



## *Signature Labradoodle Guardian Program*

We do not believe that puppies or dogs are best served by being kennel raised. 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.

- The majority of guardian homes are families who cannot afford to purchase a Labradoodle. There are others who simply like the idea of how our program works and want to be a part of it with us. For those who could not afford to purchase a Labradoodle outright, the guardian home option is a fantastic way to have a beautiful Labradoodle.
- 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.

There are always a lot of questions that people have about the guardian program. The collection of questions and answers below are our best attempt to address all questions right up front so someone does not feel like they weren't really aware of how this program works. Hopefully the information doesn't overwhelm you. It really is a very simple program even though it may seem like it has a lot of details. The main thing to remember is, if we as a people truly reject the idea of puppy mills, to my knowledge there is no better way than this guardian program to breed dogs in a humane, loving environment. People will find a way to get a dog for their family, and most people unknowingly choose puppy mills because it is the cheapest way to get dogs to the public. We value our dogs as family members and we hope that you can see how this program benefits families and our four-legged friends!

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

- Guardian families must feed a dog food approved by us. We are advocates of health nutrition for dogs, and for feeding foods that will not cause health issues, things like cancers, tumors, allergies, etc. The foods we ask you to feed are easily found, but are holistic, wheat and corn free, no by-products or fillers, etc.
- We require the family to avoid all chemicals unless necessary, and to not give supplements or medicines unless approved by us. This includes flea, heartworm, or any other meds. We use Advantage and Frontline for the flea medications and your Vet prescribes the heartworm medication.
- 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.
- 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 things that should be done to protect your dog anyway.

- The guardian home is responsible for the transportation of the dog to us when needed for breeding, litters, or health testing. This is the most inconvenient part of the guardian responsibilities. Please think through this carefully. We will not meet families or pick up dogs ourselves. This is the guardian home responsibility and part of how they earn the dog through the program. We do expect that the dog only come to us within 1-2 days of when needed, and be picked up 1-2 days after they are ready to go. We are not a boarding facility and have dogs coming and going all the time. Should you be unable to drop off or pick up your dog, we can usually arrange for someone else to do so at the cost of \$100 per trip.

#### **What age do you start breeding the dog?**

- We will usually breed on the first heat following when the dog reaches 12 months of age. If a dog goes into heat at any time beyond 12 months, you must notify us immediately so we can assess whether or not we will breed. This will depend on how many other girls are cycling and having litters, as well as the individual dogs age and situation. We would also like to be notified when your puppy has its first cycle, somewhere around 9-12 months of age, so we can have a calculated guess on when her next cycle will be.

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

- As soon as the family is aware the dog is in heat we will have them arrange to bring the dog to us by 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. Again, please be aware that we will not house the dog for long periods before or after the times they are needed. If you are unable to drop off or pick up the dog within 1-2 days of when needed, you will be required to find someone else who can do so for you, or we can ask one of our dog transporters if they are available for \$100 per trip.

#### **How long is a dog pregnant?**

- Dogs are pregnant for 63 days.

#### **How long is she with you when she has the litter?**

- She will come to us between 7 - 9 days before she is due with her litter. This gives her time to settle into our house, get used to seeing the whelping box. It is important that she becomes very comfortable with being in our house and being with us all the time. We do not want the mom to feel threatened by us when she is getting ready to whelp. She will go home after puppies are weaned. This will be between 6 and 7 weeks of age.

#### **Can we visit her when she has the puppies?**

- We do not allow guardian homes to visit until puppies are at least 4 weeks of age. Please be aware though that no handling of puppies will be allowed. You may visit the guardian dog and spend some time with her if she is doing well with leaving her puppies for short periods of time. We do try to limit this visit to one hour as our schedule is very busy and puppies are not best served by being away from mom for longer than that.

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

- 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 in our house 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?**

- Pregnancy is actually very easy. I have a list of what happens each week during the development of puppies, and I give that to our guardian homes at the time we begin breeding. 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 more hungry 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.
- No chemicals may be given during pregnancy. We have to be notified immediately of any illness or injury so we can be involved in determining how she is treated.

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

- While the dog is in guardian's care and home, any illness or injury that happens is their financial responsibility. We must be involved in treatment plans and know what is going on and determining medications, but the family is responsible for those expenses. Health insurance is recommended during her breeding years. This insurance is for your protection because these dogs are extremely valuable as breeders.

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

- The guardian home pays for any normal care items. Food, dishes, leashes, beds, normal vaccinations or wormings, flea meds, heartworm meds, toys, grooming needs etc. If the dog needs meds due to worms, illness, infection or anything unrelated to pregnancy, it is the guardian's responsibility to pay for those expenses.
- We pay for all expenses related to health testing for breeding purposes, all breeding expenses and litter expenses.

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

- We contract for four litters. We may only breed three, but we have the option of four. We are concerned for the well-being of our program dogs. If we find that the girl has problems with deliveries or it would be unhealthy for them to breed again, we will stop the breeding program with her and she will be yours 😊

### **Who pays for the spay surgery?**

- We pay for the spay surgery after the girl has had time to recover from the last litter and have her hormone levels return to normal. This is usually about 2 months after puppies are weaned. We only pay up to \$200 for the surgery, so if you choose a vet that charges an amount that is more than the average we've found throughout Oregon, be aware you'll be paying the difference. The average spay fee is between \$125 and \$175, but some vets charge as much as \$400.

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

- At this stage in our business, we are typically keeping the puppy in our house and not sending her to a guardian home until preliminary testing is done. We are very careful to know the lines we work with, and it's not typical to have a health test come back so poorly that we have been unable to use the dog as a breeding dog. 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 they aren't the perfect pet. Most of the testing we do is very specific, and we have already thoroughly screened the line and health testing of parent dogs, so it's not likely we'll encounter a problem that would cause us to say we can't breed with that dog.
- However, if you are interested in taking a chance and want to raise the dog from the earliest point possible, in the right circumstances, we might have a family take a puppy before testing. The biggest problem with this is that if the girl were to have borderline tests and we decided not to use her in our breeding program, it makes financial sense for us to sell her as a pet. We recognize the hardship on the family and the dog if we were to have to sell the puppy. That is the reason we are choosing at this time to primarily wait for the preliminary testing between 4 & 6 months. If the guardian does not want to give up their pet and a dog is not utilized as a breeding dog for ANY reason by the time they are 2 years of age, the guardian home would be responsible to pay \$1,000 and pay the spay/neuter surgery for the dog.

**What are the grooming requirements and do you want us to keep the dog clipped a certain way?**

- We ask that families keep the dog in one of the typical cuts for a Labradoodle. The most important part is the head and ears. We want them to have the look a doodle is supposed to have, especially when they come to visit us the first time around 9 months of age as I try to get a lot of pictures of them for the website. It's very easy and most groomers will do okay if given specifics when you take the dog in. If you do the grooming or cutting yourself, it's not that difficult and I can give specifics on how to do it. It's actually quite fun. I enjoy my time clipping away at the coat. :)
- We do require that the dog be kept groomed and matt free. If you are unable to keep the coat in good shape yourself, you are required to use a groomer to do so. If the dog is brought to us with a matted coat, or a coat that is in bad shape, we have the right to take them in to our own groomer and have them shaved down or worked on, but you will be responsible to reimburse us for that expense before the dog returns to you. Guardian dogs are ambassadors for our program. It is important that they are maintained and not matted and in bad shape.

Let me know if you have other questions.

Amy Lindgren  
Signature Labradoodles