

## ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR GREYHOUND

Greyhounds are gentle, quiet and docile, get along great with other dogs, and are quite social and loving with people. They also enjoy being with you. For many reasons, greyhounds are an ideal breed to take with you when you go places. There are many activities you can enjoy with your greyhound. Here are some suggestions:

### ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY

A therapy dog is a dog trained to provide affection and comfort to people in hospitals, retirement homes, nursing homes, schools (paws for reading), and in stressful situations such as after natural disasters. With their loving and gentle temperaments, greyhounds are ideal for this much-needed work. Our prison-trained greyhounds are specifically trained to have all the skills necessary for therapy work.

Many of our adopters participate in animal assisted therapy. A relatively new thing that we do is to take the greyhounds for the school reading programs where a child can be assisted with reading skill by being with and reading to your dog (instead of the much more stressful, reading in front of their class). The possibilities of what you and your greyhound can do are endless! Animal assisted therapy is one of the most important ways you and your greyhound can give back to your community, and you both will enjoy it as well. For more information on having your greyhound certified and becoming involved in pet therapy, you may want to contact:

Paws for Friendship at [www.pawsforfriendshipinc.org](http://www.pawsforfriendshipinc.org)



Here is therapy greyhound, Cash, participating in a Paws for Reading program.

### **OBEDIENCE, CGC, CGCA AND AKC RALLY**

Greyhounds are eager to please and quite intelligent. They do well with positive reinforcement and quickly learn their basic commands. All of our prison-trained greyhounds learn these commands plus a few more prior to graduation, and are eligible for certification with their adopters. The Canine Good Citizen (CGC) program was established in 1989 by the American Kennel Club to encourage responsible dog ownership and to encourage the training of well-mannered dogs. The Community Canine title (CGCA) is another award sponsored by AKC that prison graduates should be able to perform. CGCA is similar to CGC, but your dog must walk through a crowd on a loose lead, sit, wait, stay and a few other commands, all on lead. The adopter and dog goes through a short evaluation to earn the CGC and CGCA titles. If your dog is good at obedience, and you have the time to work with him or her, you may want to try AKC Rally, in which you move through a course of numbered signs containing specific skills your dog must complete. Because your greyhound is not registered with AKC, you will need to get an AKC Canine Partner number before taking any of these tests. For complete information, please go to [www.AKC.org](http://www.AKC.org).

### **TRAVELING WITH YOUR GREYHOUND**

Because they are used to traveling from track to track in their prior careers as racing dogs, greyhounds are ideal for traveling. They love to be with you and enjoy going new places. Once they learn to hop up into your automobile, they are content to rest comfortably until they reach their destination. Many of our volunteers and adopters travel with their greyhounds.



Three greyhounds ready to go for their ride.

### **SANDY PAWS, "GREAT FUN IN THE SUN"**

The greyhound gathering closest to Florida, and the one that BAGA participates in is "**Sandy Paws**". It is held in May of each year in Jekyll Island, Georgia. Over a three-day weekend, greyhound lovers from across the Southeast enjoy walking on the beach, social gatherings (with greyhounds of course), greyhound merchandise sales, seminars, raffles, an auction of greyhound items, blessing of the hounds, a salute to seniors, bingo, greyhound games, and the crowning of the "King" and "Queen". We are honored that some of our BAGA volunteers have been recognized as "Greyhound Guardian Angels" by Sandy Paws. This honor is

reserved for those people who have worked tirelessly to help the greyhounds over the years.

Sandy Paws is the creation and labor or love of Greyhound Guardians, Inc., a group of volunteers in Jacksonville, Florida. They work all year to plan and put on this event, which has been held continuously for more than 20 years. Best of all, the proceeds of the event, after expenses, are donated to adoption groups to help more greyhounds! Since 2004, almost \$200,000 has been disbursed to greyhound charities!. You will have a wonderful time and a short vacation, and the greyhounds will be helped. For more information on attending Sandy Paws, please go to: [www.sandypaws.org](http://www.sandypaws.org).



These are a few photos from Sandy Paws.

