

## **DoodleQuest's Philosophy**

Thanks for inquiring about our guardian home process. We at DoodleQuest believe in the win, win, and win philosophy. We think we have a program where you win, your dog wins and we win. So everybody is a winner. We are so thankful for our guardian homes and are always in need of others interested in the program so that we can continue the successful way our breeding program works without ever needing to kennel raise a dog.

### **The basics**

The following is how each involved benefits:

1. We do not believe that puppies or dogs are best served by being kennel raised. Dogs are social animals that adore their families and want to be with them, involved in their daily lives and participating as loved family members. By placing them in a home environment that will be their forever home from the time they are puppies, or by placing as a young adult, we are doing our best to ensure their happiness and best start in life. We never have to kennel raise a dog by utilizing guardian homes, and we feel best about this method and how it works in our breeding program.
2. The majority of our current guardian homes were either families who could not afford to purchase a quality comfort retriever, wanted the experience of raising pups for their family without the lifetime commitment to the pups they produce or simply liked the idea of how our programs works and wanted to be a part of it with us. For those who could not afford to purchase a comfort retriever outright, the guardian home option is fantastic as the family is only required to pay a deposit of \$400 when a dog is placed with them, they receive a \$500 annual stipend after each litter of 2 or more. In essence, you get a top quality golden retriever, expenses paid during the time of the breeding years. All you invest beyond the \$400 deposit is a little time for bringing the dog to us when we need her for testing or breeding or whelping.
3. We benefit as a breeder because we do not need to have or utilize kennels. We do not have to care for more dogs than we are comfortable with or can manage easily in our own home. We know each dog has a forever home from the time they are young and a cherished member of a family. There are always a lot of questions that people have about the guardian program, and we've tried to anticipate most of those and answer them below. Hopefully the info doesn't overwhelm you. We'd rather address all the questions right upfront than to have someone feel like they weren't really aware of how it worked. And, in all honesty, it's a very simple program even though it may seem like a lot of details. Let us know if you have any other questions after reading this email.
4. Many guardian homes eventually decide they would like a puppy out of their dog. Normally most pets would be spay/neutered and the owners wouldn't have this option. With the guardian program since your dog will be having pups you will have the opportunity to see these precious puppies and get a pup if you choose to do so.

## FAQ's

*How far can I live from Lexington and still be in your guardian program?*

We ask that you live within an hour's drive of Lexington.

*What guidelines do I have to follow when raising the puppy or dog?*

1. The family needs to feed one of the foods off of the Whole Dog Journal list. These foods are high quality, all human grade, do not have fillers or by-products. We are advocates of health nutrition for dogs, and for feeding foods that will not cause health issues down the road, things like cancer or tumors or allergies, etc. The foods are easily found at most pet stores. We would recommend all dog owners to consider these foods for the lifetime health of their pet.
2. We ask the family to avoid all chemicals unless necessary, and to not give supplements or medicines unless approved by us.
3. If the dog becomes sick or injured, we need the family to notify us right away so we are involved in all decisions regarding the treatment of the dog. In many cases we can save the family a lot of money if it is a simple issue, and in other situations the treatment may need to be specific if the dog is going to be bred soon, or is pregnant.
4. We ask the family to practice safe handling of the dog. To not leave the dog outside if they are not at home. Don't let the dog sit in the back of an open pickup. Use a leash in public. Provide basic obedience training so the dog has manners. All these things should be done to protect your dog.
5. The guardian home is responsible for the transportation of the dog to us for breeding or having litters, or for the initial health testing at between 1-2 years of age.

*What age do you start breeding the dog?*

1. Most girls are fully mature by about 14 or 15 months. We will usually breed on the first heat following this age, which starts between 18 and 24 months typically.

*How long is she with you when you breed?*

1. As soon as the family is aware the dog is in heat we will have them arrange to bring the dog to us by about day 5 - 7 of the heat cycle. She will remain with us for about one week, and then they can pick her up and take her back home.

*How long is a dog pregnant?*

1. Dogs are pregnant for 63 days.

*How long do you wait between breedings?*

1. We are flexible about when the breedings are done. If you want to plan a summer vacation while your dog is with us raising her pups, we are fine with that. If the timing works better for you during the winter we are agreeable to that. The dogs generally cycle every 6 months. If your dog has had a litter and done well and you and your vet want to breed next cycle we are fine with that. If you want your girl to wait a year between cycles we are fine with that too. As long as your dog is healthy and up to having a litter

we are very flexible as to when the breeding will be done but don't want to wait more than a year between breedings unless there is a medical reason to do so.

*What happens when she is ready to have her puppies?*

We give you two options.

You can whelp and raise the pups at your house or you can bring your girl to us and we will whelp and raise the pups. We don't make you make this decision till just before your girl is due. Many choose to raise the pups at their house because they want the experience of raising pups. It is a lot of work but very rewarding.

or

You can bring your girl to us a week before she is due so she can settle in. We will whelp and raise the pups and mom will come back home when the pups are 8 weeks old.

*Can we visit her when she has the puppies if she is at your house?*

1. You and your family are welcome to visit. No other visitors are allowed due to the risk of bringing in a lethal virus to the pup. We do ask for you to wait until puppies are at least two weeks old. When the mom first has her pups she is usually totally focused on her babies. Usually by the time puppies are two weeks old the mom is ready for little breaks from the puppies and enjoys seeing her family much more than earlier in the process. She is settled into being a mom and things are much happier for all involved during the visit. We ask that you try to decrease the odds of bringing in a fatal virus by bringing in freshly washed sneakers and putting them on in the car. We will ask for you to wash your hands before handling pups.

