



Better than a Mission Statement

Our Strategic Vision

Almost every business has a mission statement. Unfortunately, once those mission statements are created and shared, they are almost always forgotten, and have little if anything to do with everyone's day-to-day work.

Thankfully, this isn't a "mission statement." It's a strategic vision – meaning it can actually be followed into the future. The main difference is that we can all relate to it and act on it with our daily work. It's designed to let us all know how we fit into the ShagBark story in meaningful ways. It will be used on a regular basis – by everyone – as a guide for who we serve best, how we serve them best, and why it is truly worthwhile to work here.

Probably the most important part of this is the fact that all of us must clearly understand not just our work, but exactly how that impacts our customer's lives. We have to know how our actions will improve the happiness and quality of life of our customers and their pets. Not only do we need to know it, we need to communicate it with our actions.

We're excited about this vision and we hope you will be too. Thanks for taking the time to read it, and we hope you find your place in it.

Brian and Shannon McGuire, Owners
Oct 2011





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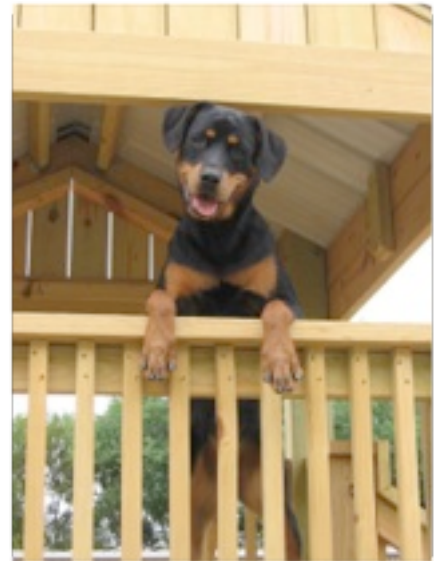
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Who We Should Serve Best

Margret Maryfoild is a single, middle aged woman who lives alone with her extremely spoiled bichon mix named Maximus. Margret loves to travel, however Maximus gets car sick on long trips and is a bit of a barker in strange situations. Margret used to work out of the house a lot until her new promotion, which unfortunately requires her to travel a lot more. Not being able to swallow the thought of her adorable Maximus pining for her attention for hours until she returned, she looked into other arrangements.

Margret heard about “doggie daycare” from Judy a co-worker. Judy also lived in Lake County and highly recommended Shag Bark Pet Retreat & Spa. “They changed my Molly! The training program is second to none! While she was there for a three week in-residence training program they conducted a sociability/temperament test and Molly passed. She then became a part of their daycare group. Now when ever we have guests over or we go out of town, I never have to worry about Molly. She can’t wait to get into the door at Shag Bark and I get to watch all the fun she is having online while we are gone. They are GREAT!”

Margret was impressed with the raving review, but still had reservations. Molly was a big lab with endless energy, she wasn’t even sure that Maximus would like playing with other dogs like Molly. She thought about it and went online to Shag Bark’s website. She was equally impressed with the details and professionalism it provided, her curiosity was high and she still had many questions. She decided to call at lunch. The phone only





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rang twice before a very welcoming voice said: “Thank you for calling Shag Bark Pet Retreat & Spa my name is Ann how may I help you”?



How We Serve Them Best

Now let's talk service. This means that our customer's dog is happy. They think to themselves, “My dog is having as good a time or better than I am” while they are here. Our goal is to have everything our customers need. But it doesn't end there. Having options available is good, but it only becomes excellent when the way those services are provided and priced exceeds expectations.

In doing that, we have to have excellent service, products, and professionals. But we also have to have a culture that inspires everyone to think ahead, and to consider what might be important to any particular client. Perhaps it's just a reassuring phone call or an unexpected gift at checkout...whatever it is, it's found by paying attention to our customers' needs and acting in meaningful ways.



Margret proceeded to discuss with Ann the anxiety she had about leaving her beloved Maximus. Will Maximus get hurt playing with a large dog like Molly? What if Maximus doesn't pass this temperament test? What is a temperament test? What if I have to go out of town? When can I drop him off? I need to be at work early... Ann sensed the hesitation in her voice, so she started from the beginning.



