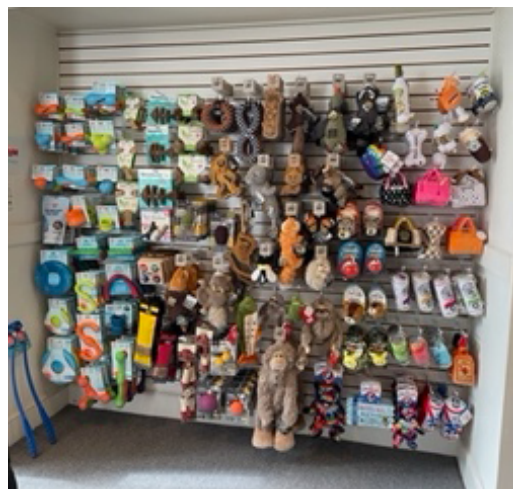


Lucky Dogs: A Local Success Story

Lucky Dogs is a New York-based pet products and services provider. For 15 years, the company has sold dog food, supplements and other products and has provided services including dog walking and in-home pet sitting.

Pet Care Weekly spoke with co-owners Amy and Pat Schiek about how the business started and how they've found success with pet owners in their local community of Skaneateles.

Pet Care Weekly publisher Chris Kelly is a Skaneateles native and frequents Lucky Dogs along with his wife Lynn and their 5-year-old Boston Terrier, Moxie. Lucky Dogs has been instrumental in choosing the right diet products for Moxie, as well her treats. Plus, Pat and Amy always welcome her in the store, with all the sights and smells she loves!



Moxie

Pet Care Weekly: What was the inspiration for Lucky Dogs? How did you get started? What makes Skaneateles the ideal spot?

Lucky Dogs: In 2008, Amy recognized a need for in-home pet sitting and daily dog walks in our town. She started as the sole employee and quickly added more staff due to a very positive reaction in the community. Skaneateles is ideal because of the number of pets owned by people in the community and how they look for highly qualified people to look after them.

PCW: What services do you offer? Why?

LD: We offer daily dog walks and in-home pet sitting. We have two mobile grooming vans and also have a retail boutique in downtown Skaneateles. With in-home pet sitting, we know from personal experience that some pets do better when their owners travel if they can stay in their own environment and have a pet sitter come to them. Boarding at kennels doesn't work for every pet. Mobile grooming is a similar concept. With mobile grooming, the dogs receive individual attention from a groomer, are never put in a crate, and do not have to travel in a car to a salon, which can be stressful for some dogs, especially older dogs.

PCW: How do you differentiate your services from the national big-box and e-commerce players? Does this factor into your decisions on what products you carry?

LD: We definitely seek out products that are not in big box stores and

don't have a large e-commerce presence. That isn't always easy to do so differentiation is really important to us. In the retail space it is especially important. Finding vendors who can help us learn about the benefits of what they offer is really important. We take pride in having a very deep level of knowledge in the products we carry and can provide individual attention to customers who are concerned about things like nutrition and supplements for their pets. The person who shops with us or uses our services has a very special bond with their pet and wants the very best for them over their entire lifespan. We also look for vendors who have a corporate social responsibility initiative. That is very important to our customers. One instance would be Open Farm food which offers a free recycling program for used bags of dog and cat food. It's free to us and our customers, and our customers really like the fact that it is environmentally conscious. As far as differentiation in grooming, we make sure to invest in continuing education for our groomers every year.

PCW: Do you hold any regular events that bring in existing and potential new customers?

LD: There are four months each year that have five Saturdays in them. We have created a 5th Saturday Club. Members of the club get a reusable shopping bag with the Lucky Dogs logo on it. Each time there is a 5th Saturday, those customers get 20% off whatever they can fit into the bag - no exclusions, all products are fair game, even food.



PCW: Why do you think pet owners choose Lucky Dogs and keep coming back?

LD: We think our customers choose and keep coming back because they want the very best for their pets and recognize we strive to deliver that for them. We also believe that our customers really enjoy the experience they have with Lucky Dogs, whether in our store or with our services. The individual attention they receive means a lot to them. We also live in a community that realizes the importance of supporting local business.

PCW: Can you tell us a little about your team? Have you always worked in pet services, or was Lucky Dogs a new direction for you?

LD: Prior to starting Lucky Dogs in 2008, Amy worked in outside sales in the corporate world. Pat

retired from a successful career in the medical device industry in 2017 and joined Lucky Dogs after that. We have two full-time employees doing grooming who have always worked in the grooming area. Our pet sitters, dog walkers, and store employees come from various backgrounds.

PCW: What are you most looking forward to for Lucky Dogs in the coming months and years?

LD: We are looking forward to continuing to enrich the lives of pets and their pet parents of Central New York. We plan on remaining active in the community supporting programs like ClearPath for Veterans which trains service dogs for wounded veterans. Skaneateles, NY is a delightful place to live and work in, but, we do hope to be able to do some traveling as we grow the business and bring on more employees.