German Shepherds are different than other dog breeds, especially rescues. Many times, we don’t know what happened in their past or how it impacts their behavior. Members, volunteers and foster families have the experience (and sometimes challenge) of learning about GSRNS’s dogs and their personalities. We need to know our dogs best before adopting them out to their forever families. It would be ideal if our GSDs were on their best behavior the entire length of an adoption. Realistically, this isn’t always the case. Adoptions can be stressful for any dog- new smells, new location, a lot of new people and multiple dogs. This can cause them to behave differently than they would at home. To help us with these situations, many members recently received training that can be used at adoptions.

            Koru K9 Dog Training and Rehabilitation provided useful tools to help us with our GSDs at adoptions and outside adoptions. The company’s co-owner, Ray Murphey, presented on many different characteristics of a GSD: health, anatomy, body language, the breed itself and much more. The second half of the training included hands-on work with some of our GSDs- proper leash behavior, how to act around other dogs and how to respond if you are handling a reactive dog. Ray Murphey taught the members attending the training a useful exercise to do with our GSD’s prior to an adoption that will help them relax, get used to their new environment and focus their attention on their handler rather than other dogs and people around them. In this exercise, we begin by walking our GSDs passed each other and responding if they are reactive, but always rewarding when they are well behaved. Handlers can walk in multiple directions weaving in and out of other GSDs. After a couple minutes of walking around, stop and ask the dog to sit. The goal is to then have the dogs attention on their handler rather than the other dogs and people. This exercise will help focus them on their handler prior to entering the adoption. Adoptions include a lot of noise, many new people and sometimes other dogs that families bring with them. These can all be huge distractions that can cause our dogs to become anxious, but getting them focused on their handler prior to an adoption, can help with their behavior during the adoption. We’d like to thank Ray Murphey and the trainers at Koru K9 Dog Training and Rehabilitation for their help and education along with all the members who attended the training. We look forward to applying what we learned to our GSDs!