

9 out of 10 dogs woof their approval for professional dog sitter

Career idea came from advertisement



Scott Kett owns the Ann Arbor-based business A2 Pet Solutions.



SMALL BUSINESS

BY TINA REED
The Ann Arbor News

If you ever see A2 Pet Solutions owner Scott Kett driving around town, take a closer look.

Chances are you might find the professional dog sitter cruising by with 14 wet-nosed, wagging-tailed friends in tow.

That's because every day, no matter the weather, Kett picks up a group of Ann Arbor area dogs to take them out to play while their owners are at work. His business includes trips to the dog park or dog walking, cat care, transportation to the veterinarian and house sitting. For special rates, he offers pet care during the holidays.

It's an idea the Ann Arbor resident got five years ago after quitting his job as a volunteer coordinator and seeing a want ad for a dog walker.

"It just sort of clicked for me," Kett said. "I don't know if it's like how some people say they meet somebody and they know they're the one. I got a Web site and the business was up and running a week later."

Like a school bus driver dropping off his precious cargo, Kett pulls up to a friend's grassy, fenced-in Ypsilanti yard in his white mini van and lets the dogs run and play in what he calls the dog park. It's only for an hour, but he said the dogs love having the chance to play outdoors and socialize together.

"If we could take a poll of dogs and they could actually talk about if they would be interested in coming to this, I think nine out of 10 dogs would," Kett said.

Q: Why do you think your business has been successful?

A: "I think there are several factors. You have a lot of professionals here who make a decent income and can afford it. But I think, more importantly, there are people who



ROBERT CHASE, THE ANN ARBOR NEWS

Scott Kett plays with some of the dogs he exercises on Thursday in Ypsilanti. Kett picks up the dogs in his "Dog Taxi" and takes them to a fenced area where they can run around.

really love their dogs and want the best for their dogs. I think the majority of dogs right now are sitting at home bored."

Q: What do you enjoy about playing with the dogs?

A: "They're really a lot like kids. Some are kind of shy and quiet; and some are very sensitive, some are not sensitive at all. Some are jocks. Mulligan right here is the most happy-go-lucky ... that German Shorthair right over there doesn't like to be messed with; he takes things very seriously, that black one over there is content just to walk around ... Sophie over there just loves playing fetch. It sounds weird to talk about them like that, but it's true."

Q: How do people react when they see you out here with 14 dogs?

A: "I've had people stop by and ask what's going on. They'll ask, 'are you selling dogs?' A lot of people

Scott Kett, owner of A2 Pet Solutions

- **Age:** 37.
- **Residence:** Ann Arbor.
- **Education:** Earned general degree studying elementary education at Eastern Michigan University in 2000.
- **Background:** Volunteer coordinator for Maria Madeline project in 2002. IT recruiter for a California firm in 2001.
- **Startup cost:** \$1,500.
- **Contact:** Visit www.a2petsolutions.com or call 734-678-4771.

down the road and I've got 14 dogs in the van and people don't notice. Just a few days ago, I was stopped at a light and a young lady just pulled up real slowly, just took the longest look, and smiled."

Q: Why did you want to start your own business?

A: "I've always loved dogs and I've always had a business sense ... It's just been an awesome experience. I realize more and more as I meet people, they really envy somebody that can work for themselves and make a good living at it. It's exciting."

The Small Business Q&A appears on Mondays. To nominate a small business owner, contact business reporter Tina Reed at 734-994-6843 or treed@annarbornews.com. Tips also may be faxed to 734-994-6879 or mailed to Small Business Q&A, The Ann Arbor News, P.O. Box 1147, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

don't notice because they are really wrapped up in their day. What's even weirder is when I'm driving