



October 5, 2023

On behalf of the Mid-Atlantic German Shepherd Rescue and in light of recent activity surrounding the First Family's dog, Commander, and his behavior, we feel it's necessary to speak on behalf of the German Shepherd breed.

We mustn't let the actions or behaviors of a few misjudged or misbehaving German Shepherds cloud judgment or perception of the breed as a whole, as not all Shepherds, (or any dog for that matter), are the same. Some GSD's are playful or friendly, while others are more reserved, timid or not friendly at all. Personalities of the breed run the gamut, but an innate top trait we must observe is that **they are a guardian breed that needs consistency, structure, and boundaries**. Without these parameters, the dog and the family are set up for failure rather than success. Having any dog or pet is a responsibility that requires time, dedication, and knowledge of the breed/animal. When the Mid-Atlantic German Shepherd Rescue places a GSD into a home, the vetting process to put the right dog into the right home is as much of a science as it is an art, something we take very seriously.

***Below is a list of things to consider prior to getting a German Shepherd:***

1. **KNOWLEDGE:** Know the breed and what they have been bred to do. Know what affect your behaviors have on the dog. Know how to be a leader and what is expected of you. Be the leader and allow the dog to be a pack member and not the leader.
2. **TIME:** German Shepherds are considered family members and require just as much time as any other family member of yours, so, do you have adequate time to dedicate to the dog? This includes, but not limited to, training, grooming, mental stimulation and playing.
3. **RESPONSIBILITY:** You are responsible for knowing the traits of your German Shepherd. It's your responsibility to lead and teach the dog what is permitted and what is not. You are responsible for their behavior, good or bad. Know your dog and protect and guide him responsibly.
4. **BEHAVIOR:** What reasonable expectations do you have for the dog? Is your lifestyle conducive to enhancing and supporting those behaviors, and properly correcting when they are not?
5. **OWNERSHIP:** German Shepherd Dogs' are very much a velcro dog, they love the whole family, but 'attach' to one person. Will it be your responsibility to provide leadership for the dog or will you expect someone else to fulfill your obligations to your dog?
6. **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY:** Do you have the financial stability to support all of the needs of a German Shepherd including, but not limited to: veterinary needs, training, food, grooming, treats/toys and mental enrichment?

We feel it's important to shed light on the necessities as well as the tools that are available to any person or family willing to open their home to a rescue dog. Regardless of breed, rescue or breeder purchase, ultimately nearly everyone can be successful and experience the joys of owning a dog if they are willing and able to learn the necessary skills and be personally responsible for doing what's right for the dog.

Sincerely,  
The Board of Directors,  
**Mid-Atlantic German Shepherd Rescue**