

Not Just Another Day at the Office

Take Your Dog To Work Day is anything but business as usual.

By Sandy Robins

For the past four years, 6-year-old American Pit Bull Terrier Chloe has been going to work with her owner Christine Eluskie on Take Your Dog To Work Day. The moment they arrive at their destination, Chloe seems to know this isn't just another typical outing.

Instead, she's destined for a day of fun and games with other dogs and being spoiled by everyone at Village Green, the property management company in Farmington Hills, Mich., where Eluskie works.

Find out if your company can participate in this annual event just like the staff at Village Green in Farmington Hills, Mich., does. Courtesy Village Green "The office is staffed by 80 employees and at least 30 dogs showed up for the last event," Eluskie says. "It was like a doggie carnival.

"We go out of our way to make it as much fun for dogs, their owners, and for everyone else in the office. Everyone involved brings their pet's bed, along with food and treats. "Some even bring baby gates to ensure their pets don't wander.

"I can tell that Chloe relishes every moment being by my side, and it's reciprocal. At the same time, we are very mindful of co-workers who are allergic and possibly even afraid of dogs."

Take Your Dog To Work Day was established by Pet Sitters International a decade ago to celebrate what great companions dogs make and to encourage adoption.

The idea behind the event is to highlight what wonderful companions dogs are, so PSI advises that participants team up with a local animal shelter and invite its staff to take adoptable pets to the company's building on Take Your Dog To Work Day.

"In the first year, only a few hundred businesses participated," says Beth Stultz, marketing specialist for Pet Sitters International. "Last year, more than 88,000 visitors from around the world went to our website to find out how to join in the event.

Bob Smith and Buckley have a rockin'

good time together at Apple Music in Fredericksburg, Va. Courtesy Bob Smith "It's a great low-cost pet perk companies can offer during a time when many businesses have been forced to cut jobs and decrease benefits. And it's for a great cause to promote local pet adoption.

"We believe that through this day, co-workers without pets get to witness the human-animal bond firsthand and are encouraged to adopt a dog of their own."

So that all the dogs participating at Eluskie's office event have a doggone good time, the company invites a dog massage therapist to come.

"The charge is \$5 for a massage. Employees also make a \$25 donation on behalf of their dog that benefits the Animal Placement Bureau, a local pet adoption organization in Lansing, Mich.," Eluskie says.

Eluskie also fosters dogs in her home, and co-workers who would like to take part but don't have dogs of their own are allowed to "adopt" a foster dog for the day.

"It's worked out really well because we've actually had eight dogs find forever homes as a result," Eluskie says. Apart from getting a massage, the dogs also take part in a parade around the office.

Courtesy Beth Stultz, Kim Ahlstrom “Last year, the dogs dressed up as superheroes. This year the theme is Going Green. Local vendors are very supportive, donating gift certificates and a variety of items for an online auction that we have going on throughout the day.

“At lunchtime we take the all the dogs outside and set up an agility course for them to have some fun.”

Before you even consider taking part, it’s important for your company to establish whether the building where you work is pet-friendly, as many leases on commercial properties have a no-pets-allowed clause.

“In office situations where there is a no-pets-allowed policy, dog lovers can consider holding an event in a dog park after work or even a fundraiser to benefit a local shelter,” Stultz says.

Some psychologists say that instead of being disruptive in an office environment, pets actually have a positive effect, boosting employee morale and thereby increasing productivity and sales, as well as improving communication between staff members.

Keep this factoid handy if you’re interested in lobbying your to company participate.

Take Your Dog To Work Day is June 26. For information and to register, visit www.takeyourdog.com

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