

Walker brings 'extraordinary qualities' to the job

continued from p.1

are proud of Walker's achievements, but note her amazing skiing abilities are not what got her the job at the kennel.

"Bridgette is very, very extraordinary in many, many ways, but the qualities she brings to the job are truly extraordinary and very difficult to find," said Serafini. "She is someone who comes to the job every day with a pure love for the animals. It's very easy to see the dogs reacting to her and picking up on her feelings. She's not judgmental or in a hurry. She comes from a place of pure joy and the dogs respond to that."

Walker's job involves cleaning, walking, and brushing the dogs and cats, but also making them feel better about being away from home.

Serafini said being left at a boarding kennel, especially for the first time, can be a stressful experience for a dog or cat and because of this it is very important for them to know they are in a loving, non-threatening environment.

This is where Walker comes in.

"It's very important I, as an employer, always hire staff who come to their job from a position of real love and affection for all of God's creatures," said Serafini.

"Bridgette truly does that. She approaches each animal and comes down and greets them on their own level. They relax, let down their guard and they become more comfortable."

Walker, who has been working at the kennel since August, said she loves her job.

Prior to Wag-a-Way, Walker had spent months looking for employment.

"I like it very much and most of the dogs and kitties are such sweeties to work with. It's always neat because all of the animals have their own personalities," said Walker.

"When we get guests who are repeat frequent customers you kind of get to know the dogs too."



Special Olympic skier Bridgette Walker returned home with two bronze medals in February after competing in the Special Olympic World Winter Games in Pyeongchang, South Korea. Here she is competing in the Giant Slalom competition. photo courtesy of Willow McCall

Walker has been skiing in her spare time for the past eight years with coaches grooming what they call her amazing natural talent when it comes to the sport.

Wag-a-Way came through again for Walker by giving her the time she needed to not only train, but attend the Special Olympics in South Korea when she was selected to go as part of Team Canada.

Avlonitis said Wag-a-Way had to juggle their scheduling around a bit to accommodate Walker, but said at the end of the day they were happy to do it.

Serafini said she was aware of Walker's Olympic aspirations when she hired her, stating she was not deterred.

"I knew that in order for Bridgette to be an Olympian she would have to be focused and committed and dedicated to achieving a goal and, for me, finding those qualities in an employee is really important," she said.

"When I understood that is what Bridgette was all about, I understood I was getting way more than most employees are pre-

pared to give."

Walker said her experience in Korea was a great one, stating the people were polite, the scenery breathtaking and the competition exhilarating.

"It was very cool. For the first actual race I was going down the hill and I was like, 'This is great, let's do more of that.' I just had a blast with it," said Walker.

"The next thing you know they're

telling me I got a medal. That was just icing on the cake."

Walker's mother, Willow McCall, said she is thankful for all that Wag-a-Way has done to help her daughter and is hopeful Walker's story will encourage other employers to look beyond a person's disability because there is no telling what that person could bring to the business if given a chance.

Carpet Cleaning Specialists Since 1952

On The Spot!

RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL
WALL TO WALL FURNITURE & UPHOLSTERY

AREA RUGS PERSIAN & ORIENTAL

**Truck Mount In-Plant Service
Water Damage Restoration**

*See the transformation of what
we can do in relation to others!*

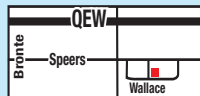


**VOTED BEST CARPET
& RUG CLEANERS
13 YEARS IN A ROW!**

**25%
Drop-off
Discount!**

FREE 250 mL SPOTTING BOTTLE
www.onthespotcleaning.ca

**1446 WALLACE RD.
OAKVILLE, ON
905-825-4256**



WEDNESDAY

- Hopped up Wednesday 20 oz.
– Keith's & Hop Mason for \$4.99
- Our New Irish Features Menu

THURSDAY

- Entertainment – Tyler Schwende @8pm
- Crafted Addict Thursdays
– All Craft Beers \$5
- Our New Irish Features Menu

FRIDAY

- Our New Irish Features Menu
- Two Fisted Friday 4-6pm
- Entertainment – Pat Hewitt @9pm
– always a party!
- Drink Exchange @11pm

SATURDAY

- New Weekend Brunch Menu 10am-3pm
- Start your St. Paddy's Day Celebration early with
Descendants of Dunn @9pm
- Prizes, Heated Tents, Late Night Food Specials

SUNDAY – ST. PATRICK'S DAY

- New Weekend Brunch Menu 10am-3pm
- Cover charge all day \$5, proceeds to new
Oakville Hospital Fund
- Irish Dancers, Half Price Apps from 9pm – Close
- **Entertainment:** 11am – 2pm – Gabe Salem
3pm – 6pm – Lloyd Banfield
8pm – All the way from Down East – Shore Thing

- Lots of Prizes, Heated Tents, Drink Specials



**350 DUNDAS ST. E., OAKVILLE
(TRAFALGAR & DUNDAS)**

905-257-5500

FACEBOOK.COM/OAKVILLEFIONNMACCools

