

# A doggone good business

BY DARYL-LYNN CARLSON  
Staff Writer

Cheryl Lintzeris mops up more drool at her Thornhill day care than she cares to mention. Then there are the times her charges become so frenzied with excitement, they leave a puddle on the floor.

But as innocent and eager as youngsters tend to be, the feisty members of this play group are easily forgiven.

Besides, who could not be wooed by little Kayla's enthusiasm as she waits wide-eyed each morning by the front door of her home for Lintzeris to pick her up for day care.

Then there's Riley, a perpetual celebrant of the simple things in life who peers anxiously from the bay window of his home waiting for his ride.

So, despite the mopping, Lintzeris is in heaven as her day care and its patrons flourish. It's her dream business and one she intends to expand, with another site planned to open in the future.

Why is she so passionate? Well, she simply loves the canine creatures that she cares for each day.

"I was trying to figure out what to do with my life," recalled Lintzeris, a kinesiologist who found herself wanting to change careers three years ago after moving to Toronto from Alberta.

"A wise person told me 'Think of what you would do if you could just do what you want and not worry about money,'" said Lintzeris, who once worked as a veterinarian assistant. "So I thought, well, I'd spend time at home and play with animals. And that's what I decided to do."

*"They need socialization. Many dogs are lacking in social skills because they don't get to be around other dogs very much."*

Initially, Lintzeris opened Holiday Pet Care in her Richmond Hill home, a canine boarding service that took in dogs that need to be watched for an extended period of time.

The endeavour proved prosperous and Lintzeris saw more opportunity. With working couples putting in long hours and their four-legged friends increasingly left home alone, Lintzeris decided a service that provides care within a social setting on a daily basis could fill a niche.

Last October, she opened Doggie Playgroup Daycare Centre at Thornhill Square Mall at Bayview Avenue and John Street.

Although the aim is to assure owners their pets are in good hands, Lintzeris' also focuses on the benefits she provides.

"They need socialization," she said. "Many dogs are lacking in social skills because they don't get to be around other dogs very much."

Some of them also need much more exercise than their busy owners can provide, she added.

Her furry attendees range from Dobermans and rottweilers to tiny teacup poodles. But they all seem to get along — Lintzeris screens the dogs to ensure they have a friendly disposition.

They romp and wrestle in a large open room, taking periodic breaks to sit attentively and gaze out the window to the delight of passers-by.

Three times a day, they are walked in groups of five. And, yes, Lintzeris or one of her staff of three stoops and scoops along the way.

As fringe benefits, Lintzeris also offers pet grooming, basic dog walking and yard cleaning — a weekly stoop and scoop of a pet's back yard mess. Daycare fees run from \$15 for a half day to \$20 for a full day. Other services are extra.

For example, she or her husband, Demo, will pick up a daycare doggie and deliver it back home for an additional \$5.

"I am not a morning person but when you wake up and see these guys wagging their tails and panting and they're so happy to see you, it's better than coffee," said Demo, who recently quit his deejay job to join the business.



Cheryl Lintzeris gets a real charge out of her doggie daycare play group. Her first daycare in Thornhill has been so successful, she hopes to open another.

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