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“Good afternoon Margret you said you have a little one named Maximus”? “Yes” “What kind of dog is he”? “*He’s a bichon mix*.” Ahhh I can’t wait to meet him. You’re currently interested in daycare”? “*I think so, I work long hours and I don’t want him to sit at home all day.*” “Our daycare is an amazing mix of high energy fun play groups, lower key social bonding time, and interactive lesson periods. We have the most unique curriculum that keeps our pups engaged all day. They truly go home tired”!

“Curriculum”? *I thought they just play*”? “Our group is unique because we have added what typical play groups lack, we rotate the dogs through three different programs through the day . During what we call our Gym class, dogs are grouped together based on play styles in order to promote exercise through high energy play. Every month our sport changes to keep it interesting and to appeal to all play types. For example, October explores soccer related activities. Our Lesson time involves teaching anything from tricks, to household manners or training commands. Lesson time is designed to empower the dogs with a sense of purpose and accomplishment similar to that of a true working dog. These skills are then often utilized in the Gym class activities of the curriculum.



For October it’s “Up”, which will aid when working with different obstacles. This also helps strengthen the bond between your dog and our staff as we learn together. It’s meant to be fun and interactive, everyone is rewarded and kept moving.

We also have Story time every day which provides the group with the much needed down time, but keeps them engaged and interested. This is also a great snuggle time providing them with the human interaction they all love. Our groups rotate through out



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these stations all day providing them with a well rounded active day. Everyone naps from 12-2 and we begin the rotation again in the afternoon. Every month the theme changes and we add extra fun with craft projects and holiday actives or parties. We truly have so much fun; our pups don't want to leave". "Wow I had no idea. That sounds amazing! I don't even give him all that when I'm home with him. I have to come by and see your facility, do I have to make an appointment"?

"No, we are open 7 days/week and you are welcome to come during any of our office hours and we would be happy to show you around". "Fantastic. What else will he need"? "Well we need to set up an evaluation and he has to be up to date with all his vaccinations, is he over 6 months"? "Yes he is, he is 8 months, why do you ask"? "When they are over 6 months of age we require them to be spayed and neutered".

"Oh, yes he had that taken care of". "Great! Did you want to schedule the evaluation now"? "Can I do that when I come in"? "Absolutely. Can I answer any other questions you might have at this time"? "No I can't think of anything you haven't already covered. You have been very helpful". "Your welcome we look forward to meeting you both soon". "Thank you, good bye". "Good bye".

Margret couldn't wait to tell Maximus all about daycare and Shag Bark. She was so excited she shared her conversation with the ladies at lunch. She found herself driving a different way home that night, she just couldn't wait to see the facility. She pulled to a place she drove past a hundred times and had no idea of all the activity that went on there every day. She was always so impressed by how neat and well groomed the property looked every time she has driven by. When she walked in she was greeted by a huge smile on the other side of a counter. "Hello! Can I help you"? "Are you Ann"? "No





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I'm Sarah, can I help you with anything"? "I was hoping to look around if that would be ok"? "Absolutely, are you interested in Lodging"? "No, just daycare". "Ohhh you have a playful one at home"? "I hope so, we have never done anything like this before." "Let me show you what he has to look forward too at a day in the life at Shag Bark."

Sarah walked Margret through the bunking areas where Maximus would nap and then showed her a brightly colored room where the dogs were frolicking together and looking so happy. She had the opportunity to see one group in story time relaxed and cuddled around a sweet girl reading a book, and they really looked like they enjoyed the story. ...and another group were in gym class, the dogs looked to be having so much fun.

She was amazed by the play equipment made for dogs... and the yards were huge. They had there own jungle gym to play on. She couldn't help but notice that the facility sparkled and smelled fantastic. For as many dogs as she could see she didn't smell dogs. The floors were clean and the bunking areas were cute and clean and the yards were huge. She was so impressed she wanted to play herself.



