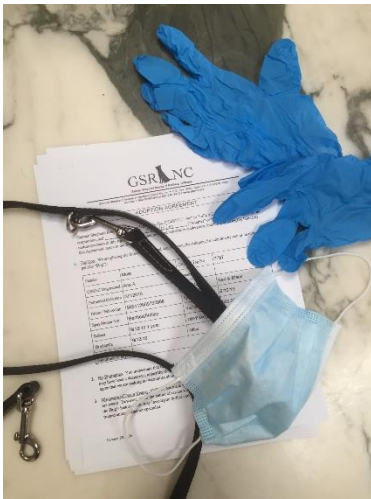


Roxie's "New Age" adoption

Managing adoptions in the age of COVID-19

When potential adopters Dan and Loretta told Lee E. they were interested in seeing Roxie; Lee arranged for a meeting. As an Adoption Counselor, it is Lee's job to help Dan and Loretta find their perfect new family member. The plan was for Lee to meet Roxie's fosters, Kelsey K and Vidhur V, at Dan and Loretta's home. They would meet Roxie and, if all went well, Lee would fill out the paperwork with them and Roxie would have a new home! The only wrinkle? COVID-19.



After recommendations for limiting gatherings made us suspend adoption days, we temporarily suspended processing potential adopters (PAs) while we came up with some plans for how to do it. At issue were the home visits, a crucial part of the PA evaluation process, and introducing PAs to adoptable dogs. How could these be done safely?

We quickly turned to technology and home visits became "virtual." Using phones and computers to video conference, Adoption Counselors (ACs) have the PAs walk around their homes, pointing out the dog's environment and talking about how they'll integrate the dog into their lives. They then show the ACs the yard and, critically, the fence. PAs even stand next to the fence so ACs can confidently judge its height. Along with extensive phone interviews, this gives the ACs enough information to accurately evaluate the PAs.

Lee had done the home visit for Dan and Loretta before the pandemic hit. Now Lee was faced with figuring out how to responsibly introduce Roxie to the PAs. Lee, Kelsey and Vidhur came up with a plan.

The safe approach to PA-dog introductions mimics what we've all heard: wear protective gear (gloves and masks), keep your distance and wash your hands. Be conscientious and think about routes of transmission; don't share items like leashes.

Lee, Kelsey and Vidhur decided to meet at Dan and Loretta's home. Rather than a tour of the house they all went through a side gate straight to the back yard. Roxie and the PAs got along famously, and it was clear the adoption was going to happen.

Normally, adoption paperwork is completed at Adoption Days, so Lee hadn't been familiar with how it was done. Lee got a crash course, printed out all the paperwork at home, and helped the adopters sign on the dotted line.



Many people sheltering at home are realizing this is a great time to introduce a new dog into their lives, whether as a permanent family member or as a foster. GSRNC is fielding a lot of applications and despite the challenges we expect to adopt out lots of GSDs in the coming months.