

Woof House owner focuses on individual canine care

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Bob Sell took a risk when he left a full-time job to purchase the Woof House in Sheffield Village.

Sell, 45, held a management position with Schwan Food company in Pennsylvania for 25 years, while also working part time at a kennel, AR Pet Inn. It was within the first month of working at this kennel when he realized he had a passion about caring for dogs, and he couldn't waste a chance to pursue a career he was passionate about when he learned Woof House was being sold.

"Working at that kennel, I knew this is what I really wanted to do... so I left everything behind to buy this," Sell laughed.

He purchased the 20-year-old kennel, located at 3497 E. River Road, in January when its previous owners retired.

Woof House offers what Sell referred to as "lodging" services, where families can leave their dogs while they are on vacation or away from home. As sole owner of Woof House today, Sell said he works to ensure the canines he cares for receive individual attention from the minute their owners drop them off until the moment they are picked up.

Along with a place to stay, the business offers 30 rooms of three different sizes to accommodate dogs of all breeds, as well as three out-

door playing areas for exercise where the dogs are let outside a minimum of four times each day. Sell explained the business also follows the animals' usual feeding schedule and provides grooming.

"We try to take care of the dogs here like they're taken care of at home," he said. "We try to keep their routine like they're at home so it's not disruptive and they feel comfortable."

He added the kennel can fit more than 30 dogs, and he's had customers across Lorain County and the Cleveland area leave their pets for more than 30 days at a time.

Sell said his love for the canine-caring profession, as well as the animals themselves, stems from the bonds he formed with dogs his family owned while growing up.

"I just always loved dogs; they always took to me," Sell said. "I just had a knack for (caring for dogs). They love you unconditionally, they're there all the time. They rely on you, and we rely on them as dog owners and pet lovers."

Sell said he believes there is a negative stigma attached to dog kennels.

"A lot of people, I think, have a perception of kennels as being dirty and smelly," he said. "If you have a good kennel and take care of it, it's totally opposite."

Sell, who lives in the apartment property right above the Woof House, said he visited other for-sale kennels in Ohio,



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Bob Sell, owner of the Woof House, tends to dogs staying at the Sheffield Village kennel.

West Virginia and Maine before purchasing Woof House. He cited his kennel as unique due to it being smaller in size than those that house hundreds of dogs. This size serves as a benefit to the animals, he said, as it allows him to better manage and offer individual care to each dog.

"I wanted a kennel this small because you have more of a one-on-one with the dogs,"

he said. "It's manageable versus having 100 or 150 dogs. I just don't believe that individual care can be given with that much going on. If I need to spend extra time with a dog, you can do that (at Woof House)."

Sell noted he feels a sense of satisfaction in taking care of dogs, serving his customers and having a profession he enjoys. He didn't know that a

former part-time gig at a kennel, and his decision to put his passion to work, would subsequently lead to his current ownership of Woof House.

"It was very scary leaving what I know for 25 years in a management position, and leaving it for the unknown... Turns out it worked out in my favor," he said. "Leaving my full-time job after 25 years and buying this place was the best

thing I did."

Woof House operates on an appointment-only basis. Its appointment windows are Mondays through Fridays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 3 to 5 p.m. Saturdays, and Sundays' appointment windows are 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The business can be reached at 440-277-0577 or visit woof-house.com for more information.