

## A dog's best friend

By Alvaro Macias

In the popular TV series *The Simpsons*, the family adopts a retired racing greyhound who eventually makes a very entertaining transition to a pet. Santa's Little Helper, as he is named by Bart Simpson, eventually wins over the family and is now a staple of this fictional family that shined a light at the very real transition these amazing dogs go through after their days of racing.

Ascentra Credit Union's Karen Kolwey has become a "little helper" herself for greyhounds from our region. Karen serves as co-chair on the board of directors for Quad Cities Greyhound Adoption and takes care of Kennel Operations of the Maysville, Iowa facility where these dogs are housed and cared for until they are adopted. In 2006 she started volunteering when her daughter graduated high school and she figured it was time to start volunteering in an area she was interested in. She started volunteering one shift a week at the kennel where she cared for the greyhounds.



"As time passed I started helping do repairs at the building, assisting with medical issues, transporting greyhounds to appointments or bringing them down from the track or farms to our adoption program," Karen explains.

When Quad Cities Greyhound Adoption moved to Maysville near her home, the timing and location were perfect for Karen. The plight of the retired racer was always something that interested Karen. Little did she know that she would love this breed of dog.



"Seeing these gentle souls transition from racer to pampered pet fills me with pride to have been able to be a part of their journey 'home.' It is also just an awesome experience to be a part of a 100% volunteer group, who do it all for one purpose—greyhounds. That feeling is indescribable," Karen says.

Karen says that Greyhounds make excellent pets. Being that they have been cared for by handlers and trainers while involved in racing, these dogs are very people oriented, calm and loving. Most ride very well in a car, and like to go places. They enjoy any activity where they are with the family "including laundry and dishes. They are very devoted companions in most cases, which is why you add a pet to the family, isn't it?" she asks.

Greyhounds are referred to as the "45 mph couch potato." They are sprinters, not long distance runners. They sleep much of the time especially after vigorous exercise. They need adequate exercise, just like any other breed, but not any more than any other breed. Walks are very good and a fenced yard is preferable. A greyhound can go from 0-35 in 3 strides, so they

should never be tethered. They also are not “outdoor” dogs, and must be kept primarily as an indoor dog - low body fat makes it difficult to adjust to temperature extremes.

According to Karen, a greyhound is no more expensive to adopt than any other canine and are probably much cheaper. “There are few places you can adopt a purebred dog for \$250, spayed/neutered, all shots up to date, teeth cleaned and a specially made sight hound collar and lead,” she adds.

She encourages people to visit the organization’s website at [www.qcgreyhoundadoption.org](http://www.qcgreyhoundadoption.org).

“There you can see the greyhounds that are available for adoption, loads of info about greyhounds, meet and greet dates, fundraisers for the greys and everything in between. If you want even more info, the kennel phone number is there and also the phone number for the adoption coordinator. I’d say you could ask me, but you’d be in for a very long conversation,” Karen says.