In the office she was shown some of the art projects that are made and was given all of the month's happenings. She was overwhelmed by all the actives provided. The conversations just seemed to flow so easily between her and Sarah. She found herself telling Sarah all about her little man and all his funny little habits. She couldn't believe how easy it was to talk to Sarah and how comfortable she felt doing so.

As she read through the paperwork, she had the opportunity to see a daycare pup going home. While Sarah left to get the dog, she asked the owner if he was happy with the



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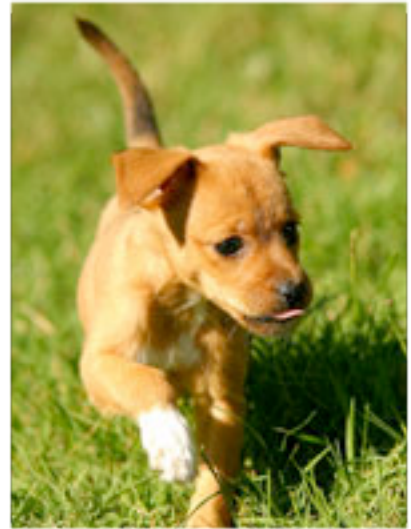


facility. “ I can’t even drive down Grass Lake Road without Chloe going crazy in the car. She LOVES it here! They do a great job and when we have to go out of town there is never any guilty feeling because she is having a great time with all her friends. She will sleep for a day now because she played so hard. We love it!”

Just then Sarah and Chloe, a very happy black lab, came bounding into the office. She said hello to Margret before making her way to her owner. “Thank you” Margret said. “Not a problem, good night Sarah” he said as he and Chloe left.

“When can I bring Maximus for an evaluation”? Sarah made all the arrangements she even called Margret’s vet to make sure he had everything needed and the records faxed over. He was all set for tomorrow. Margret couldn’t wait to tell Maximus.

The next day on her way to work she dropped Maximus off. She was greeted with a huge smile and a good morning from Sarah. “So this is Maximus! He is so adorable!” Sarah walked to the other side of the counter and made a squeaky noise that made Maximus’ butt wiggle in way Margret has never seen. He pulled to get to Sarah as she squatted down towards the floor. “Hey baby, aren’t you just the cutest little guy”... Margret felt a wave of ease flow over her in that moment. Maximus didn’t even look back at her as Sarah led him through the door.



When Sarah returned she went over all the paper work and what was in store for Maximus today. “Can I call and check on him”? “Absolutely”! She felt better and off to work she went.



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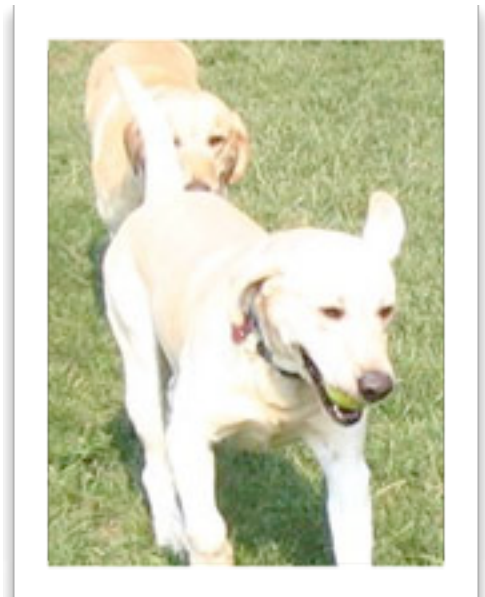
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She contained herself until lunch time and had to call to find out how her little one was doing. : “Thank you for calling Shag Bark Pet Retreat & Spa my name is Ann how may I help you today”? “Hi Ann it’s Margret how is Maximus doing?” “Hello Margret, let me find out exactly how today is going, hold on one moment”. She was put on hold and when Ann returned she learned that Maximus is a people lover that passed the human sociability tests but was not faring so well with the dog-to-dog interactions thus far.

