

suburbanlife

Leslie
ODOM
pg. 28

+

Also
Inside:

Top physicians,
surviving
divorce,
and more



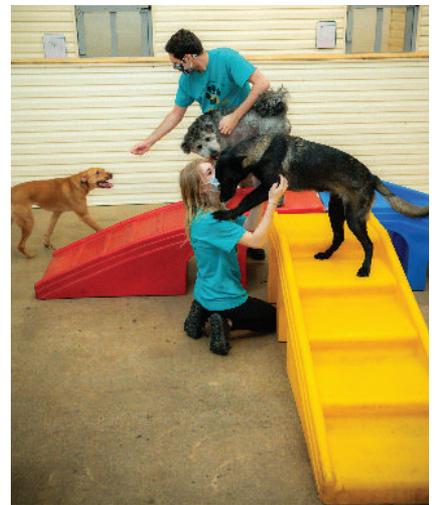
For professional daycare,
boarding, and other
services, award-winning
Stay & Play Pet Resort
has become a trusted
destination where beloved
pets enjoy a "home away
from home." page 80



SOMETHING TO BARK ABOUT

For professional daycare, boarding, and other services, award-winning **Stay & Play Pet Resort** has become a trusted destination where beloved pets enjoy a “home away from home.”

by **BILL DONAHUE** | photography by **JODY ROBINSON**



Carol Myer remembers an “upsetting dog-boarding experience” from 28 years ago that made her vow to someday open a boarding facility that did things differently. While boarding their dog for the first—and last—time, Carol requested a brief tour of the facility, to see where her “fur baby” would be spending the first time away from home. Apparently, this wasn’t permitted, no tours ever. She was told that the dogs were let out of their kennels just three times a day for bathroom breaks, and she also learned that the facility was unattended for 14 hours overnight. To make matters worse, she was charged an exorbitant amount, including an extra night’s fee, due to the facility’s inflexible pickup times.

“After that negative experience, we said that someday we would open a place of our own, that does things right,” she recalls. “A place where pets feel at home, and are not left alone all night long.”

She and Steve, her entrepreneurial husband, kept working hard and raising their daughters, but the dream never faded. They knew this would be a life-changing commitment, and the timing had to be right. Once their youngest daughter went off to college, the Myers almost immediately started looking for a site where they could bring their dream to life: offering affordable professional daycare and boarding services for pets, in an accessible and comfortable location that never goes unsupervised.

Stay & Play Pet Resort opened its doors in 2016, in a vast facility tucked away in the Huntingdon Valley Industrial Center. In doing so, Carol and Steve created a “home away from home” for dogs, offering the highest-quality experience they could imagine, including spacious indoor play areas and two sizable outdoor yards, as well as an outdoor run.

“It’s important for dogs to have outdoor play,” Carol says. “Our prices are very reasonable, and playtime is included with boarding. More than anything, we want this to be a comfortable, loving place for your fur babies. To me, it’s like taking the kids to



grandma and grandpa's bed & breakfast rather than a big, impersonal hotel."

Stay & Play is a cage-free facility, meaning dogs are never crated. Rather, the 8,000-square-foot facility offers generously sized "bedrooms" for dogs, outfitted with comfy couches and racecar beds, so pet parents have the confidence of knowing their animals enjoy their stay.

Dogs in daycare are grouped by factors such as size, age, energy level, and personality to avoid any unwanted encounters.

Pet parents also appreciate the fact that guests are never left alone; someone is on site 24/7, 365 days a year. In fact, either Steve or Carol stays at the facility every night to make sure overnight guests remain safe and comfortable. Doing so requires some degree of personal sacrifice, but the Myers are happy to make it.

"We just feel like one of us always needs to be here," Carol adds. "On the day of our daughter's wedding, Steve worked here in the morning, went to the wedding, and then came back here afterward. We treat your pets like family, because they are family to us. We also tend to get close to the parents, because how could we not? Our pet moms and dads are simply wonderful people. For our nervous pet parents, we will text a photo or short video of their fur baby to reassure them, but we post photos daily on social media for

everyone's enjoyment."

Stay & Play's "guest list" includes more than just dogs. The facility also has a cat room to house feline guests, and it has the capacity to care for other kinds of pets, if needed.

"We've had lizards—bearded dragons—and we get a lot of bunnies and guinea pigs," Carol says. "We have yet to have a snake, but we would. Pretty much the only pets that we don't board are birds, because they are very delicate, and we are not equipped for their care."

While the events of the past year have temporarily decreased demand for overnight stays, an increasing number of pet parents throughout Bucks and Montgomery counties—and even farther afield—have come to rely on Stay & Play for doggie daycare. Carol cites a woman who used to bring her two Anatolian shepherd dogs to Stay & Play when she lived in New Jersey. The woman has since moved to Vermont, but she will soon be bringing her two shepherds back to Stay & Play for an extended visit.

"She has to go to Oregon for family reasons, but she's going to drive the dogs down from Vermont so they can stay someplace she knows she can trust," Carol says. "Those dogs started coming here when they were puppies, but now they're 150 pounds each. It just shows the level of trust people have in us to take care of their animals. That's what we do for all our parents—make sure their pets are loved and well cared for so they don't have to worry." ■



About Stay & Play Pet Resort

Stay & Play Pet Resort strives to offer a best-in-class experience at reasonable prices, for daycare (as little as \$25 per day) and boarding (\$42 per night for a dog and \$20 per night for a cat). Stay & Play offers a 10 percent discount to police, firefighters, and members of the military. In addition, Stay & Play provides bathing and nail clipping for all dogs, as well as grooming for small dogs. The facility offered on-site training prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but sessions are now conducted right at the homes of pet parents.

The owners of Stay & Play Pet Resort have always believed in full transparency, which is why they decided from the very beginning to offer tours of the facility. They remain happy to provide tours, as they want prospective clients to see where their pets will be spending their time. However, the pandemic has meant that tours must be limited in nature in order to prevent unnecessary person-to-person interactions.



Stay & Play Pet Resort Inc.

1957 Pioneer Road, Building H
Huntingdon Valley, PA 19006
(215) 323-4811
stayandplaypets.com

