LIBR 101

Our president, Georgia, founded the rescue after rescuing a dog named Porsche who was found on the side of the highway with crushing injuries to her head from what is believed to be a baseball bat. She needed cranial reconstruction and months of rehabilitation. After she was medically cleared she was having a failure to thrive, and was very depressed. Georgia realized she needed not the promise of a longer life, but the promise of a better life; hence our name - Life is Better Rescue. Porsche has since gone on to get her Canine Good Citizen and therapy certifications and she now is not only our spokes dog, but also works in schools with children who have anxiety disorders.

When Georgia founded our rescue there was a 90% mortality rate for kittens in Denver's shelter system. In order to help serve our community and help change this number, we worked with the City of Denver to change city code and create the Temporary Housing Program. Now, when an animal under 8 weeks old comes into the shelter, the staff calls us and we place the animal in foster or take them to our Care Center, depending on the animal's age and needs. We house them during their stray hold and, if no one comes to claim them, they are officially transferred to our program after the legal five business days, and we will then put them up for adoption once they are old enough to be fully vetted, including spay or neuter. After several years of implementation, the mortality rate has decreased to less than 10%.

We have built and strengthened many relationships with rescue groups and shelters in Colorado and surrounding states, so while the bulk of our cat population still comes from Denver Animal Shelter, we pull animals from a few dozen different shelters. Life is Better Rescue is licensed to shelter cats and foster dogs through the Department of Agriculture's Pet Animal Care Facilities Act (PACFA). We are required to meet specific care standards and reporting practices to maintain these licenses and are subject to regular annual and surprise inspections. Every animal that comes into our program must be tracked and reported on a monthly and annual basis, and our paperwork system, from intake to adoption, is set up very specifically to help us do this effectively. One of the other requirements mandated by PACFA, which we strictly follow, is that any animal transported from out of state is required to have a valid health certificate issued prior to transport. Health certificates indicate an animal has been appropriately vaccinated for his/her age, has been examined by a state-licensed veterinarian, and is deemed healthy for travel across state lines. When applicable (an animal has come from out of state), the health certificate is included as part of each animal's adoption packet.

Our Care Center is the rescue's main base of operations and includes office space and sheltering space for cats. However, the Care Center is not a public facility. Visitors are welcomed on a discretionary basis and at the request or by approval of the leadership team. This is to ensure the safety of our staff, volunteers, animals and property. It is important that volunteers sign in and out when they are at the facility for events or volunteer shifts. Unique alarm codes are provided for trained, approved volunteers only and should not be shared. While at the facility, it is important for doors to be kept closed and locked, and because we are not a public facility, volunteers should not feel obligated to open the door for anyone they do not know, or are not expecting.

Any moms with babies or cats that are able to eat on their own are housed at our Care Center (kittens who need to be bottle fed are sent to foster). We have three shifts of volunteers each day, seven days a week to feed, water, medicate, otherwise care for the cats and clean the facility. We do accept volunteers of all ages, however volunteers under 16 must be accompanied by an adult and have a parent or guardian signed waiver on file. We have a volunteer handbook for every person that comes in to do a cat shift, and provide either group or one-on-one training sessions for each volunteer to get acquainted with our policies and procedures regarding cat care. Our main goal at the Care Center is to keep each cat as healthy as possible, which requires adherence to strict standards of care to minimize disease transmission. Per our insurance liabilities, all volunteers must sign waivers specific to work with cats at the Care Center.

Our cats are considered fully vetted at the time of adoption. This includes feline distemper (FVRCP) vaccines appropriate for their age and length of stay (while adults receive just one vaccine, kittens receive three to four boosters every

21-30 days, beginning at four weeks), rabies vaccinations (for cats over four months), spay/neuter, microchip, blood testing (we test all adults for feline leukemia (FeLV) and feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV), and test all kittens for FeLV) and deworming. Cats that have been deemed ready for adoption are listed on our website and via Petfinder, and they are moved to our partner Petsmart store or to Denver Cat Company, based on space availability. Petsmart associates handle the entire adoption process for our cats in store, from adoption application to go home. Adopters interested in cats at Denver Cat Company submit applications online and once approved, go homes are scheduled for a weekday with a lead volunteer. Adoption fees are based on age and are non-negotiable: adults over one year are $75, adolescents between six months and one year are $100 and kittens under six months are $125. Feral mom cats are fully vetted after weaning their kittens and either re-released or barn released. We have a barn specific adoption application and agreement. There is no adoption fee for these cats, but donations are welcome.

Our dogs are all kept in foster homes until they are adopted. We provide all supplies needed, and we cover the cost of all veterinary care, which includes (but isn't limited to): vaccinations, heartworm testing (any dog over six months of age that has come from out of state is tested), deworming, flea/tick treatment, spay/neuter, microchipping, and any necessary antibiotics. Per our PACFA license and insurance liabilities, we require all fosters complete a foster questionnaire and agreement/waiver. We also require that except for medical or age-related reasons, all cats and dogs in a foster home be spayed/neutered and up to date on vaccinations. Due to our foster-based nature, we are unable to take dogs into our program that have severe dog aggression, and under no circumstances will we take a dog with known human aggression or a known bite history.

Our dogs are considered fully vetted at the time of adoption. This includes canine distemper (DAPP) vaccines appropriate for their age and length of stay (while adults receive just one vaccine, puppies receive three boosters every 21-30 days, beginning at five weeks), rabies vaccinations (for dogs over four months), spay/neuter, microchip, blood testing (we require all dogs over six months that we take from out of state be tested for heartworm), deworming, flea/tick treatment. Dogs that have been deemed ready for adoption are listed on our website and via Petfinder, and they attend adoption events and individual meet and greets. Adopters interested in dogs submit applications online or in person at events and once approved, a go home is scheduled with a lead volunteer or the adoption is completed at the event. Adoption fees are based on age and are non-negotiable: adults over one year are $250, puppies one year or less are $300 and seniors (determined by age based on size) are $200.

Life is Better Rescue is a Petsmart Charities partner, which means we are eligible to receive a donation for each adoption we process, as long as a Petsmart Release Form is signed by the adopter. We are also eligible to participate in Petsmart's quarterly National Adoption Weekends and can apply for additional grants related to these events. As a Petsmart Charities partner, we are held to a high standard of professionalism and are required to carry a substantial insurance rider. Because of our high adoption volume, our partner store (#1457: 8500 West Crestline Avenue, Littleton) has agreed to allow Life is Better Rescue to be the sole rescue (with minimal exception) that does adoptions in their store. In recognition of this courtesy, all adoptions should be completed at our partner store. This is also a more public, professional and safe location to complete adoptions. There will be situations where exceptions are made, ie: timid or high arousal dogs, but this should be the general rule.

Each adoption agreement is a binding legal contract and must be fully completed. This includes the adopter's name at the top, all line items initialed (not checked), and a completed bottom section including signature and driver's license or state issued ID number. All adopters are provided a copy of the contract at the top of their adoption packet. It is important to go through all of the paperwork included in each adoption packet. This should include: transfer paperwork (identifies the organization that transferred custody of the animal to Life is Better's program); vaccination history, including identifying when an animal is next due for vaccines; medical history, which can include medications provided prior to transfer and after arriving with us; spay/neuter verification, typically on a Life is Better Certificate of Vaccination and Sterilization or rabies certificate; microchip number; and the health certificate. Our legally binding adoption agreements, which are attached to each animal's transfer and medical paperwork, are filed by adoption date and kept for five years for audit and referral purposes.