Margret a little upset by the news asked what about the next step. Ann explained that Brian would finish the day with him and gain a complete understanding about his personality. He will then call you and discuss the next step.”

In a phone conversation with Brian, the owner and trainer at the facility, Margaret was reassured that Maximus was not a bad dog nor was she a bad “mom”. The technical observation was that Maximus presented signs of resource guarding, challenged other dog’s status through posturing and offensive displays of physicality, but in laymen’s terms he was acting like a confident dog that was unsure of how to play and not used to sharing with other dogs.



Fortunately, these were not insurmountable issues and a few private training sessions were suggested to get Maximus on his way to improved sociability. This news made Margret very happy. She wanted to start right a way, at this point she couldn’t see having Maximus anywhere else. So she and Brian set up a couple of private consultations to see how far they could go with Maximus.



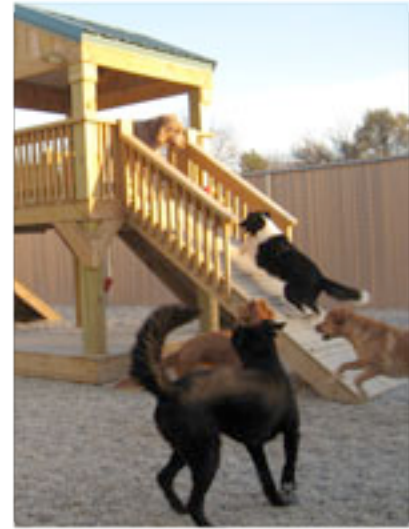
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They meet once a week and the information that was given about dog behavior and the way canines think and communicate blew her mind. She never knew all the cues and signals that were given a daily basis, and after she knew what they all meant she was able to work on fixing them at home. Every week she gained more knowledge and saw a different side to her little companion. She now felt equipped with an “ethology toolbox” filled with information and techniques that empowered her to communicate with Maximus.

She started to improve his selfish behavior and was now making him heel behind her. Walks became more enjoyable. He no longer barked excessively or jumped when greeting new people. She found someone who could teach her how to be the best parent to Maximus. Now with Maximus approved for daycare, he spends his days romping among his new dog friends while she has peace of mind at work.



The day came for her to travel for work and she dreaded the idea of being away from Maximus. Yet, somehow the idea of him playing everyday eased her mind, so she called to set up the reservation. Ann walked her through the routine and put him down for the five day stay. She asked if Margret would like him groomed before picking him up and the thought of that one stop shop was really cool. “I would love to pick up a clean and freshly groomed dog... yes please!” When she came to drop him off she was greeted with Sarah’ big smile and enjoyed the wiggle dance that Maximus preformed at the sight of her. Sarah walked Margret through every part of Maximus’ stay again, and answered any last minute questions.

She then went and got Katie to talk through Maximus’s spa treatments. Katie walked in with a smile and introduced herself as the grooming manager. She felt through



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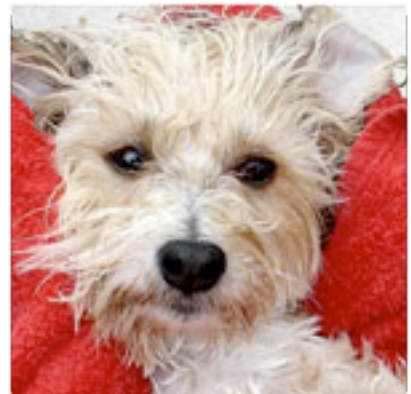


Maximus' coat and looked at his ears and skin. She then stood up and walked through the grooming form with Margret. "What is your ideal look for Maximus?" "Well I like him to be a little longer on the body with the nice round full head." "Ok, I noticed a little matting in some area's but what concerns me is how red his skin and ears are in areas. Does he scratch or chew on himself?" "Nothing that would concern me, he does shake his head sometimes and he scoots across the floor occasionally." "That is usually a sign that he is in need of an anal expression, I can take care of that for you. Do you take him swimming?" "Well sometimes if we are on our walks he likes to go in the creeks and play, is that bad?" "No, but it does explain some of the matting. And depending on what he is swimming in and if he gets it washed off after being in the creek... that might account for the patchy skin.

