

## Fitness participants work out like dogs

By ALEXANDRA BOGDANOVIC  
Times-Democrat Staff Writer

A new fitness class allows people to work out with their dogs.

Doggie & Me is the first of its kind on the East Coast, according to founder Jayme DesDunes.

DesDunes, owner of Jayme's Canine College in Marshall, and her friend Langdon Harris Johnston, a certified trainer, decided to start the class after learning about a similar program in San Diego.

Classes are designed for those who want to get in shape and improve their

dog's behavior at the same time.

"The San Diego program doesn't really have a dog-obedience component," DesDunes said last week.

"This offers both aspects. I am [in charge of] the dog obedience part of the program. Landon takes care of the fitness part [of it]."

The classes will be held at the Northern Fauquier Community Park in Marshall and Great Meadow Field Events Center in The Plains beginning April 15. Morning and afternoon sessions are available.

Each will last an hour. Participants will have time to warm up in the beginning and stretch at the end.

Most of the time, students will run or walk, stopping only to do exercises on mats or use light weights.

The program does not follow a "boot camp" format. It can be tailored to suit individual fitness levels and goals, so there's no need to be intimidated, Johnston said.

"Every time we move, the dogs will move. Every time we stop to do something, the dogs will be in a down, stay [position]," DesDunes said. "It is really more of a mental exercise for the dogs."

Classes are limited to 10 people.

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**WORKING OUT:** Beth Presgraves, Laura Symanski and Shelly Amirato follow the lead of instructor Langdon Johnston during a "Doggie and Me" group fitness class. Times-Democrat Staff Photo/Randy Litzinger

## DOG

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Each person can bring only one dog. Dogs must be on leashes at all times.

"This is not a play group for dogs. They must be on their best behavior at all times," DesDunes said.

To ensure that's the case, dogs must be at least four months old. All dogs must be evaluated one week before coming to class. Canine College — a dog training and boarding service — offers free evaluations for dogs with no prior obedience training.

Beth Presgraves of The

Plains, took her Rottweiler, Roxy, to Canine College for obedience training three years ago. Now she's looking forward to exercising with her pal.

"I had my third baby in November, and I want to work some weight off," Presgraves said Monday. "I've been pretty busy the past couple of months, and Roxy gets pretty hyper if she doesn't get her walks in, so it should be good [for her, too]."

Program fees vary.

### More fun and games...

There are numerous options for Fauquier dog owners who want to improve the bond with their pets.

For example, the Warrenton

Kennel Club officers basic training programs at the National Guard Armory in Warrenton in the spring, winter and fall.

"Our next formal training classes begin April 6, and we've already got 48 people enrolled," said Gary John, training coordinator for the club.

Then there's the Puppy Pals Club. It features free obedience and agility training for dog owners involved in 4-H programs.

"Agility is a lot of work for the dogs and for people," said Cindy Wilson. "Anyone who wants to get in shape should try it."

For more information, visit [www.jaymescaninecollege.com](http://www.jaymescaninecollege.com), or call 364-2878.