

Jeanne Thomas, CPDT

Companion Pet Trainer



Jeanne Thomas has been teaching pet dog training in the Grand Rapids area since 1994. A lifelong animal lover, her work with dogs began in 1990 when she needed training for her own out-of-control puppy and enrolled in community education classes in Grand Rapids.

Many classes, books and seminars (and several years of assisting in classrooms) later, she has become well grounded in learning theory and pet dog behavior and is still fascinated with the challenge of teaching humans and dogs how to communicate and cooperate.

Jeanne's goal is to help people improve their dog training and handling skills using reward based, dog friendly training techniques. Her primary expertise is teaching family pet manners and household behavior management from the puppy stage through the intermediate levels of training. Her approach to dog handling is strongly influenced by internationally known trainers and behaviorists such as Pat Miller, Patricia McConnell, Ian Dunbar, Sue Ailsby and Jean Donaldson.

She also offers classes and coaching in Rally obedience, a sport which gives family dog owners a chance to show off the teamwork they achieve with their canine companions, and is developing curriculum in advanced obedience skills and therapy dog handling.

Many of her students take their dogs through testing to receive their Canine Good Citizen designation, and have gone on to use their skills in activities such as rally and competition obedience, agility, pet therapy, tracking, flyball, herding and carting.

Jeanne is currently training her own dogs (a basset hound, a labrador retriever and a lowchen) to compete in Rally obedience and to have fun with tricks and pet therapy work. When she wants an additional challenge, she works with her cat and guinea pig to fine tune her training techniques.

Jeanne is a certified evaluator for the American Kennel Club's Canine Good Citizen program and has recently become one of west Michigan's first Certified Pet Dog Trainers (CPDT), successfully completing testing through the Certification Council of Professional Dog Trainers. She is a member of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers, the Grand Rapids Dog Training Club, and West Michigan Therapy Dogs.

Jeanne offers group classes through Pawsitive Canine Training Center in Lowell, Michigan (www.pawsitivecaninetraining.com) and Grand Rapids Public Schools Community Education (<http://web.grps.k12.mi.us/adulted/>). For information about private lessons, contact Jeanne at JeanneT@teachyourpet.net.