

BUSINESS

All Students Pets At KETCH

A combination dog day care, boarding and training facility bring owners joy.

By JASON GEARY
The Tampa Tribune

CITRUS PARK — Heather Ceresoli can see Petey is ready to play even before she takes the key out of her car's ignition.

The excitement of the 10½-year-old Jack Russell terrier finds an outlet through his frantically wagging tail.

Nine years ago, Ceresoli began taking Petey to K-9 Educational Training Center of Hillsborough (KETCH) for day care and obedience classes.

As the dog grew, Ceresoli, 37, of Citrus Park, signed Petey up for flyball, a relay sport for dogs, and he earned titles at tournaments. He continues to undergo agility training at the center.

"It really is like his second home," Ceresoli said.

Although she is often busy raising her twin 6-year-old

boys, Ceresoli said she finds time about once a week for "Petey's night out" when her pooch struts his stuff on "doggie obstacle courses."

For 12 years, Mike and Wen-

At A GLANCE

WHAT: K-9 Educational Training Center of Hillsborough (KETCH)

BACKGROUND: For 12 years, Mike and Wendy Pape have operated this combination dog day care, boarding and training facility. The current location includes an indoor facility, a nearby training arena and grassy fields.

ADDRESS: 7709 Gardner Road

CONTACT: For information on day care, boarding and training, call (813) 920-9191 or visit <http://www.ketchdogtraining.com/>



Tribune photo by KATHY MOORE
Kathy Gilligan of Tampa encourages Slider, her 3-year-old golden retriever, to jump through a tire on the agility course at KETCH. The school for dogs has been operating for 12 years.

dy Pape have operated KETCH, a combination dog daycare, boarding and training facility. The couple said they enjoy watching longtime clients like Ceresoli continue to take their dogs to classes or bring in new puppies.

The Papes named their business after one of their own

dogs, called Ketch.

Mike Pape said he and his wife's half-blind border collie acted more human than canine.

"You didn't think he was a dog," he said. "He was so intelligent."

Ketch knew how to work a crowd with dance routines,

Frisbee catching and other feats, he said.

The dog won awards in dog sports, did commercials for a dog treat company and performed at sporting event half-time shows before he died of cancer at about 11 years of age.

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DOG SCHOOL

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"He was an amazing dog," Mike Pape said.

KETCH was started in June 1995 at a warehouse on Johns Road. A few years later, the facility was featured in a Life magazine story exploring the then relatively new phenomenon of doggie day cares.

About five years ago, the center moved to its location on Gardner Road, complete with an indoor, air-conditioned facility, a nearby training arena and grassy fields. The center has continued to expand its class offerings, even recently adding sheep herding lessons.

The business venture has become a full-time responsibility for the Papes. They maintain a staff of about 10 to 12 employees. Supervision, feeding and cleaning are constant tasks.

"We basically don't have vacations together," Wendy Pape said. "One of us is always here."

Wendy Pape said the day-care part of the business has been about keeping dogs out of trouble.

While volunteering at a local shelter, Wendy Pape said she saw owners getting rid of dogs



Tribune photo by KATHY MOORE

Wendy Pape observes the agility course at KETCH as Heather Ceresoli works with Petey, her 10-year-old Jack Russell terrier.

because they didn't know how to handle them.

Some people just didn't know what to do with dogs chewing household items, barking excessively, jumping up on people, or showing aggression or fear, she said.

"We teach the dogs what they need to learn to live in a human environment by using the methods they will understand," Wendy Pape said. "We reward the behavior we want and ignore the behavior we don't want."

She said dogs need structure, exercise and socialization with other dogs. A tired dog is a happy dog, she said.

Owners can sign up for

group or individual obedience classes to work on specific problems. For further chances to bond with their dogs or give them exercise, the center offers flyball and agility training.

Wendy Pape said she most enjoys helping dogs stay with their owners, and watching the subtle improvements each day among their furry companions.

"Every day, we have some [dogs] come through here, and you see a change," she said. "There's always amazing changes."

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