

Photo by Mary Pasicatatan Photography

Wendy and Jim Markgraf
have been pet foster parents
for over eight years



Tena Wood stays in touch
with her former foster pets
after they are adopted
into loving families



Markgraf chooses to foster
dogs larger than 25 pounds
because it is typically harder for
shelters to find homes for them



Loving Homes

Katy families share their heart for fostering homeless animals until they are able to be placed with life-long families

Written by Kelly Boldt | Select photography by Shanna Kenney

Every year, thousands of pets in the Katy area need help finding a home. Thankfully, there are many people who have devoted their time, resources, and hearts to helping these animals prepare to be adopted. Katy pet foster families provide an environment where the animals can get special attention for medical needs and experience the healing power that a loving human family can provide. Here are a few inspirational families who illustrate the healing power of love.

The Wood Family

Tena and Tim Wood have served as a pet foster family for many years. The positive experiences their family had working with dogs helped them as they dealt with their own struggles within their family. “My son was having a rough time at school and he needed something positive to focus on,” Tena explains. “He has always loved animals, so we volunteered at several adoption days. Then we decided to become a pet foster family.”

The Woods have worked with various organizations such as Scouts Honor and Dachshund Rescue of Houston. “They call us when a dog has certain needs, whether medical or behavioral. Our first step is to take our family dog to the

shelter and see how they interact. If that goes well, we agree to foster the dog,” Tena says. “It can be hard when they leave, but I am involved with the selection of their forever home, and we stay in touch even after they’ve been adopted.”

The Markgraf Family

Wendy Markgraf began volunteering a few hours a week at the Citizens for Animal Protection (CAP) thrift store. As she spent more time at the shelter, she saw how many animals needed foster care so she decided to take one home. Her family has now fostered for over eight years and nurtured over 50 dogs and cats. “It’s hard not to keep them,” shares Markgraf. “It breaks my heart when I have to give them up.” But knowing how many more animals are in need of her help keeps her going. “It’s very rewarding to nurse them back to health after they come to us in bad shape,” says Markgraf.

Markgraf has adopted two of the animals she once fostered. “I couldn’t let them go,” she says. “I jokingly call it a ‘foster failure’ because the dogs never left.” The Markgrafs have chosen to foster larger dogs that are over 25 pounds because finding homes for them is typically more of a challenge for the shelter.

The Dillman Family

Lynn Dillman was in between jobs and decided to volunteer at CAP. He later became an employee. As with the other employees and volunteers, he saw the overwhelming need for families to give special attention to dogs and cats waiting to be adopted. Dillman left the shelter after a year, but decided that they wanted to keep fostering sick animals. “Shelters are good at what they do, but they can only do so much,” Dillman explains. “Without the foster network, more animals would be euthanized, and we saw this as a way to give more animals a chance.”

The Dillmans have fostered around 200 animals and adopted three over the years. “We’re here to help these animals have a happy life, and you have to be happy for them when they go,” says Dillman. He recalls a particularly difficult case



Lynn and Kyoko Dillman have fostered almost 200 animals



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Smigin and Eddie are in the Dillman's care



Chester is being fostered by the Markgraf family

Foster a Pet

Over 900 animals were in foster care in 2013. If you are interested in more information about becoming a foster family or volunteering with Citizens for Animal Protection (CAP), visit cap4pets.org.

where the dog had been kept in a cage not much bigger than he was. "He was incontinent and turned in circles all day," says Dillman. "We found a home that would tend to his needs, and now he is doing a lot better." KM

KELLY BOLDT is a Katy mother of three teenagers.

SMITH RANCH

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