



# Press Release

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For Immediate Release

## Local Pet Professional Launches New Online Business Venture Because of COVID

*ForceFreePets.com Provides Online Puppy Classes for Pet Parents – Anywhere There is Internet*

[Bangor, Maine February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021]— In March of 2020 and the advent of the COVID pandemic and its mandates to limit in-person gatherings, Green Acres Kennel Shop co-owner Don Hanson had to cancel all the in-person dog training classes offered by his business. Knowing that puppies have a critical learning period, Hanson scrambled to turn his Puppy Headstart class into an online program. He launched his first online class on April 18<sup>th</sup> and continues to offer a class every Thursday evening and Saturday morning. As we are close to marking the first anniversary of COVID, Hanson announced he would continue online offerings long after COVID is behind us. He said"

"I probably never would have tried online training if I hadn't been forced to because of COVID. However, I discovered it works exceedingly well for many things, especially when we are primarily teaching people. A puppy class is all about teaching those with a puppy what they need to know to make their puppy a happy family member. That includes teaching them about the importance of socialization and how to do it in a pandemic. Additionally, we address the typical puppy issues such as housetraining, play biting, chewing, nutrition, and general mischief-making. The wonderful thing about doing this online is families can do it in the comfort of their own home instead of trying to do it in a room full of other people and puppies where everyone is trying to supervise their kids and the puppy while trying to listen to the instructor. Now I see my puppy students all sitting on a couch together, listening and asking questions while the puppy is asleep on their lap or in their crate. Many clients opt to take the class before they decide to get a puppy or before they bring a puppy home. From my perspective, offering online classes allows me to have clients from out of the immediate area, where they might not even have an option for an in-person class. We would often need to postpone classes in the winter because of a weather events. That is no longer necessary. Teaching puppy classes works so well that I will continue to offer online classes post COVID. It also inspired me to create a new business entity, ForceFreePets.com, separate from Green Acres Kennel Shop. ForceFreePets is now the home for my pet training and behavior business."

When asked how the pandemic has affected other training offerings, Hanson said:

"We had to reconfigure all of our other programs to make them COVID safe. That meant smaller class sizes. For example, in the past, we would bring all of our students starting a Basic Manners class together without dogs for an initial orientation. That meant 20 plus people in a room for at least 3 hours. In July of last year, we started doing that online by giving students access to videos covering the

material presented in the orientation two weeks before their class started. That allowed them to review this material at their own pace, which helped them retain more of what we were teaching. It's worked brilliantly, and we will continue to do that in the future as well. We also dropped the size of our in-person classes from 5 dogs plus accompanying family members to 2 dogs with one person per dog. We may expand that once we get past the pandemic."

### **About ForceFreePets**

Founded in 2020 and owned by Don Hanson, ForceFreePets is located at 1653 Union Street in Bangor, Maine, and online at [www.ForceFreePets.com](http://www.ForceFreePets.com). Its mission is to provide humane, ethical, and empathetic pet-related education based on science while prioritizing the needs and welfare of its client's pets. We are also the home of *The Woof Meow Show* podcast at [www.WoofMeowShow.com](http://www.WoofMeowShow.com) and the *Words, Woofs, & Meows* blog at [www.Words-Woofs-Meows.com](http://www.Words-Woofs-Meows.com). In addition, our business partner, Green Acres Kennel Shop, offers boarding, daycare, grooming, and the sale of wholesome pet food and supplies. Green Acres has been voted Best Kennel every year since 2002, Best Pet Store every year since 2007, Best Dog Trainer every year since 2011, and Best Pet Groomer every year since 2013. In December of 2021, they were recognized by Best Businesses of America as one of the Top 10 Kennels and Top 10 Dog Trainers in New England for 2021. In addition, we are a proud member of The Pet Professional Guild and a member of Pet Industry Advocacy International. For more information, please call 207-945-6841 or visit [www.ForceFreePets.com](http://www.ForceFreePets.com)