

North

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Dog Day Afternoon to pamper pets, benefit shelter

By Mark Bertan
Special Review

For \$38,000, a puppy and his people can hop on the Concorde and fly to Paris for a wonderful weekend canine extravaganza, including luxury hotels, restaurants and train rides. No joke.

For just \$30, North Hills residents can get their paws on some more practical provisions for their puppies — namely, yoga, stress management classes and a massage.

With the title of "Dog Day Afternoon," the puppy pampering also includes the opportunity to consult with Renee Takacs, an "intuitive consultant."

Takacs, who has a master's degree in transpersonal psychology from Atlantic University, has been doing "intuitive reads" on animals

If you go

- ▶ **What:** Dog Day Afternoon
- ▶ **When:** 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Saturday
- ▶ **Where:** Grant Community Center, 216 Jefferson Ave., Bellevue
- ▶ **Why:** All the proceeds from the event will be donated to the Animal Rescue League of Western Pennsylvania Inc.
- ▶ **Details:** Call the HP Yoga Center in Bellevue at (412) 761-2107.

for years. She was a featured guest at the fourth annual Collie Frolic in North Park. She has lectured at the Community College of Allegheny County, conducts seminars all over the region and has a bimonthly dis-

Bellevue

cussion group that meets at her Bridgeville apartment.

"I'm going to be the pet communicator," Takacs said. "I'll be doing 15 minute intro readings on people's dogs."

Takacs describes her method as calming for the animals.

"I get quiet and I say my prayer, and then I ask for permission to connect with Max, we'll call it Max. Then I ask Max if there would be anything he would like to share with his owner," Takacs said. "Often they will tell me what they like, what they don't like, who they like, types of food, health problems. I often ask on behalf of the relationship, 'What is the purpose for being in the owner's life?' There is usually a fundamental love (between pet

and owner), but sometimes the animal comes into that person's life at a difficult point."

Dave Young, spokesman for the Animal Rescue League of Western Pennsylvania Inc., based in East Liberty, said his organization is not sponsoring the event but is grateful the participants are having the fund-raiser for his organization.

"We're just the grateful recipients, and we are very grateful," he said.

Young said, depending on scheduling, the Animal Rescue League might have a veterinarian there to demonstrate animal acupuncture.

"She's a certified acupuncturist. She's been using it to treat many of the animals here that aren't improving and where nothing else

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can be done," he said. "Some of the stories are mind boggling. When you see the results, it is really interesting."

Ruth Rittenhouse, owner of the HP Yoga Center in Bellevue, said the "yoga" taught to the dogs is not like yoga that people typically do.

"Obviously, you can't teach animals yoga," she said. "They're basic commands, but we just gave them yoga pose names."

The Animal Rescue League is the beneficiary of the event because that is where Rittenhouse's dog, Newton, came from.

Newton has since died, but he was a good partner when she did her own yoga forms, she said.

"When the dog is lying on its back, it's called corpse pose. We're going to teach that to the dogs," Rittenhouse said.

"The other thing is to teach your dog to be quiet while you do your practice. That can carry on into their fear of storms ... basic behavior techniques that aren't just yoga practice but can be used in life."

The doggie massage will probably be the main attraction, she said.

"Doggie massage probably will

be the most popular class," she said. "There are points on animals that you can press and that will calm them."

Rittenhouse said the participants' main goal is to make Pittsburgh friendlier to animals in shelters.

"We're hoping to do this every year to benefit a different shelter each time," Rittenhouse said. "It's all in the hopes of making Pittsburgh a no-kill city."

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