

What I Do Keston Magazine – February/March 2019



Monday morning comes around again. I'm standing on a packed platform waiting for my train to London which will be crammed full on arrival. Standing squashed up to complete strangers is the norm, and this is before the long stressful day in the office, followed by the repeat journey home. Yes people, this was my life for 25 years. The life of the Executive PA in London.

Whilst it once served me well, I am thankful to say that it is no longer. After the years of constant stress I suffered a spell of ill health. As part of my rehabilitation, I decided to volunteer at the RSPCA and Foal Farm, where I dog-walked once a week. Spending time with these bewildered yet still immensely trusting, loving creatures, made me question my life's path. I realised a drastic change was needed.

I am pleased to say, I am now the founder of "The Fairy Dog Mother", a dog-walking, day-care and home boarding service, provided from my home in Keston. I have always been an active person and an animal lover, so it felt the natural thing to try. With our ever increasingly busy lives, and with dogs now being considered "family members" as opposed to just "family pets", I could see how it could turn into a business. I can happily say it's the best thing I have ever done. 18 months down the line, I now have a regular customer base booking way in advance.

Nowadays my days are filled with dogs, dogs and wonderful dogs. I typically walk twice a day dependent on my canine visitors, and include lots of fuss, play, stimulation and love. I use all our lovely surrounding areas including High Elms, Sparrow's Den and Norman Park. We are spoilt for choice of places to walk our dogs. I can have dogs for the day, a weekend or a long holiday. Each visitor brings their own individual character and needs, which I relish. Like us, no two dogs are the same. This career also isn't for the "bad weather shy", as I'm still out walking in the cold, dark, snow and rain; my doggies still want their walkies! They get me up and out, which in turn, has worked wonders for my mental health and well-being. So, it's a win-win situation.

I also acquired a 12 year old Staffie, Missy, initially as a long-term boarder whilst her elderly owner was in hospital and then on a permanent basis. Sadly, Missy passed away in August, and my world just fell apart without her. So I decided to undertake a Pet Bereavement Course, to benefit not only myself, but my customers going forward. And I am pleased to say that I have since rescued another lovely doggie, who has helped with my grief ten-fold.

They are mindful creatures who live in the moment. A lot can be learned from these wonderful animals. Their ever constant enthusiasm for everything inspires me. I feel very humbled to be doing a job that I love. Find out more at www.thefairydogmother.dog.

Donna Coleman