



Biographical Sketch Pia Silvani, CPDT

My love of teaching began over 20 years ago as a private trainer, dance instructor, track, field and swimming coach for the Special Olympics and Regional Clinician for an international aerobics corporation where she trained new instructors in the field. After 13 years of para-legal/office management work, I decided to make my part-time teaching career a full-time dream by combining my love of teaching people with my other fondness, dogs. I can't recall a time in my life when dogs were not part of it.

In 1991, I applied for a part-time position with St. Hubert's Animal Welfare Center in Madison, New Jersey. What I thought was going to be a "side job" turned into a full-time career, one that I can't imagine giving up. My enthusiasm led me to develop program after program for the pet-owning population focusing on positive, reward-based techniques. Not only did I see great success when training my own dogs, but I was able to effectively coach people through the process of learning the skill of dog training in hopes of enhancing the bond and relationship that they had with their dogs as well as educating them in canine social behavior to avoid relinquishments to our shelters. My devotion and prior coaching experience brought about an astounding 75 pet classes per week.

There were many books and seminars on the market about dog behavior, but very few focused on what I felt many trainers were lacking - - the skill in becoming an effective coach to their students (the trainers) and developing good communication skills through effective classroom management. I spent hours furthering my education in this field and as a result, have worked with hundreds of trainers around the country in hopes of helping them to become more effective in their teaching. I've written five training manuals, which trainers use around the country as a guideline for their programs and one day hope to finally sit down and finish my coaching book - - in my spare time, of course!

I've spent a good deal of time traveling around the country helping shelters develop educational programs for their shelter and community. As charter member and past Vice President of the Association of Pet Trainers, I was able to continue to help trainers receive education on a national level. At the present time, I spend a good deal of time as Board member of the Certification Council for Pet Dog Trainers and am involved in a national marketing project to bring education to the pet-owning public about the certification program.

The relationship that I've been blessed to have with my dogs now and in the past keeps me working hard every day in hopes of educating not only dog owners, but all professionals in the field.