waiting for her to do something “to” him. Little did he know at the time that, instead, she would “give” something to him.

She gave him one of the little broken pieces of her heart. She reached out to stroke his head and he instinctively flinched his eyes shut and dropped his head, waiting for the heavy hand. With that little bit of movement she gave him another one of the broken pieces of her heart.

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She took him home and gave him a bath. She towelled him dry and brushed some order back into his coat. For that, he was grateful and even though his own heart was loaded with worms, he accepted yet another piece of her heart, for it would help to heal his own.

"Would you like some water, big boy?" She whispered to him as she set down a large bowl of cold well water. He drank it up happily. He had been dehydrated for a long time and she knew it would take him most of the week to re-hydrate. He wanted more water - but it was gone. Ah... that’s how it is, he thought to himself. But he was grateful for what he had been able to get. "Would you like some more?" and she gave him another bowl along with another little piece of her heart.

"I know that you are hungry. You don’t have to find your own food anymore. Here’s a big bowl of good food for you. I’ve added some warm water and a little piece of my heart."

Over the four months that he stayed with her, his health improved. The heart full of worms was replaced piece by piece with little bits of her loving heart. And each little piece worked a very special kind of magic. When the warmth of love and gentle caresses are added, the little broken pieces knit together again and heal the container it resides in. That container becomes whole again. She watched each little broken piece fill a gap in the gentle dog until his quiet eyes radiated the light from the little pieces. You see, kind words gently spoken turn the little pieces into illumination for the spirit that resides within.

He rested beside her, happy to be with her always. Never had he known such kindness, such gentle caresses; such love. His health had returned, his spirit was playful as a young dog’s should be and he had learned about love.

Now his heart was full. The healing was complete. It was time to go. There was another person who had another heart that was meant to be shared with him. So she sat shapeless on the floor because all the broken pieces of her heart were with the dog. It is difficult to sit tall when your heart is not with you. She wrapped her arms around the dog that sat with tall, proud ears for her. Lean on me, he said. And she gave him one last thing that would keep him strong; that would keep the pieces of her heart together long after he had gone on to live his new life. She gave him her tears and bound them to the pieces with a simple statement made from her ribbons of her heart.

"I love you, Buddy." And Buddy lived happily ever after.

Melissa sat on the floor, straight and tall like her mother had always admonished her to do when she was a child. Today, it would be possible. And tomorrow... it probably would be possible too. Because her mind was busy thinking about this, the next dog that lay across her lap.

Where did she get the heart to help yet another dog, you ask? Ahhh... it came with the dog. They always bring a little bit of heart with them. And when the rescuer breathes in that little bit of heart, it quickly grows and fills the void left by the last dog.

~ Author Unknown

**Congratulations!** You and the entire Golden Retriever Rescue of Southern Maryland, Inc. team have found a permanent, loving home for a golden in need. You were a big part of that as you loved your foster dog. There will be some dogs you are thrilled to see get adopted; and there will be others who you’ll wished you’d kept. All will take a little piece of your heart....