

CAMP CANINE

Stouffville's Fun with Fido camp 'first of its kind in Canada'

STORY & PHOTOGRAPHS
BY JIM MASON



Jeffrey Hills leads Harry over an obstacle course jump at the Stouffville camp.

More than a half hour into a visit to Stouffville's Fun With Fido Kids and K-9 Camp and you notice it.

Nothing.
Quiet.
Silence.

Seven dogs and even more children are being put through their paces on the final day of the first session of the camp.

Not a bark, whine or whimper.

Just dogs of all sizes making jumps through hoops, when they aren't putting on costumes, taking a water break or running through tunnels.

It's the first summer camp of its kind in Canada of which organizer Corey McCusker knows. Another session, that's all but at capacity, begins Aug. 18.

Ms McCusker started Muttz with Mannerz obedience training after leaving the corporate world two years ago. The Stouffville resident does group and individual training.

She wanted to create something for children and their pets. The summer camp was born.

"It's such a special bond," she said.

Many of the participants have taken lessons already. And the "man's best friend" saying applies in spades here.

Many of the owners spend hours daily with their pets. Their dog is their hobby, the way their friends spend time on hockey or video games.

The camp would be taught on a fenced lot behind Stouffville Veterinary Clinic on Main Street.

Next, came up an agenda for the five days.

"We had no clue how it would go," said Ms McCusker who was assisted by Linda Mutch at the camp.

They hit on daily discipline training, a day with the vets in the clinic, grooming, bite prevention and agility. Cost was \$150.

And there was plenty of fun, including a costume party on the final day.

The dogs had to get along and the children had to be able to handle their charges.

Not a problem, on either count, here.

For more information, go to muzzwithmanners.com or call 905-640-1758.



Cosmo has two young trainers, Shawna and Curtis Cargill. A second camp for children and dogs in Stouffville is scheduled for next month.



Ella and Katarina Matthiessen and Buddy took part in the camp-ending costume party.

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