

Grooming service sets tails wagging



Truman alumna Laci Cook, with her dog Mi-Mi, opened Pawsitive Animalworks about two years ago. Pawsitive offers unconventional grooming services such as pet massages, aromatherapy, blueberry facials and “yappy hours.”

BY ANSHU THAPA
for the Index

Dog lover Laci Cook puts her passion to good use.

Two years ago, Cook founded Pawsitive Animalworks, an animal grooming business for Kirksville pooches. The idea of opening a pet grooming store came from Cook's love for animals, she said. Cook said she noticed a great need for pet facilities in Kirksville, so she started giving pet massages as a side job, and the business grew from there.

“I decided instead of doing a day-to-day job, I would like to do something I really like,” Cook said.

Cook said she started out massaging pets at home, and that a lot of people suggested the need for a grooming service. After seeing a demand, she decided to take her business to another level.

“My client base built up,” Cook said. “I started doing a lot of research and focusing groups for grooming. Later the boutique aspect came along.”

A certified pet massage practitioner, Cook said she received her certification from the Pet Massage and

Research Institute in Toledo, Ohio.

“I am actually one of four pet massagers that are located in the state of Missouri,” Cook said.

Like other grooming stores, Pawsitive offers pedicures, haircuts and teeth brushing for pets, but other services such as pet massages, aromatherapy and blueberry facials make it more like an upscale spa, Cook said. Pawsitive also has a pet boutique and offers activities for pets to socialize.

Cook, a Truman alumna, said she takes pride in the service she offers and the positive feedback she gets from clients.

“We get a lot of compliments on our friendliness and how we interact with the pets,” Cook said.

Bathing and grooming are essential for a healthy pet, Cook said.

Cook said pets receive massages

and grooming at the spa for the same reason people do.

“You can wash your face at home or you can have a professional facial done,” Cook said. “It's same with dogs. When you take your pet to a

professional you get better products and services.”

Cook said she mainly treats dogs and cats at her store. She said she has had rare requests for grooming rabbits and gerbils but that she hasn't done it yet.

Cook said Kirksville has a lot of room for growth to become a pet-friendly place. She said that because Kirksville is a rural community, many people still have dogs for work or protection but that she is surprised to see the turnout from University students.

“When I was a student, a lot of off-campus apartments didn't allow

pets,” Cook said. “I think renters are being more accepting and friendly now to have pets because I see a lot more Truman students than I expected.”

To fulfill pets' socializing needs, Pawsitive organizes “yappy hours” every Friday. Yappy hour starts with obedience classes followed by socializing with other dogs and dog owners. Cook said Pawsitive Animal Works has different events during the year like Howl-O-Ween Spooktacular, a costume party for pets, and Christmas socials including pictures with Santa.

James Cianciola, assistant professor of communication, discovered the store while taking his dog Enna on a walk around the Square. Cianciola said that after visiting the store in its previous location he liked what Pawsitive offered and, more importantly, liked the attitude Cook showed toward the animals. Cook has been his dog's groomer ever since.

Cianciola said he loves to take Enna there and can see how excited Enna gets upon her arrival.

“Laci comes out and gives a big hug to Enna, which is really cute,” Cianciola said. “She is a very kind person, and she does a great job with our dog.”

Cianciola said Enna attended the dog training session this summer and has benefited a lot from it.

“She is a much better dog now,” he said. “Enna is a good girl.”

Cook even gave Enna a report card, documenting how Enna behaved throughout her grooming session.

“Enna's card read ‘I am a little angel,’” Cianciola said.

Cianciola said he also purchases Enna's dog food at Pawsitive because it is all-natural.

Cook said she gets the dog treats from her dealer Merrick because they are healthier than other pet food. Usually treats available at stores contain a lot of fillers and artificial coloring, she said.

Senior Meghan Naida said she visited Pawsitive for the first time to get winter clothing for her three-month-old Chihuahua and that she was impressed by the products and services Pawsitive has to offer.

“They seemed to know what they were doing as far as grooming dogs,” Naida said. “I would trust to take my dog there.”

She said she was excited to find out that Pawsitive has social activities for the pets. Naida is planning to take her dog Bella for the Halloween costume party at Pawsitive.

“She is going to be a ladybug,” Naida said.

Naida said she has already started recommending this place to her

friends who own dogs.