I would recommend a skin remoistening treatment on him to address the irritation. I can keep his cut like you like it, I do suggest we keep his stomach shorter to help with matting. I can blend the different lengths to keep it visually appealing." "That sounds great, thank you".

She once again felt she learned something and loved watching as Maximus wiggled and eagerly pulled on the leash to go into the facility as Katie walked him back. She truly felt as though he was in such good hands.

Off to the airport she went. Half way through her trip she got to missing her little man she remembered hearing about Facebook and daily updates. She quickly logged on and was amazed with the content. She started to look through the days pictures and there she saw him, her little man playing and having fun. She looked through pictures of a new art projects being done and was excited that she would have a little surprise waiting for her when she got home.





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She was so happy to see him and he was so happy looking she felt the need to write a little note. “Hi my little Maximus, so glad you’re having so much fun! I miss you see you in a couple of days!” She once again felt at ease and off to sleep she went. The following day was off to a bad start for Margaret.

She was late to her meeting, her computer was acting strangely and she lost her room key in the parking lot and had to walk around in the rain looking for it. Soaking wet, tired, and frustrated she made it back to her room. After a shower and some room service she logged on and found a message waiting for her. “Hi mom! I love sleeping over with all my friends. I’m having so much fun, can’t wait to tell you all about it tomorrow! Love you!” “She wanted to cry, she knew he didn’t actually write it, but it filled her with such a warm feeling and she was so thankful for those words on this day. She was so eager to get home from the long week.

She had a phone message waiting for her when she got off the plane that he was all finished with his groom and waiting for her. She rushed straight to Shag Bark and couldn’t wait to see him. Sarah’ smile once again greeted her and she felt like she was talking to an old friend as she summarized her week of long dull meetings and mishaps.

The office door opened and Sarah introduced Margret to Rebecca. Margret recognized her from Facebook. She was the one in the pictures doing the art projects and reading to the dogs. Rebecca is our Lodging Manager she wanted to talk to before she brought up Maximus.





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Rebecca greeted Margret with a smile and showed her a form that was used to monitor food and water intake, bathroom breaks, overall attitude, and a daily health check. I don't want to alarm you, everything is fine. I just wanted to let you know that I found a tick on Maximus under his front right leg. I removed it, cleaned it, and have kept an eye on it. It looks fine. If you notice any redness or if he starts to bother with it, you may want to bring him in to get it checked. But currently he is great! We have just fallen in love with him. I will go get him now, I'm sure your eager to see him".

As Margret looked over the health form and paid for his stay, Rebecca went to retrieve all of Maximus belongings. She collected his toys and leashed him up and off to the office he wiggled. He bounded through the door and ran to Margret's feet. "He is so clean... look how great he looks, oh she did an amazing job on his groom!" Margret picked up her little companion and they exchanged kisses and hugs.

"Before you go Maximus has an art project for you". Rebecca brought back a white paw print that had been turned into a ghost with goggled eyes and his name written on it. She was waiting for this all day, finally something to hang on the fridge. Overwhelmed and wanting to get home she picked up Maximus and headed home.



On the way out Sarah handed her a piece of paper to read later. In the parking lot Margret crossed paths with another Shag Bark team member out on a walk with a very ambitious husky. She watched as the gentleman keep the husky under control, but would run with her one minute then let her smell and roll in the grass the next. It appeared as though they both were enjoying themselves. She smiled as she watched the him take a picture of the husky. Facebook.... Margret thought. As they headed to the car Margret heard "Bye Maximus!" Margret turned to see the gentleman with the



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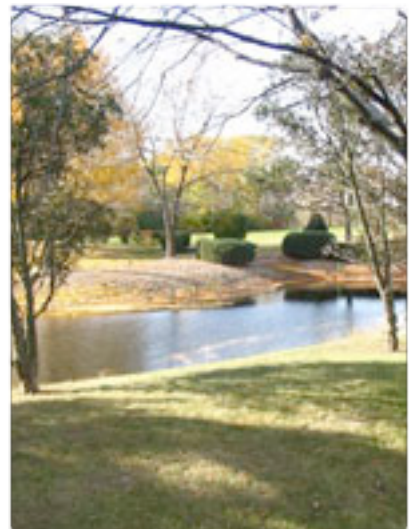
husky walking towards the building. “He has such a personality! I love how he dances on his hind legs for a treat. He is so cute!” He does do that, Margret thought. “You know Maximus too?” “Of Course!” Margret smiled and waved good bye to him.

