

Maryland Independent

Friday, January 1, 2010

Pet Sitting Company Has It Ruff

Walking onto the job site and getting greeted excitedly every morning by the employer happens rarely in most jobs but when your employers are house pets, it's an everyday occurrence, according to Terry Robinson of 4 Pets' Sake dog walking and cat-sitting services.

Since 2003, Robinson has owned the pet-sitting business based in Fort Washington, and, after having worked office jobs in Washington, D.C., Robinson said it was a great move.

The main difference between working with people and working with pets, according to Robinson, is "[pets] are always excited to see you. It's almost like you're their favorite person on earth," she said.

Robinson has 14 dog walkers/ pet sitters employed and about 75 percent of her business is in Charles County.

Daphne for example, a rescued great Dane lives with her owners in Waldorf and is walked by 4 Pets' Sake employee Heather Moose three times a week. Daphne used to be walked more before her owner retired.

Owner Richard Stickels said he and his wife Elizabeth Allison both worked all day long and Stickels said it wasn't right to leave Daphne alone.

For the past several years, 4 Pets' Sake has come to walk Daphne. Stickels said the pet sitting service has excellent service and is very flexible. "All the dog walkers we've had have been great."

For the past couple of years Daphne's walker has been Heather Moose of California. "She's just really sweet, a really good walker and always happy to see you," Moose said of Daphne.

After walking through the Waldorf neighborhood, Moose brought Daphne back home for a treat and what she said would be a three-hour nap for Daphne.

Not for Moose, who would turn around and walk two Boston terriers who live in the same neighborhood. Moose said she walks about 10 to 12 dogs a day.

Puppy play dates

But not all dogs are up for a walk. Robinson said dog walkers will sometimes just play in the backyard with a dog or whatever the dog's normal routine may be.



Staff photo by EMILY BARNES

Heather Moose, a 4 Pets' Sake dog walker takes Daphne on her walk in Waldorf on a recent Tuesday morning.

The walkers will reinforce any training that owners are working on and also clean up those little or sometimes big accidents that happen when puppies can't quite hold it.

Other services the company provides for a fee are transportation to and from veterinarians' offices; midday puppy visits, which include a walk and praise during potty training; in-home visits for pets who can't go on vacations; and boarding at 4 Pets' Sake.

According to Robinson, all employees are trained and certified in pet first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Robinson said 4 Pets' Sake is bonded and insured and is a member of Pet Sitters International, The National Association of Professional Pet Sitters and the Southern Maryland Association of Professional Pet Sitting.

Robinson said her business works with other businesses in the surrounding area rather than being in direct competition. She said she does not walk or sit for all animals, those that require live feedings for example, but if a reptile needs services, she can refer customers to other firms who are more comfortable with the not-so-furry animals.

Robinson said she loves her job and feels like she learns from her four-legged friends not to take life for granted.

"I am more positive because of [the animals]. Every day is a gift," she said.

-Gretchen Phillips
Maryland Independent Newspaper