



*Allies for Greyhounds*

*P.O. Box 63*

*Grandville, MI 49468-0063*

*866.929.3647 www.afgwm.org*

## **Allies for Greyhounds Meet & Greet FAQ & Guidelines**

### **Introduction**

Meet & Greet events assist us in placing greyhounds into their forever home. The more events we do helps to drive adoptions, and that's why we need your help. Allies for Greyhounds relies on its volunteer network to reach out to the public to share their knowledge and experiences with greyhounds so that others can find out all the joys of adopting a greyhound of their own.

Helping out or hosting an event on your own may seem like a daunting task, and that may make you feel hesitant to offer assistance. Perhaps you're worried you'll be expected to help every weekend or at every event. Or maybe there's a fear that you'll be asked a question about the breed that you won't have an answer to. Don't worry! You are not alone. Most volunteers feel this way in the beginning, but after taking part at a few events you will quickly find out how easy and fun they are to do.

Even if you aren't ready to take on a Meet & Greet event of your own any help is always appreciated. You'd be surprised at how happy volunteers are to have an extra hand to help hold a leash if only for an hour or two. It's a great opportunity for you and your own greyhound to come out and visit others.

### **What's involved?**

A typical day at a Meet & Greet goes like this: you'll arrive a few minutes before the event start time to set up. Most events start at 11:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. Being on time is important as potential adopters often come out to see specific dogs if they are scheduled to attend an event. Avoid canceling a Meet & Greet as much as possible, but we understand that unexpected events come up. If you know in advance that you will not be able to attend let us know so we can reach out to others to see if we can get coverage for the event or update our event calendars for cancellations.

## **Items you'll need**

If you decide to host an event you will be given a Meet & Greet box. Inside the box will be most of the items that are needed for an event. Additional items are listed for your benefit but our not required. We do ask that you provide your own card table to display the items.

### Meet & Greet Box

- Brochures
- Business cards
- Donation jar

### Optional Items

- Blanket for the dogs
- Print-outs of the available hounds (or bring an iPad, Nook, Kindle, etc.)
- X-Pen
- Dog treats
- Water bowl
- Clean-up items for accidents and potty breaks
- Chair for yourself
- Snacks/drinks (follow store policies)
- A copy of one of the required reading books: Adopting the Racing Greyhound, Retired Racing Greyhounds for Dummies, or The Best Finish: Adopting a Retired Racing Greyhound
- Canopy for outdoor events
- Event signage

While policies vary from store to store it is always helpful to have proof of vaccinations for the hounds. This includes personal hounds along with foster dogs. Copies of vaccination records can be obtained from the kennel. These can be printed out and carried in, faxed, or emailed to the store if needed. Contact the store manager a few days prior to the event to verify if records are required.

## **Setting up**

Check with store personnel to find out where they would like you to set up at. Most locations will have you set up in the same area each time, but for special events you may be required to set up in a different spot. When weather permits setting up outside is a great option as this catches more people coming in and out of the store that otherwise may not see you, and it is also a great aid in getting donations.

## **Guide to conduct**

Allies for Greyhounds, Inc. is a 501c3 non-profit greyhound adoption group. Although we are a not-for-profit group think of it as representing a business, and by doing so we want to maintain a level of professionalism when conducting a Meet & Greet. Keep in mind that this is a benefit to both parties. Event locations are helping us out by giving us a venue to showcase the hounds and

we help bring in customers by listing events on our website. Being courteous at all times to the customers and staff will leave a lasting impression with the store management. This helps us to be invited to special store events that others may not have the privilege to attend.

Observe all store policies. Since events last 3-4 hours you may want to bring something to drink along with some snack items, but check with the store to see if there are any issues. Having a few small items generally isn't an issue, but bringing in a bag full of hamburgers and fries could be. Besides, the hounds will be more focused on your food rather than trying to win over potential adopters!

With greyhounds there is naturally much debate (and opinions!) in regards to the racing industry. Regardless of your personal beliefs Allies for Greyhounds takes a neutral stance to racing and we ask that you uphold that stance as an AFG representative. By being neither for nor against racing it has allowed our group greater outreach to the racing industry which in turn helps us in adopting more dogs. The subject will come up at nearly every event. Most people will ask if the greyhounds are "rescues." It is preferable to use the term "retrieved" or "rehomed" instead of rescued. Another common reply you can use is to simply state that they are all retired racers.

### **Common questions**

You're probably concerned that you will be asked thousands of questions about the greyhound breed that you won't know. Don't worry! You'll be surprised to see that most questions people have are generally the same:

- How old are they when they retire?
- How long do they live?
- Do they get along with kids, dogs, or cats?
- What's the process for adopting?
- Do you need a fenced in yard?
- What are the adoption fees?
- Why do they wear muzzles?

