



Photo by PhoDOgraphy's Shawna Taylor

Woof! Bark! Yip! Yap! Yep! Yup! Yes! Count them! Forty dogs on a log posing for a worthy cause while happily hoping to bark their way into the Guinness Book of World Records!

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Pet Tips 'n' Tales

by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

40 dogs on a log!

Nanaimo's mountains, rivers, lakes, and ocean scenery is splendorous, so imagine it being your office window!

As the book title, "Do What You Love, The Money Will Follow" suggests, did they mean with muddy feet? Kim, owner of Pooch Pack Adventures, is doing what she loves; making money, dogs happy, they all stay healthy, and just when it can't get any better, they are contributing to a worthy cause!

Their story is wrapped around domestic violence, sadly a worldwide issue where victims with pets remain in dangerous situations because they feel trapped; with children, no money, and nowhere to take a pet. Immobilized victims don't believe their pets will be safe left with a violent partner, yet, over 70 percent report that the abuser has already injured, maimed, killed or threatened to harm family pets. Seriously, it is a deviant human who hits/hurts/beats a woman, child or pet!

"I was thinking of dog training as a career change," said a healthy 45-year-old Kim. "But when I discovered off-leash pack hikes I knew it was for me! I asked neighbors and friends if I could exercise their dogs, and the dogs loved it so much that my business exploded! Now, my staff and I take 10 dogs on two-hour, six mile a day hikes, five days a week, and some days twice! On Wednesdays, we walk 18 dogs at once! What a sight, seeing so many joyful, well-socialized canines."

(Watch her video - you will wish you were a dog, too!) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dNlaPd6u6cA>

Another of Kim's passions is photography, so she incorporates a traditional scenic-sit-stay photograph for the pet parents, then posts the happy-faced dogs onto her facebook/website.

"Four years ago, I started photographing a core group of five dogs. Once they learned that they 'had to have their picture taken' before we continued their walk, they were good teachers to all the newbies."

With Kim's large, enthusiastic, and furry client base, she felt challenged to photograph as many as paws-ible, sitting on a log at the same time.

Along with her staff, they surmised that they could organize 40 dogs for a charity event. So the search was on to find a log long and wide enough. Even though Nanaimo is lumber country, it took a year to locate a 100-foot log! Before the photo shoot, a volunteer team cleaned the brush from around the log so the dogs could safely line up without tripping.

Picture the daunting task of lining up 40 dogs on a rain free day, clamoring onto a log; posing to sit, stay, and in unison look at you without them scratching an ear, sniffing each other or jumping off!

Kim's human clients said they were honored their dogs were invited to participate in this fund raising event, which helps abused women, children and their pets, so they generously donated their dogs and their dog's hiking fees. Kim and her staff volunteered their time for the cause.

"Helping victims of domestic abuse should have universal support," adds Kim, "and because pets are not allowed to stay at Women's Shelters (Safe Houses) they developed a network of people to foster resident's pets while women transition their lives. Our animal shelter offers the residents' pets compassionate no-fee boarding."

Kim's main purpose is bringing awareness and publicity to this helpful concept so other communities can duplicate it, and first responders/crises line staff in her community can pass the information on to victims.

"Our dogs helped assure other pets' safety," said Kim. "They felt our energy. They

knew we were on a bigger mission than their average every day walk."

It was a mission of good will and hope that also attracted the media. The extra publicity would encourage other contributions for the victim's pets emergency boarding.

On a carefully chosen rain-free day, four walkers set out, on four different trails, with a pack of 10 dogs each. To tire the dogs, they hiked for 1 1/2 hours. Then, at a set time, they arrived at "the log". Each handler talked loudly, so the other teams of dogs would recognize their voices and meet up with the other dogs "politely".

The media, who had air/publishing deadlines, also hiked up to film what could have been mayhem in the making.

But, miraculously the photo session went smoothly! Almost im-paws-ible but true! Forty dogs! No glitches! A great photo! Another professional dog trainer exclaimed, "Seriously! I have no idea how you accomplished this!"

Once the photo was taken, the dogs exploded off the log as if someone yelled, "SQUIRREL!"

Their fun digital photo barked in \$3,000. View/order photo: <http://www.gofundme.com/HavenPetsAndFamily>

"My motto is 'Do what you love'," said Kim, "'think of others, and share the blessings.' Also, my staff, clients and I laughed admitting that we wished our children listened to us as well as our dogs!"

TIPS

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