

Dispatch from Real World Canine

THE RWC TEAM



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FROM PSYCHO PUPS TO PERFECT PETS

The RWC Story

The path to RWC was a convoluted one, starting more than 20 years ago. Although we did not know it at the time, we kept adopting dogs that were "difficult," to say the least. We have had dogs who had food, human, and dog aggression, hyperactivity (with a heart condition), leash reactivity, and destructive separation anxiety. We certainly knew how to pick 'em!

Friends and family wondered why we kept doing this. The answer is so we can save a dog who has been failed by a human being somewhere along the line. Real World Canine is the culmination of that journey.

The seed of this journey was sown 22 years ago with Sapphi (RIP). She was a terrier mix who had been severely abused. She had been hit so hard that her retina was detached and she eventually underwent an enucleation surgery. Perhaps not surprisingly, she was extremely aggressive toward men and other dogs. We were not told this when we adopted her.

After bonding with us, she developed extreme separation anxiety. At the time, we were completely out of our depth with Sapphi, but taking her back to the shelter was not an option, as we were her last placement. Her next stop was a needle.

The first couple of years with Sapphi were challenging to say the least. We couldn't have friends over, walks could only happen late at night when no one was around, and we couldn't leave her alone at home for long because she was very destructive.

We learned the hard way that every evening out required all furniture to be waste-proofed, and

anything within reach to be put away. Trash cans had to be on the kitchen counter. Our lives became very isolated. We consulted every dog trainer in the area, some of whom said she was "too broken." Stubbornly, we disagreed. We read and tried every "training" method we could find. Slowly, we started to see some positive changes - e.g., she stopped trying to eat the relatives!

The real turning point, however, came when we adopted a friend's 6-month-old puppy, a Cavalier King Charles spaniel. We agonized about how Sapphi would react, since her instinct was always to "kill." To our amazement, it was the best behavior modification secret we could have tried.

At the time we didn't understand why it worked, we were just grateful that she was a happier, better-behaved dog.

We now know that dogs are pre-wired to be in packs, and they learn from other dogs better than from a human. The new puppy didn't have fear or anxiety of the world, which seemed to help Sapphi put hers aside. She also had strong maternal instincts towards the puppy and wanted to show him the way to be. It was like we had a new dog overnight. All her destructive and aggressive behaviors abated quickly.

This experience underpins the philosophy at RWC where fear-aggressive dogs spend a lot of time observing balanced, well-adjusted dogs, and model their behavior. Through RWC, we have been able to help dogs like Sapphi live the best life possible!



A GOOD START FOR A GOOD PUP!

Have you noticed that some dogs seem relaxed in all kinds of environments, while others shy away from loud noises, certain people, or even certain objects?

Did you know that a puppy is deaf until about three weeks old? This means that if you have a puppy, you have a golden opportunity to start your puppy on the path to relaxed confidence, free of unnecessary fear.

The key to having a balanced, relaxed dog is to desensitize the dog from a young age, and expose them to as many stimuli as possible, as safely as possible. Once the puppy can hear, you can expose him/her to all kinds of sounds, including baby cries, trains, buses, fireworks, vacuums, buzz saws, etc. There are even apps that will play these sounds for them. Start at a low volume, and increase over time.

Between 8 and 16 weeks is the golden timeframe to expose your puppy to these sounds, and help him/her associate those sounds as "normal" or even "good," e.g. a treat, a belly rub, a toy, or just play.

Equally significant is exposing your puppy to other people, dogs, and children, not necessarily so the dog can play with all of them, but so the dog does not feel intimidated by, or fearful of, them. When introducing your puppy to other people or dogs, it is important not to force them on your puppy, but to allow your puppy to go to them. For example, let your puppy sniff the new person/dog. If he/she seems interested, then the person can pet them on their chin or chest. You have to be an advocate for your puppy as you are his/her protector. This will help the puppy feel safe, protected, and eventually secure in him/herself.

The more you can create positive associations to all kinds of real world stimuli, the more likely your puppy will become well-adjusted and confident.

WHAT'S NEW AT RWC

Don't let us be a stranger to your dog!

At RWC, we like to stay close to our pack members. Not only do we love your dogs, we want to keep them up on the ethos of being an RWC pack member, meaning a well-mannered canine who can play with other dogs as well as chill when he/she needs to. We also want to help our pack members stay well-adjusted and free from fear. To do so, we like to see our pack members as frequently as possible, but certainly no less than once every six months. If your pup is not at RWC for more than six months, we will need to re-evaluate (at a discount) your dog in case its temperament has changed during its absence from us. This is so we can keep ALL our pack members safe.

