

# Hound Huddle is a new daycare for dogs in Oregon

By Hannah Disch

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Oregon area dog owners looking for an outlet for pets who are naughty, out of shape, bored or lonely will soon have a new resource.

The Hound Huddle, a doggy day care attached to the Oregon Vet Clinic on Park Street, will open its doors Oct. 1. Many people may not see the need for a doggy day care, but the owners and employees of the Hound Huddle feel that they are providing an important service that will benefit not only dogs but their owners as well.

Sandy Ambrosius, daytime manager, says, "I think that there's a misconception sometimes that the dogs that come to doggy daycare are rich and that kind of thing and that's not the case. I think every dog can benefit from coming to a daycare."

Becky Nettelsteadt, one of the six owners of the Hound Huddle (four of whom are vets at the clinic), adds that "a lot of people hear dog day care and think you're crazy - who would do that? But they don't have one-year-old dogs tearing the house apart."

"The majority of people I know who take their dogs to day care are people working full time who understand that their dogs needs more exercise than they can give them," Nettelsteadt said. "They come here and they're active the whole day. Even if they're not tearing around, they're interested in something, and when they go home they're ready to sleep for the night."

There certainly should be enough going on at the Hound Huddle to keep the dogs active and engaged. The village of Oregon has approved the Hound Huddle to care for up to 70 dogs at a time. Most of the animals will be in a large indoor play area. There is also an outside play area which will be fenced in. Dogs will be rotated through the outside play area in small groups throughout the day.

According to Nettelsteadt, one reason for this is to keep the noise level at a minimum. "We don't want the neighbors to get barked out of town," she said.

The noise factor was also taken into consideration in the indoor areas of the day care, which is well sound-proofed, although noise may be less of a problem than some would expect.

Nettelsteadt said that in several visits to other area doggy day cares, she and other owners only heard barking one time. Unless something unusual happens to excite the dogs, they're just too busy playing to bark. Besides having other dogs to play with, dogs that come to the Hound Huddle will have access to a variety of toys such as large balls, Frisbees, a kiddy play house and a kiddy pool.

Both Ambrosius and Nettelsteadt agree that apart from exercise and entertainment, the socialization that dogs get at day care is very important.

Ambrosius calls socialization the most important thing for dogs and explains that "they need to get out into a dog/dog socialization atmosphere so that they continue to be social with other dogs. So that when you walk them down the street they're not barking and snarling at everybody you walk by."

Socialization with humans is also important for dogs. In some cases, they suffer separation anxiety when spending hours alone at home every day.

Ambrosius says that was something she frequently saw in her work with the Humane Society.

"The dog just can't handle a human not being around. It causes chewing, it causes the dog to destroy certain things in a house, it can cause them to jump through a screen door



Becky Nettelsteadt lifelong love of animals serves her well as she supervises a couple of happy puppies at the new Hound Huddle, an addition to the Oregon Veterinary Clinic on Park Street.

Bill Livick photos

because they're just so nervous and have so much anxiety pent up inside when they don't know where their owner is," she explained.

Daycare gives the dogs the human contact that they need and distracts them from the fact that their owner is gone.

In order to use the day care, dogs do have to pass a socialization evaluation. If it seems like a dog is not able to play well with other dogs, one-on-one training will be available. The trainer in charge of that has done an intensive course in rehabilitating dogs who originally could not be adopted because of their personalities.

Nettelsteadt said some dogs who really want to play with other dogs just need some training to control their excitement. Ambrosius agrees that most dogs can be socialized when given a chance.

Owners can also drop off dogs that have passed their social evaluations at the day care for one-one-one training in basics such as heeling. Evening training classes for the dogs will be available as well, starting with Beginner Obedience and Puppy Socialization with classes in Advanced Agility and Tricks and Games to come.

In addition to the day care and training, the Hound Huddle will provide grooming services and a do-it-yourself-bathing area where owners can bathe their dogs. Nettelsteadt likens the bathing area to the Oregon car wash – there's a walk-in tub with stairs and a nozzled hose which can be switched to shampoo, condition or rinse. A leash-like restraint attached the wall will help keep the dogs in place during their baths.

Some items for dogs, cats and ferrets will be for sale at the Hound Huddle as well. These will include basics such as leashes, collars and food bowls as well as more unique items such as artwork.

A key service that the Hound Huddle provides for dog owners is a convenience.

People can drop their dogs off at 6:30 a.m. and pick them up at 6 p.m. without having to worry that their dogs will create chaos at home or need to go outside before the owners can get home from work. There are a number of packages available through the day care which will allow people to drop off their dogs at day care and add on a bath, nail trim, training session, etc. at discounted rates.

Nettelsteadt says the clinic will offer other services as well. "If a dog's rabies vaccine expires next month, and if they're a client of the clinic, people can set up an appointment so that they can drop them off for day care and get their rabies vaccine too."

The most important aspect of the Hound Huddle is summed up by Dr. Craig Schley (part-owner and veterinarian) who says "dogs will love it."

For more information visit [www.houndhuddle.com](http://www.houndhuddle.com) or call 333-7412.

