

## Karin Nikopoulos, Instructor, Waukegan Park District Dog Programs

For the last 17 years, Karin has taught dog obedience, agility, rally, Treibball and nose work for the Waukegan Park District dog programs. Classes are based on skill levels of the dog and their handler, from introductory to advanced. She is pleased to offer a variety of affordable dog training classes at the Waukegan Park District. "If you teach a dog how to behave, you won't have to rescue them," she says. "Trained dogs don't end up in shelters." She knows a lot about shelters, having worked at Orphans of the Storm placing animals for adoption and as an animal control officer for the Department of Defense at Great Lakes 25 years ago. Her current role as a Security Administrator still provides opportunities for her to rescue animals.

Karin's first job was as a horse farmhand. Her employer noticed how animals responded to her and it wasn't long before she was exercising and then training trotters and pacers for racing. Because of her success with harness horses, she moved to training

foals, yearlings, and two-year old racehorses. She was training racehorses while a high school student! The military noticed her special skills with animals when she enlisted following graduation from high school. She became a law enforcement specialist responsible for training military working dogs. An injury forced her into retirement, but did not curb her love and enthusiasm for dog training. Karin became a certified dog trainer after her apprenticeship with Marge Gibbs at Collar and Leash Dog Training in Riverwoods.

Karin is a certified Humane Investigator and Community Service Officer for the State of Illinois and an AKC certified evaluator for Canine Good Citizenship and the S.T.A.R. Puppy Program. She lives in Lake Villa with Star, her rescued 4 year old Great Dane, Raven a two year old Doberman and Roscoe, a year old Doberman. Karin shows Raven in conformation and obedience categories. Raven is certified as a S.T.A.R. Puppy and Canine Good Citizen. Roscoe is



**Karin Nicopoulos and Roscoe**

on his way to becoming a champion in conformation. He is a certified S.T.A.R. Puppy and is involved in obedience, agility, and nose work training. In his last show, he was Best of Winners. Karin is a member of the Little Fort Kennel Club and arranged for club members to volunteer at K9 Trace and Pace. She officiates at AKC dog show trials. Karin noted how especially proud she is of her 28 year old son, a U.S. Air Force B52 Crew Chief.

## Why 10 Million Kids Outdoors?

The Waukegan Park District is participating in the *10 Million Kids Outdoors Initiative* sponsored by the National Wildlife Federation and the National Recreation and Parks Association. We not only provide open spaces for leisure activities and recreational programming; we also accept the challenge to improve the health and wellness of our community.

Year round outdoor programs provide opportunities for exploration, play, physical activity, creativity and reduce the time kids, ages 8-18, devote to entertainment media, which currently averages over seven hours daily. (Kaiser Family Foundation)

- Children who play outside are more physically active, more creative in their play, less aggressive and show better concentration. (Burdette and Whitaker, 2005; Ginsburg et al., 2007)
- Sixty minutes of daily, unstructured free play is essential to children's physical and mental health. (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2008)

We invite you to join us in our efforts to improve the health of our community. Ways for families to participate range from activities that connect with nature & special events to daily walks in the park or visits to the playground. Be a positive change agent; help us get 10 Million Kids Outdoors!