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Doggy daycare business opens in Brookfield

Frisky Dog occupies 19,000 square feet on 47th Street

By **BOB UPHUES**
Editor

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It was in April that Joe Perry, Ross Rolando, Gail Stine and Carol Weber sat down and had their first serious conversation about taking the leap and starting their own dog daycare/boarding business.

All dog owners and dog lovers, when the quartet would get together, the subject would inevitably turn to what they loved to do and how much they cared for their animal companions.

But Perry was in marketing, Rolando in retail management, Gail in management for both private companies and public agencies and Carol in art and art education.

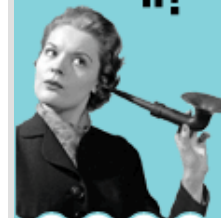
Five months later, however, Frisky Dog was born. The business, which opened Sept. 26, combines doggy playcare, boarding, grooming and training in a 19,000-square-foot facility at 9216 W. 47th St. in Brookfield.

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Ross Rolando spends some time with the client's dogs in the outside yard as they romp together at Frisky Dog, a new doggy daycare and groomer in Brookfield, on Oct. 27.

J. GEIL/Photo Editor

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"For us, the idea of going to work with our dogs was a big thing," said Rolando. He and Perry have two dogs, Jack Russell terriers named Sophie and Bailey. "This was the ideal situation for all of us."

After deciding to take the plunge last spring, the challenge was to find a suitable location. They found it on 47th Street in the former home of the Wayne Services Group, which did service work on retail gasoline pumps and convenience store cash registers.

In 2009, that same site had been eyed by another canine daycare business, but the deal never fell into place. The site, said Rolando, made perfect sense.

"This place fit our needs perfectly," he said. "There's a need for it here. There's not anything like this nearby. People here are going to Downers Grove. This is the area we wanted to be."

For nearly three months prior to opening the doors, Perry, Rolando, Stine and Weber renovated the office/warehouse space, laying new floors, painting and creating separate indoor play areas, the kennel area and putting down an artificial surface for the 10,000-square-foot outdoor yard in back.

"The four of us were here many a night, seven days straight," said Perry.

They are still putting the finishing touches on two "suite" areas for dogs who find crates stressful or are simply too big for them. There are also separate areas for training and grooming.

Perry and Rolando got their feet wet by training at a couple of dog daycare businesses prior to opening Frisky Dog to see how those operations functioned and settle on what they wanted their business to offer.

One thing they decided was that they didn't want dogs cooped up in the kennel all day and let out only for a couple of walks. The play spaces, particularly the large outdoor yard, reflect that wish to keep dogs active all day.

"This is your dog's home away from home," Perry said. "One of the biggest problems [with dog daycare businesses] is once you drop off your dog, you're not sure how he'll be treated. Here we pick them up and love them all as if they were your own."

"We want to give dogs a place they can come and have a good time."

The company's website can be found at www.friskydoggdaycare.com.

Photos by J. GEIL/Photo Editor

