ADOPTION COUNSELING

Adoption Counselors (ACs) are the Cupids of GSRNC; their job is to make good matches. However, instead of a bow and arrow, they utilize a list of questions and good observation skills. Their job is to learn everything they can regarding a Potential Adopter (PA) in order to determine if the PA will be a good fit for one of our dogs, and if so, which dogs would best fit their experience and life style.

We currently have twelve Adoption Counselors with one doubling as the Adoption Counselor Coordinator (ACC). When and application comes in the ACC reviews it for any obvious red flags such as the dog will sleep in the garage, their only experience is raising a rat, (no, really, that happened!), the fence is only 4 feet high, they want to get a dog as a gift for someone else, and the list goes on... These will get a polite refusal from the ACC, perhaps suggesting they look at a different breed (or maybe a gold fish).

The applications that pass are sent on to an AC, who lives in the same area as the potential adopter. They look through the application and then call the PA to get more in-depth information and to set up a date for a Home Visit (HV). The HV may be done virtually, if necessary, but actual visits are preferable. Believe it or not, some people lie on their applications! In one case, the home visit revealed that the PA did not have a fence, there was trash and vehicle parts all over the yard, and one of the children confided that grandma had set fire to the house! Obviously, they didn't get a dog.

Some of our ACs have several years of experience, while a couple are still in training. All agree that adoption counseling is very rewarding. They enjoy meeting new PAs and hearing the stories about the previous German Shepherds that made them life-long GSD fans.

Finalizing an adoption makes the job worthwhile. Nothing beats seeing the smiles on the adopters' faces as they take their new family member home. The dogs even seem to smile as they head off for their new life with a loving family. It makes for a job well done and another dog saved!

It can also be tough, at times. It's always hard having to say no. Especially when an adopter has their heart set on a specific dog but the AC knows the dog is not a good fit. The decision is always made according to the best interest of the dog. If the dog isn't a good fit for an adopter, it will most likely be returned to us and nobody feels good about that.

GSRNC has had over 5,000 successful adoptions, thanks to our ACs. Some of the connections made with adopters become long-term relationships, with the adopter sending updates and photos of their adopted pup. It's the icing on the cake!