Pawsitive carries clothes to warm up Bella for winter, nail polishes for Enna's little toe nails and glittery collars and leashes to add a touch of trendiness and certify a pup as the hottest thing on four legs. Cook said to groom pets at home, Pawsitive has shampoo, conditioner, aroma bubble bath and hygiene items like disposable mint toothbrushes and breath mints to make the grooming experience fun, she said.

Cook said every dog that visits Pawsitive will receive one-on-one attention and have a tail-wagging experience.

Tips for grooming your pet at home

- Grooming sessions should **be fun for the both of you**, so be sure to schedule them when your pet's relaxed, perhaps after exercise or eating.
- You want your pet to remember grooming sessions **in a positive way**, so you never want to risk losing your temper.
- Keep your first grooming sessions **short—just 5 to 10 minutes**. Gradually lengthen the time.
- Brush your pet's coat **thoroughly every day** to help keep its hair in good condition by removing dirt, spreading natural oil throughout the coat and preventing tangles.
- Trim the nails **once a month** using specifically designed clippers.
- Clean the ears **twice every month**.
- If your pet is extremely stressed out, **cut the session short and try again** when it's calmer. And remember to pile on the praise and offer it a treat throughout the session to make the experience fun.

Design by Jessica Rapp/Index

Student bands jazz up the campus atmosphere

BY JASON QUALLS
for the Index

As autumn leaves begin to fall, University students and Kirksville residents might enjoy their evenings in the warm indoors listening to the cool sounds of jazz.

Several small groups on campus enrich their own musicianship by enriching the community with jazz music. These groups, the University's own jazz combos, have been a part of the music department for years. Recently they have become more active in other areas of campus life as well as in Kirksville's bars and restaurants, as live entertainment.

“I think [jazz] is not a style that is overexposed for sure,” said Tim AuBuchon, assistant professor of music and director of jazz studies. “There's always a lot of blues and rock and whatever, so [jazz] is adding to the richness of the Kirksville musical scene,” he said.

Four jazz combos currently meet on a weekly basis, AuBuchon said. Each combo has four to six musicians, ranging from bassists and drummers to pianists and saxophone players.

Students earn one credit hour for their participation, according to the music department's Web site. Each combo has several performances throughout the semester.

AuBuchon said the newly renovated Student Union Building will be a great new venue for live jazz music. Concerts will take place on Oct. 22 and Nov. 12 at 9 p.m.

“We're playing the Down Un-

der,” AuBuchon said. “Those last two [concerts] will have refreshments provided by the SUB.”

Although AuBuchon requires his students to perform on campus, many members of the jazz combos also have decided to take their talents into the Kirksville community. Jazz combos perform weekly at Il Spazio and the Salamander Grill — not for class credit but for the experience and sometimes as paid gigs, he said.

Junior Tony Kroeger, a member of the self-named jazz combo Gumbo Jazz, said he has been playing jazz in local venues for

about two semesters.

“It's nice being in a standard group that you're used to playing in,” he said. “You can tell what somebody's going to do before they do it almost, and you can play off that.”

Kroeger said Gumbo Jazz has played at the Salamander Grill weekly for several months, excluding summer break. The group decided last week to hold a jam session in which anyone interested could perform with them, he said.

“It's also a lot of fun to have new people coming in,” Kroeger said. “It's just a new experience.”

Senior Adam Yanick, a fellow member of Gumbo Jazz, said the jazz combos are popular in the community.

“We had an offer one time to do a house party,” Yanick said, adding that the reaction to their live music might be even more

positive at a venue closer to campus or on the square.

That's one of the reasons AuBuchon said he requires his students to play on campus. Live interaction with each other and with an audience enriches the musical experience, he said.

“I think they've improved a lot since we've started [playing concerts in the SUB Down Under],” he said.

AuBuchon has played jazz in live venues for years, and he said performing jazz is a unique experience for both the players and the audience.

“If you're a hardcore jazz listener or musician, you can be right up in front, five feet from the front and not be blasted by them, ... and if you're 50 feet away, you can have a conversation,” he said. “It's a more intimate musical experience.”

AuBuchon said that al-

though some people might not enjoy jazz as much as others, he thinks that the improvisational nature of the music is an entertaining and important part of American culture.

“It's good to have that art form which is, at least in its origins, a purely American art form,” he said. “They're creating something on the spot. It creates a really good energy.”

Yanick, who also is a member of the local band Deadwood and formerly of the Dance Commanders, said all live music deserves attention from students and the Kirksville community.

“There's stuff that any live local group plays that would interest every student and local resident,” he said.

Although the jazz players might be biased, their love for music still offers the community a unique and significant addition.



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