



Puppy's Playpen is a Pooch Paradise

ARTICLE LISA ALLEN | PHOTOGRAPHY PARKER HARRISON

Andrea Galeski knows what it's like to be a crazy dog mom. Galeski, the owner of Puppy's Playpen, says that she built her business based on what she liked and didn't like about her experiences as a consumer.

"We don't nickel and dime our customers, we're really flexible and we cater to everyone's individual needs. That's the way I want to be treated, so that's what we do here, every day," she says. Rates are all inclusive, and extra care is the standard; after all, the business' tagline is 'for the spoiled rotten.'

But Puppy's Playpen is built on more than just good intentions. Galeski did her research; she studied the market in Seattle and California, where cageless dog boarding, daycare and grooming was most prevalent, and brought what she learned back to Kansas City.

"We were the first place in Kansas City to offer cageless boarding and puppy cams," says Galeski. Puppy's Playpen also offers grooming services, and stocks its boutique with more than 20 brands of all-natural dog foods.

Galeski opened Puppy's Playpen in 2004, right after she completed her MBA program at Avila University. In fact, it was during her marketing strategy class at Avila that she first started to develop the business plan that would eventually become Puppy's Playpen. She convinced her group to concentrate their efforts on a marketing and business plan for Puppy's Playpen; the project earned the group an A in class, and Galeski immediately began working on opening the business once she graduated.

"I've always loved dogs, and I had a really strong entrepreneurial drive," says Galeski. "I saw a need for boarding my personal dog, and every place I checked out had an old-school set up. I knew I could do better, and we're really good at what we do."

Now Galeski has a staff of 20, all "crazy dog lovers" whose sole goal for their day at work is to send the pups home happy.

"We just treat all the dogs like they're our own," says Galeski. On the flip side, she treats the owners as if they're friends. Puppy's Playpen is kept meticulously clean, and Galeski offers advice on what foods are best for dogs and which ones should be avoided. Because staff is on-site around the clock, pick up times can vary if scheduled in advance. Grooming is offered seven days a week.

Puppy's Playpen is staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The dogs play and can roam at will, all supervised, instead of being caged. The facility is more than 5,300 square feet, and there is also a secure outdoor space. The staff provides a snack before nap time, which is encouraged between noon and 2. Nap time is complete with soothing pet music, plush dog beds and several nooks and hiding places, just in case your pooch prefers to snooze solo.

The staff separates the dogs into three groups: little babies and geriatrics; medium babies and big babies. Owners are required to submit a personality profile prior to dropping the pup off, and no aggressive dogs are allowed.

Perhaps one of the most popular perks is the ability to check in via webcam at any time. There are six cameras at Puppy's Playpen, and owners can log on at any time to catch a glimpse of their pet.

Galeski says that 10 years of experience sets her business apart from the competition, and she is proud of what Puppy's Playpen has become.

"Everyone is special here. We truly believe that," she says.

Learn more at PuppysPlaypen.com.

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