Please review our latest Terms of Service

Due to continuing constraints on space, we are introducing changes to our Terms and Conditions of Service. This has been disseminated via email, and is also on our website. Besides the aforementioned six-month re-evaluation criterion, we are making changes to our holiday boarding policy. As we have a limited number of boarding spots, deposits for holiday boarding reservations that are cancelled less than 28 days before the stay, will be refunded only as credit. Cancellations of shorter duration than 28 days have different tiered credit refund terms. Please see the Terms of Service for more details.

ROME WAS NOT BUILT IN A DAY



AN UPDATE ON OUR CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

COVERED OUTSIDE PLAY AREA

As customers know, we recently started work on the covered outdoor play area between our front and rear buildings. This space is much needed to give our pack members more room, and also so we no longer have to turn pack members from day camp!

Work was a long time in the making due to protracted negotiations between the Code Department and us, as well as delays in engineering data from the manufacturers of the fabric building structure.

Currently, we are awaiting Code Dept approval of modified plans. The original plans that were approved called for seven-foot foundation footings. However, after drilling to five feet, we hit bedrock. This required engineering assessments on the adequacy of the foundation, followed by a modification to the building plans. Once the modification is approved by the Code Department, we will proceed with foundation pouring, sewer connection for runoff, remodeling of the building overhangs, and installation of the structure.

POOL AND BUILDING UPDATE

As of this writing, we have submitted permitting for the pool (aka "dog pond") and the building around it. The pool will be an inground pool, 30' by 20' by 3.5'. On each of the four sides, there will be platforms of different depths, which will allow dogs of all sizes to undergo hydrotherapy to aid in joint strengthening, muscle building, as well as injury recovery.

We anticipate much back and forth with the Code Department as we embark on this most important project that will improve the lives of our pack members infinitely. We miss the days when we got to witness daily, the unbridled joy of water-loving dogs who thought it was just PURE HEAVEN to be able to splash and swim in the pool.

We are deeply appreciative of our customers who have been waiting patiently for this project to happen. If all goes well, we hope to start construction of the pool in December or January, with the building to go up around it shortly after. With luck we should be up and running by next summer!

FALL IS COMING!

With our days getting shorter, there is now less daylight time to exercise your pups, so why not bring them to RWC more often? Here, they will always get their share of treadmills, pack walks, kiddy pool time, proper stimulation, as well as basic canine manners!

CATERING TO YOUR DOG'S INSTINCTUAL NEEDS

RWC Management has spent the past few months learning more about how to enrich our pack members' lives. In May, our owner Jodie and our Director of Operations Brenna went to the Pet Boarding and Daycare Expo in Vegas. Over the five days we were there, we learned how to sanitize our facility even better, keep our pack members safe from parasites, as well as how to provide a better all-round experience for our pack members.

One of the lessons we learned was how to provide ways for dogs to express their instinctual needs. One of these needs is the desire to forage and "work" for their food.

You can help your dog express this need by feeding them, not in a bowl, but with a toy, such as a kong, snuffle mat, or lick mat. It is possible to become very creative in fulfilling this need of your dog's. For example, other than using one of the aforementioned toys to feed your dog, you can also scatter his/her kibble in the lawn in your yard, hide kibble all over your house for your dog to "forage," or place their food in rolled up toilet paper rolls, and then hide them in an Amazon box! I have been known to scatter food in parks and grass medians on my walks with my dogs! The possibilities are endless! Your efforts will result in a more fulfilled, well stimulated, and calmer dog. Just be sure to keep track of how much you're feeding your dog so they do not end up taking in too many calories. I have definitely made that mistake! One way to make sure of this is to set aside your dog's allotted food for the day, and then feed the food to your pup in different ways throughout the day, and not feed them more than the pre-portioned amount of food.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

All our customers know that we have a great team in place at RWC! Without our dedicated and hardworking staff, we would not be able to keep our pack members safe, happy, and fulfilled!

Today, we would like to focus a spotlight on our morning customer service representative, Carolyn!



Carolyn is the face every dog and customer knows, because rain, shine, or snow, she is there at 6.30 every morning to greet them and bring the pup to the play area. It is not surprising that she is loved by every single RWC pack member!

Carolyn likes working at RWC because she gets to meet all the different dogs that come to us. "They are all so unique. I have enjoyed getting to know some new breeds. I have 4 dogs at home, a mini sheepadoodle, a maltipoo, and 2 havaton (Havanese and Coton de Tuleare mix). The sheepadoodle is my daughter's Emotional Support Animal (ESA), but she is working and can't have any pets with her."

Besides greeting every dog, Carolyn is also in charge of Tiny Town, as well as providing laser therapy for pack members who have pain or joint issues. She is also an outstanding photographer! We are so lucky to have Carolyn on our team, and I'm sure all our pack members and their pawrents agree!

Thank you for reading!

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