You’re a little superstar Maximus, thought Margret as she got them both in the car. Margret rolled her windows down and could hear the gentleman yell out “goodnight Maggie!”, as he waved to a woman walking a large hairy dog towards her car. Margret thought as she drove away how cool it was that the staff truly knows all the dogs’ names and personalities. It’s not just yellow lab and black lab it’s Otis and Samantha.

After all the excitement of being reunited and getting home was over, she finally had time to read the paper that Sarah had handed her. Shag Bark’s Spooktacular Sleepover. A two day daycare event that promised to give the pups Halloween fun Dog style! She looked up at the couch and saw Maximus zonked out on his back, legs in the air, as he snored. She tacked the flyer up by the new art work on the fridge and headed to bed.

Maximus was so worn out she had to wake him up the next morning to go out. She left him home and went off for her morning walk. Two blocks in, she watched as her neighbor struggled and pulled to keep control of her boxer. “Good morning Jessie!” “Hi Margret, no Maximus today?” “He is still sleeping!

He came home so happy and tuckered out from his stay at Shag Bark” Just then Jessie’s boxer wiggled his head out of his collar and darted across the street to Margret. Margret caught him and hung on to him until Jessie could get the leash back on him. “I’m having so much trouble with him. He is horrible on walks; I just want to leave him





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at home so I can enjoy the walk! But when I do, he eats the house! I don't know what to do."

"You need to call Brian, at Shag Bark. He works wonders with dogs. He will teach you how to teach him. Let me get you his number". She wrote down the number and handed it to Jessie. She promised to call when she got home and was then pulled down the sidewalk back the way she came. Maximus woke up, stretched and greeted Margaret at the door. Realizing she was almost out of his food she knew she would have to run out for a bag. But first, coffee!

She sat down with her cup and looked at the health report card from Shag Bark again. She noticed that it said Maximus ate twice a day and his entire meal. She opted to use the house diet and wondered how much he was given in a day. She always just filled a bowl and kept it down all day. It could last a couple of days. He has always seemed to be a grazer. She did tell them that, but was curious what a meal was. So a quick call to Shag Bark. Ann answered the phone and Margaret voiced her question. Ann asked for her to hold while she pulled his chart.

When Ann returned she went over the way they monitor the intake of food. "We don't just add food on top we like to know exactly how much they eat each meal. We go off the recommended amount suggested by the manufacturer, unless otherwise instructed by the owner. In his case he was getting a cup of food a day broken down between two feedings. He ate the complete meal both times every day".





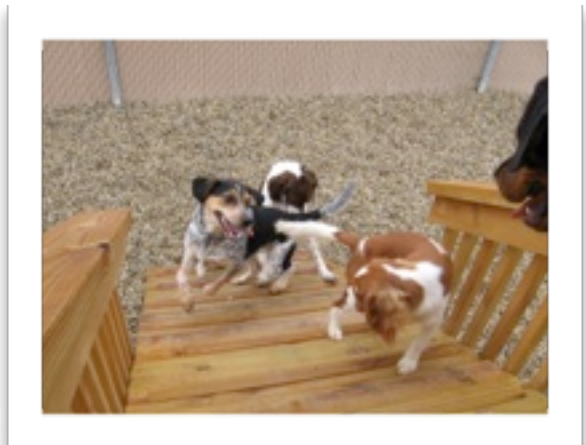
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Margret was amazed; “he must really like your food. What is it?” After being advised of the brand and the quality of ingredients she wanted to switch. “Where can I get it?” “We sell it here Ann added.” “I will be right over!” Back to Shag Bark she went and picked up a small bag of food to try. While waiting for the bag to be brought up she over heard a couple nervously talking about not wanting to leave there baby for the weekend. With a slight giggle she asked “first time leaving her”?

