

Like *Scream* Banshee

29 Days of Tips & Tales to Keep Your
Sanity As a Doggie Foster Parent

WITH A 29-DAY DOGS DESERVE BETTER
AND FOSTER DOG DIARY

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THE ACTIVIST FORMERLY KNOWN AS TAMMY GRIMES

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Introduction



Banshee is a male dog who's namesake is a screaming female (wait...is that me?), but so be it. He's my foster dog, whose inner scream can be heard from miles around, if anyone's listening.

I hear you Banshee. I just don't know how to help you.



Before I started Dogs Deserve Better, I didn't even know that people fostered dogs just like they foster children—except for less pay and greater rewards. But today I know there are thousands of us out there, people just like me who've undergone the ups and downs of helping homeless dogs so they don't die in

shelters or at the end of a chain.

I know it's hard. Having fostered over 100 dogs myself, I offer these tips for those of you who struggle with the difficult task, and feel like you're just not cut out for it. I hope to make fostering easier for you so you can be easier on yourself.

I also offer these tips for those of you who haven't yet dipped your toes in the foster-parent pool. I encourage you to just do it.

I wish I could claim to be the perfect doggie foster parent, but I'm not. Some days I'm all but screaming like a banshee, patience shredded, driven to the brink of insanity by my motley crew of foster dogs. I've made the journey from crazy foster parent to calm (ok, calmer) pack alpha over a period of six years, and some days it still feels like I have a ways to go. But I'm not stopping now, and neither are you if you're on this journey with me.



When I talk about my adventures in dog rescue and what I go through to foster and advocate on behalf of chained dogs, my family and friends are usually dumbfounded. They don't know why I put myself through it; sometimes I don't either.

It's certainly not for the pay.

It's certainly not for the recognition.

It's certainly not for the (un)popularity contest.

It's for them.

These dogs.

They get to me.

And I am driven to make a difference.

If you don't know me or Dogs Deserve Better, welcome to a brief look into my daily life with fostered, formerly-chained dogs, and the lessons I've learned from interacting with them. I hope to open your eyes to the pleading in theirs, and the necessity of opening our homes and hearts to a foster dog in need.

I aim to give you simple, daily tips for keeping your sanity while fostering. You are not alone in your struggles, and you are not the first one to feel you can't press on.



Worthless, his 'improved location' after my complaints...more mud and water.

I began devoting myself to chained dogs in 2002, after suffering an utter six-years in the bastions of Hell watching a chained black Labrador retriever named Worthless pace day in and day out, chained to a wooden post, 1/4 mile from my home. He was often so tangled around both the post and a nearby tree that he couldn't reach his house or any shelter from the elements.

God knows how many nights he spent shivering, huddled in

the cold and mud, unable to get himself to safety because he was shackled by a formerly 10-foot chain which had somehow become a 2-foot noose.

I felt so helpless and so hopeless watching him suffer that I was driven to do something about it. I discovered that current laws were on the side of abusers, and looking to local authorities for help got me nowhere.

I formed Dogs Deserve Better, a non-profit organization which advocates exclusively for America's chained, penned, and backyard dogs, launching myself into the adventure of a lifetime.

Today, Dogs Deserve Better employs five people and boasts over 130 volunteer area representatives in 39 states, Canada, and the Bahamas, most of whom advocate tirelessly on behalf of chained dogs. The other reps, the ones who join our quest for the 'prestige' and 'a title' soon leave in a huff, discouraged and a brief blip in history, realizing it's not fun and games down here in the chained-doggie trenches.

Most of us have quit more than once doing this, and I myself quit on a daily basis for the first six years—ok, I still quit almost every day. I just don't tell anyone. Then I get back up and start fighting all over again.

This is my story, well, 29 days of it anyway, with daily tips for you as a foster parent, and tales of foster parenting gone right or gone wrong. This is Banshee's story, the story of what he taught me, and the story of his current foster siblings.

My list of foster dogs, many of whom I can't even recall today, includes Worthless (renamed Bo), my first-ever chained-rescue and the nudger of my soul to its life's purpose. He was and will

remain forever in my heart a beautiful, ordinary, stumpy-tailed black Lab of a dog, kind and gentle, with a gratitude I found absolutely humbling and I adored him.

I do this for him; I do it for them.



Bo and I, back in 'the day.'