*Does this negatively affect the dog emotionally to go from the guardian home to the breeder's home?*

1. No. There is an initial "Where is my family going?" when they bring her to us, but in every situation the dog is settled and comfortable and doing very well within an hour or two. We try very hard to give them so much attention and love the first couple days that it is a pleasant and enjoyable experience for them. This is also important as everything the mother feels causes things to happen inside her body that can affect the babies. The less stress and the more relaxed she is, the better it is for babies. So, it is very important that the guardian home not make the transition difficult for the dog. If they act upset or nervous or sad about leaving her, she will feel that even more greatly and we need to make sure that doesn't happen. Bringing her and hanging out with her for an hour or so and just pretending like it's any other visit you'd make is very important. If we can have the family sneak out so the dog isn't even aware they've left, that is usually best too. She rarely acknowledges for more than a couple of minutes that anything has happened.

*What happens during pregnancy and what do I have to do differently with the dog?*

1. Pregnancy is actually very easy. The dog may act a little more tired, or not eat normally for a few weeks. The last couple weeks of pregnancy she is usually becoming hungrier and sleeps more as time progresses. Otherwise, normal activity is typical and it is important to continue with walking the dog right up to the end. This helps during delivery. Being in shape is always best. Normal play and romping and running during the first half of pregnancy is great. After that, we limit activity to walks on a leash and

no ball chasing type of activities. We suggest adding ¼ cup of yogurt or cottage cheese every other day and a raw egg twice a week during the last 2 weeks of pregnancy to give extra nutrition.

2. No chemicals may be given during pregnancy. We suggest no vaccinations, worming and heartworm when possible during this time. If there is an illness or injury we ask to be involved in determining how she is treated.

*What happens if the puppy gets sick or injured while in the guardian home's care?*

1. While the dog is in your care and home, any illness or injury that happens is your financial responsibility, just as it would be if you had a non guardian pet. We need to be involved in knowing what is going on and determining medications, but the family is responsible for those expenses. We have your dog's best interest at heart so it is good to have us to consult with. If you are negligent and your dog is lost or dies when in your care we will ask for you to be responsible for our financial loss. If your dog is injured or dies and can no longer participate in the program and you were being responsible we will not hold you liable for the loss. Bad things can happen to anybody. Fortunately, we have never had a serious injury or loss to any dog in our guardian program.

*What expenses do we pay for and what things does the breeder pay for?*

1. The guardian home pays for any normal care items for the dog. Food, dishes, leashes, beds, normal vaccinations or wormings, toys, etc.

2. We pay for all expenses related to health testing for breeding purposes, all breeding expenses and litter expenses, and we provide the guardian home an stipend of \$500 after each litter. This stipend normally more than covers all typical annual expenses, extra foods given during pregnancy, plus the gas and time for bringing the dog to us. We've worked this amount out carefully and rounded it up quite a bit to make sure it more than covers normal things.

*How many litters do you usually breed before retiring the dog?*

1. We contract for up to three litters. Sometimes we don't breed at all. So the number of litters depends on each individual case. We consider a litter 2 or more pups so if a mom has only one pup we don't count it as a litter.

*Who pays for the spay surgery?*

Our stipend of \$500 should more than cover the spay costs and normal vet care for a year. We suggest you her time to recover from the last litter and have her hormone levels return to normal before spaying. This is usually about 2 months after puppies are weaned.

*What happens if the dog doesn't pass a health test like you want them to for becoming a breeding dog?*

1. Our standards are very high. Remember, that breeding quality and pet quality are two different things. Just because a dog may not be the best breeding candidate doesn't mean she isn't the perfect pet. Your dog can pass all the tests and we still may decide to remove it from the program. We aren't bashful about removing dogs from our program.

If we release your dog from the breeding program you can spay your dog. You will still have gotten a quality dog at a very low price.

*What if I have a male guardian dog?*

Male guardian dogs are usually used for breeding after 18-24 months. We ask that you offer us up to 2 breedings per girl per year at no charge. Most of our guardian boys aren't used for breeding very often. If we use your boy for more than 2 breeding we offer a \$50 stipend for each breeding. Most of the time the dogs will need to be with us less than 24 hours.

*Where can I board my dog?*

We offer boarding for dogs that we have placed at a very reasonable rate. If you ever need boarding we would love the opportunity to watch your dog. It is always great to have the opportunity to play with one of the dogs we produced. We love the additional opportunity to interact with the dog and family.

*What happens if we join the guardian home for a quality discounted dog but don't intend to honor the breeding contract?*

1. We make a great commitment emotionally and financially to our owners and guardian dogs. We ask that you only enter into our guardian program if you are willing to make the same level of commitment to your dog and to us. Unfortunately, we have been forced to put a penalty for those who break our contact as we find many want the discounted dog but have no intentions of honoring the the contract. We want to work with you and for this to be a win, win, win for all involved. We work hard to select the best of the best of our dogs for our guardian homes. We have a financial penalty to discourage those that would want to get a discounted dog and break the contract by using the dog for their own breeding program. If you are willing to make an honest commitment to us and our breeding program we will be are very flexible and will do all we can to make this program work for you and your dog.

We don't want to be controlling or intrusive into a family's life. We consider our dogs and owners like extended family and enjoy the extra interaction we have with them in the guardian program. We are very fair and reasonable and want to work with you to make this a win, win and win situation for all of us. We hope that you will consider partnering with us.