“Yes, my cousin is getting married. We never left her before, and I’m afraid she will hate us for doing it”. “I just got back from a week long business trip the first one with my new puppy. He had so much fun here, he loved playing with all the other dogs, and he was so well cared for”. “Ahhh, our dog isn’t dog friendly. We signed her up for plays, but I hate the thought of her just sitting.” ”Have you seen the play yards? I think they have a play package that gets them out a bunch of times during the day, for individual play time. I love the play equipment”!



Margret pointed to the picture of the play set on the wall. “It’s also really cool that you can see them having fun on Facebook.” It made me feel so good to see him playing and happy while I was away. They are so good here, she is in great hands”! Just then Sarah walked back in the office with a bag of food. Margret decided to treat Maximus to a new toy too. Margret left with a bag of food, new toy and signed up Maximus for spooky Halloween fun. Telling the nervous couple how great Shag Bark was reminded her how much fun Maximus would have with an interactive Halloween sleepover, how could she deny him that fun!!!

Our Team



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To serve our best customers in this way, our team has to be the best. Our staff is upbeat and happy, professionally dressed, and knows what's expected of them. We are all doing continuing education to keep our skill set fresh and up to date.

We all use the proper terminology for our services and are well versed in communicating them with prospects and customers alike. In fact every job function is documented and fully systemized. There's a special "way" we do everything. And we reward our employees for the great work they do. We all take ownership of our responsibilities and feel great about knowing that our efforts are rewarded.

Why We Do It

Shag Bark Pet Retreat & Spa was founded in 1976 by Retired Police Captain Richard Mulder who began his canine training experience in the 1950's. Training German Shepherd dogs to perform as silent scouts and sentry soldiers during his military service, Richard's passion for working with canines carried through to his career as a canine officer in the Chicago Police Department.

Richard's innate ability to communicate and work with animals led to his unique style of training and his renowned success in the Chicagoland area. As an animal behaviorist he has worked professionally as the canine training coordinator for military police units, as well as special security forces and area law enforcement organizations. Richard has authored a





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book, a video tape and an audio tape on canine behavior and training. He appeared on a number of radio and television shows as an authority of dog training for all breeds using positive reinforcement techniques.



Together with his wife Trish, Richard created a nurturing and caring environment that has made Shag Bark Pet Retreat & Spa a leader in the pet care industry for over 25 years. The business continues on with the same dedication and commitment to quality care with their son, Brian and his significant other, Shannon.

Brian was a natural fit to take over the lodging, training and daycare business, having grown up working in the business since a young boy. Through schooling, independent study, and Richard as a mentor, Brian has studied Ethology (Animal Behavior) and its application toward training and caring for the canine species for over 20 years. He uses these skills and his graduate degrees in Mechanical Engineering to create the safest, most comfortable environment possible for the pets under his care. Shannon is also a skilled animal handler with over 7 years of experience. She is a dog trainer, Certified Groomer and Certified Pet Massage Provider. Together with their four sons, Brian and Shannon plan for Shag Bark Pet Retreat & Spa to remain a caring family-run business for many years to come.

We Are Their Companions

We believe our customers' dogs are family members. No, not in a ridiculous way, but in a humane way - we should view them as deserving of respect and loving care.

At ShagBark our goal is to improve the lives of dogs and their owners in all situations. Dogs are full of unconditional love. And it's our duty to give some of that back.



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When you see in a customer's eyes the look they get when they really understand that we care about their dogs just the way they do - when they really know that it's true - well that's a feeling that's hard to describe. It's overwhelming, it's heartwarming. Its the combination of immense trust and honorable service that makes us so proud of what we do. And it drives us to constantly be looking for ways to improve.

And that's why we do it. This is our story and this is ShagBark!

