



## Purr'n Pooch Pet Resort Owner Dick Palazzo: Innovator, Entrepreneur and Philanthropist

I first met **Dick Palazzo** when he appeared before the Tinton Falls Planning Board seeking approval to expand his business, **Purr'n Pooch Pet Resort**, located on Gilbert Street North. At that time, Purr'n Pooch was established as the pre-eminent dog daycare provider, with two locations (Tinton Falls and Wall, NJ) since the early 1970's. During the presentation, which Dick made himself, he informed the Board that he was seeking approval for a therapy pool for dogs with arthritic conditions or who were recovering from injuries. I left the meeting with the impression that Dick Palazzo was a passionate, dedicated animal care professional who would never stop seeking the most advanced techniques for the well-being of the animals in his care. For Dick, Purr'n Pooch isn't just a business; it's the culmination of a lifetime of working with animals and an extension of his family as he treats every employee and every dog that spends the day or the week with him at Purr N Pooch.

Dick and his family have worked with dogs and cats for 45 years at the family owned and operated Purr'n Pooch locations. Dick and his wife, Mary and daughters Koren and Elizabeth are involved in the daily operations even though they employ over 80 employees between the two locations to help them manage and run the business. On the days that I've bumped into Dick or one of his daughters in the Tinton Falls location, they are completely engaged with their clients, both animal and human, and take immense pride in the business that they have built upon Dick's earliest dreams of working with animals which led him to study dog training in the 1970's.

### A Growing Trend

Although dog daycares weren't popular until the 1990s, during the early 1970s when the Purr'n Pooch Tinton Falls and Wall facilities opened, Dick would open the doors to

allow their boarding dogs to enjoy leash-free, group play in the halls and yards. Animal behavior was a young science then, and many colleagues questioned why he would take such huge risks with the animals. Today, Dick's early vision has become an accepted practice as dog daycare has become a service widely accessible across the country.

Dog daycare continues to be on the rise. Many families work long hours and don't want their dogs to be home alone. Some simply want their dogs to socialize and enjoy a good time. There are many reasons people bring their dogs to daycare, but the common thread among his clients is the love they share for their pets and their desire to do what's best for them.

Purr'n Pooch offers 55 different play areas, transitional groups where the dogs enjoy free play, as well as tricks and games with the play area employees. There are even programs for pets with special needs. By having these spaces and specialized services, all dogs can play and enjoy themselves in the proper, supervised environments.

Proper training of their employees has ensured that the clients of Purr'n Pooch receive the highest level of care during their daycare experience. That training includes the proper evaluation of your dog's needs. At Purr'n Pooch, your dog will be introduced slowly to its new environment, comfortably integrated into a circle of friends while becoming familiar with the surroundings on his or her own time. This type of introduction takes patience, understanding, and, above all, that investment in employee training and workplace safety practices that is a cornerstone of the Purr'n Pooch experience. They are proud to advertise that they have 24 hour staff supervision, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, so your pet is never without human care.

## PURR'N POOCH FOUNDATION FOR ANIMALS

With the success of two busy pet care facilities, the Palazzo family decided that it was time to give back to the community by establishing the Purr'n Pooch Foundation for Animals. Foundation President, Elizabeth Palazzo Dudick is proud of the Foundation's giving programs, which provide annual grants to non-profit, no-kill animal and marine mammal rescue and welfare organizations to be used for day-to-day operations, emergency relief, spay/neuter efforts, veterinary care, equipment, construction, vehicle purchases, educational programs and special projects. In recent years, the Foundation has established a special donation program for Military Service Dogs and their handlers which has had a tremendous response from the community. Donors are asked to select from a special list of needed items for these hard-working canine military members and their beloved handlers.

In addition, the Foundation raises funds for their grant-making efforts through special events organized for all ages, people and pets. Events include a canine run/walk event in October, a dog-friendly gala event, a summer party and collection drives. One of the most highly-anticipated events is the Foundation Grantee Breakfast, where unsung heroes from the charities funded by the Foundation join them for a morning of friendship and celebration at the presentation of their grants. Recent grantees include Wag On Inn Rescue, Tabby's Place: A Cat Sanctuary, Project Animal Worldwide, Marine Mammal Stranding Center, German Shorthaired Point Rescue, Operation Kindness, Greyhound Friends of New Jersey, All Fur Love Animals Rescue, Monmouth County SPCA, St. Huberts, Mid Atlantic Bulldog Rescue and New Life Boxer Rescue. Visit [www.purrnpoochfoundation.org](http://www.purrnpoochfoundation.org) for more information or to apply for a grant

As a dynamic and compassionate leader in the field of pet care, Dick Palazzo continues to build upon his reputation by working in his facilities daily and lecturing across the region. Dick is currently working with Dr. Nicholas Dodman, a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists and Professor, Section Head and Program Director of the Animal Behavior Department of Clinical Sciences at Tufts University to study and observe the behavior of pets. Dr. Dodman is one of the world's most noted and celebrated veterinary behaviorists and Trustee of the Purr'n Pooch Foundation for Animals.

Dick Palazzo lives on the Jersey Shore with his wife Mary, also an animal welfare advocate, trainer and groomer and partner in the success of Purr'n Pooch. The Palazzo family has raised the bar in the pet care industry at the Shore by providing compassionate day care, comfortable boarding facilities, professional grooming services, training and aquatic exercise all of which which are a reflection of their commitment to their meaningful life's work.

- Paul J. Abrams