### **LURE COURSING**

In lure coursing, dogs known as sighthounds chase an artificial lure across a field, following a pre-determined pattern. Sight hounds such as greyhounds normally do not need to be trained for lure coursing since the desire to chase a small, moving object is instinctual. (In our experience, some greyhounds are eager to chase the lure and have great fun doing so. Others have no interest, pay no attention, and wonder what the excitement is all about.) If you are planning on trying your greyhound at lure coursing, caution must be taken to

wrap your dog's front legs with "vet wrap" to insure that their dew claws do not become entangled in the cord that pulls the lure.

The American Sighthound Field Association (ASFA) certifies and holds lure coursing events. In Florida, these events are held in the winter months when it is cooler. The competitors are judged on agility, endurance, enthusiasm, and follow (pursuit of the lure). At lure coursing events, dogs compete by breed (Whippets competing with Whippets; Irish Wolfhounds with Irish Wolfhounds, Greyhounds with Greyhounds, etc.). The winner is Best of Breed. The top dogs from each breed may compete to determine the Best in Field, which is the best dog in the trial. A special "slip" collar is used to set the hounds free to course. You can find much more information on lure coursing, as well as where lure coursing meets are being held, at [www.asfa.org](http://www.asfa.org).

Below is a photo of greyhounds lure coursing. Notice that their front legs are wrapped so as not to entangle their dew claws with the cord pulling the lure.



## AGILITY

More active greyhounds will enjoy the fast paced sport of agility. This is a great way for greyhounds and their adopters to bond, get some exercise, and have some fun. Agility consists of a series of obstacles set on a prescribed course that the dog must negotiate. There are many dog training schools and associations that teach agility. You will need to have the time to regularly work with your dog on each obstacle. Most dogs love agility! It is like a doggie playground to them. If your greyhound is a more high-energy type that is always busy doing something, agility may be a great activity. Since you train your hound to do the obstacles with treats, food motivated hounds will excel at this fast sport.



## **PET COSTUME CONTESTS**

With their gentle natures and calm temperaments, greyhounds are up for anything, including being dressed in funny costumes! There are many Pet costume contests in the fall throughout the area.

## **BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS**

Many Catholic and some Anglican churches celebrate St. Francis of Assisi Day on or near October 4<sup>th</sup> each year. St. Francis is the patron saint of animals. Official blessing services are held where you can take your greyhound. Many churches give a St. Francis pendant to participating animals. A prison trained greyhound is perfect for this event. In the photo below, the priest is blessing Popeye, the greyhound.



## **GREAT GLOBAL GREYHOUND WALK**

This is a worldwide annual event that celebrates all sight hound breeds, especially greyhounds. It is usually held in late September of each year. On this special day, thousands of sight hounds come together across the globe to raise awareness and showcase these gentle, loving dogs as wonderful family pets. The walk builds awareness, creates connections, and celebrates the joy of sharing life with a sight hound. For more information and to find an event near you, please go to: [Greatglobalgreyhoundwalk.co.uk](http://Greatglobalgreyhoundwalk.co.uk).



## **FESTIVALS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS**

There are many outdoor festivals and community events where you can take your greyhound. There are many of these festivals in the area, especially on the

weekends in the winter months when it is not too hot for your greyhound. You will enjoy going and the exercise is good for your greyhound. We have been to many festivals over the years. Here we are with our greyhounds at a couple of them.



## **BOATING**

Greyhounds are so docile and easy going that they are even very relaxed on a boat! In our area, boating is a favorite sport because we are near many lakes and the Gulf. If you have a boat, or a friend with one, you might want to try taking your greyhound along. You will need safety vests, which are available on line.



Here are Mario and Marlow (notice how calm they are) and Stretch enjoying being on boats.

## **“YAPPY” HOURS**

Since greyhounds are calm, social, and quiet, they are an ideal breed to take to social gatherings where a group of people get together with their dogs to have dinner in an outdoor dining restaurant. The prison trained greyhounds are really wonderful since they are trained to lie down on command. Many restaurants have these dining areas and will accommodate patrons and their dogs.



There are many more activities that you can do with your greyhound. Actually, pretty much anything you can think of to do or any place you want to go, your greyhound will be happy to accompany you. Besides being the world's fastest "couch potato", they are also the world's best companions!