The FAQ page listed on the website is a good source to use. You can print it out along with the Greyhound Guide .pdf file located at the bottom of the FAQ page. If you don't have all the answers to their questions it's okay! Just tell the person you're not sure. This is a great opportunity to hand them a brochure and direct them to look for more information on our website. It's best to be honest and tell the person you don't know rather than taking a chance of misinforming them by mistake. You can also direct them to use the Contact Form on the website to ask any unanswered questions they may have.

When it comes to questions about the adoption process explain the following: The adoption process starts by filling out an application at our website. An AFG representative will contact you within 1-2 business days. We will conduct a background check which may mean contacting your landlord to verify that you may own a dog, reference checks, and contacting your veterinarian to find out how knowledgeable they are about the greyhound breed. Once the background check is completed we will contact you to schedule an in-home visit. At the in-home

AFG volunteers will come out with hounds you have indicated interest in on your application, if they are still available for adoption, as well as dogs we feel may be a good fit for your particular home environment. You will have a chance to spend some time with the dogs and then make the decision on which hound you wish to adopt. After the decision is made you will complete the adoption paperwork and you'll have your new best friend!

Explain that the adoption fee is \$225 for a regular hound or \$325 for hounds that have been through the prison program. This in turn will lead to questions about the prison program so you'll want to tell them what the program is about and the types of commands that they learn.

You may be approached by someone asking if they can take a dog for a walk around the store. This is not recommended. Explain to them that with the busy environment you do not know how the hound may react to other animals, or they may suddenly become spooked due to a loud noise. We are simply looking out for the welfare of the hound and avoiding an unnecessary risk.

### **Be alert**

Always exercise caution with the hounds. A pet store can be an extremely busy and noisy environment that can be overwhelming to your hounds. Depending on other animals in the store, number of people, and so on it can be stressful if they aren't used to going out to public events. We want to give the public the best impression of Greyhounds and it is important to keep control of the dog(s) you are holding at all times.

Some owners may allow their dog to come running up to your hounds, and while their dog may not have any ill intent it can catch your hounds off guard and cause them to bark, snap at, or bite the other dog. This is especially so if your hounds are lying down. By the end of the event they will be worn out and want to lie down (okay, by the end of hour 2 they will be worn out. They are greyhounds after all!). Attempt to stop the person approaching you before they get too close. Simply ask them to give you a chance to get your hounds up. If you do not have an X-Pen and your dogs are on leash take out the slack on their leash. Remember to keep a slipknot around your wrist at all times and never tie a leash off to something.

Use caution if a person wants to pet a dog that is lying down. Ask them to give you a moment to get your hound up and explain to them the reasons why. These opportunities can be used as a learning experience for them.

### **Number of hounds to bring**

There is no minimum requirement on how many greyhounds there should be at an event. Obviously having a few hounds helps draw people in. It's a great feeling to see that look on a person's face when they see a greyhound pack with a multitude of colors and sizes. While we always want to have as many adoptable hounds at events as possible it is perfectly acceptable to do an event with only your personal hounds.

There is too much of a good thing, however! If multiple volunteers plan on coming out to an event coordinate with one another to establish how many people will be there and how many hounds they will be bringing. Although potential adopters (and owners as well!) get a kick out of seeing a large pack of greyhounds together, the store management may not feel the same way. Having too many hounds can lead to blocking an aisle or section of product making it difficult for customers to shop. It can also make it rough for volunteers when it comes to untangling leashes all day long!

### **Donations**

Be sure to thank everyone that makes a donation. Any money that is received can be turned into the kennel or an AFG area representative. On occasion people may donate treats, food, toys, etc. These items can be turned in along with any donation monies.

### **Be patient**

Events can be hit and miss on the number of people that stop by. Weather, sporting events, and holidays play a big part in store traffic. One weekend you may be flooded with donations only to receive a few dollars at the next event. It can also feel as if you're hosting events and not seeing adoption results. Of course it feels good to know that you talked with someone and helped them make the decision to adopt a greyhound, but don't get discouraged if results seem low. It may take hosting an event a couple of times before you see feedback. And keep in mind that greyhounds are not for everybody. People will show a lot of interest at the event and you'll feel like "Yes! They're going to adopt for sure!" only to never hear from them again. Many realize once they get home that a greyhound may not be right for their home, or perhaps they aren't ready for any breed of dog at all. Don't give up!

### **Ready to go?**

Volunteering can be very hard work, but the rewards are well worth it. If you're still a little unsure of it all try assisting at an event for an hour or two. There are no obligations for coming out. We want it to be an enjoyable experience for both you and your hounds.

There are several ways to reach out to us for more information or to find out where you can help at. The best way is to send us a message through our contact form on the website. From there we can get you in contact with area members and what you can do to help out.

Allies for Greyhounds wouldn't exist without its wonderful volunteers and we would love for you to be part of our family!