

# A dog's best friend

Words: CATHERINE  
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Photos: STEPHEN CLARKE

**T**hey say that a dog is man's best friend – but what happens if the dog won't behave? In the Cayman Islands there is someone who can help, no matter how naughty or disobedient the dog, whether it is in a loving home or the animal rescue shelter.

Meet Kenneth Morgan, formally classified as a dog trainer and erstwhile known as the Dog Whisperer of Cayman.

It appears that he can work miracles, even with canine cases that have long been given up on.

He just has to walk into a room and the most boisterous, bouncy four-legged friends will lie down in complete submission without twitching a muscle.

"I'm always calm, I make a sharp sound and dogs pick up that a leader is in the room,"

Kenneth Morgan holds  
dog training classes



## Beach training

Every Sunday morning, Kenneth holds classes to teach volunteers and dogs from the Humane Society's animal shelter the basics in training.

The hour-long classes are held at the public beach by Calico Jack's bar, except on the last Sunday of each month when the group meets at the great lawn of the Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman.

The training helps the dogs transition into their new home once they are adopted. The animals graduate after six to eight classes or when adopted. The Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman is a sponsor of the monthly event, providing refreshments and dainties for the group.

Hotel guests are also invited to take part, with dogs brought from the shelter if anybody wants to participate in this worthwhile cause. There is no fee to take part but donations to the Humane Society are always gratefully accepted. For further information call the Humane Society at 949 1461.

explains Kenneth. "Dogs love to lead and if they cannot, they quickly follow."

Kenneth's special relationship with animals began back in his native Jamaica many years ago, where he grew up in the countryside.

"My gift comes from my mother who trained her animals without a leash," he says.

Indeed, Kenneth's techniques involve a holistic approach and only positive discipline.

In 1982, he went to Kingston to train as a dog handler for the largest security company in Jamaica.

Such was his success with the dogs that he quickly became assistant K9 trainer and was later promoted to K9 training supervisor, before becoming manager of the K9 division.

After 20 years in the division, Kenneth moved to Grand Cayman in 2002, where part of his duties involved teaching classes with groups of 10 or more dogs at Cayman Pet Paradise, a dog training and boarding facility.

He soon began spending time at the Humane Society and generally helping to resolve doggy dilemmas, with word of his talents being passed around from dog owner to dog owner.

Over the years, Kenneth's skills have been met with awe and joy as dog after dog has been cured of its bad habits.

"It has always amazed me how a dog that is giving its owner a problem will immediately respond to Kenneth if he takes the leash," says Andy Kronick of Pet Paradise where Kenneth teaches classes on Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings. "He has an inner sense, and years of experience in observing dogs, that allow him to know what needs to be done to correct a dog's problem."

"The dogs know he is in control and he seems to know what the dogs are thinking. Kenneth is able to convey to the owner that they need to be the one in control and teaches them how to be the boss. Sometimes I think training the owners of the dogs is more difficult than training the dog, but Kenneth does both equally well."

Kenneth recently held a training session for a group of new guards for the K9 unit of The Security Centre in Cayman.

And he is currently working with Andy and a new security dog that is boarded at Cayman Pet Paradise which will hopefully be part of the K9 unit in the near future.

Kenneth is a partner in Cayman Canine Training Services through which he offers personalised, one-on-one and group training for both puppy and adult dogs.

However, he still finds time to help out with dogs at the Humane Society, providing training and behavioural assessment.

"I go to the Humane Society during the week to help train dogs that cannot live with others," he says. "If it is too bad, I take that dog to my home and return weeks later so the animal is playing with the other dogs he/she did not previously like. Keino, a pit bull, recently returned to the Humane Society after three weeks training at my house. Staff say there are no more fights."

Kenneth also co-ordinates the beach training programme held on Seven Mile Beach each Sunday, where dogs from the shelter are given lessons and playtime.

And it's not just dogs that Kenneth works with – he is officially an exotic animal trainer.

"I can train other animals like horses and I have worked with llamas and ostriches, and I have a lovebird that walks around the house," he reveals.

Kenneth lost his own dog, Sammy Jo, this summer, 10 happy years after he adopted her from the Humane Society.

Sammy Jo had been branded a "monster" dog by her previous owners and given up as a lost cause.

Kenneth thought differently and set to work on her. Within five days she had been transformed completely and was being used as a demonstration dog.

"Sammy Jo has been the greatest satisfaction in my job," says Kenneth. "She needed a home because she was unmanageable. I took her and she became the Cayman Islands' top therapy dog."

As a member of the Humane Society's group Healing Paws, Kenneth took Sammy Jo to The Pines, The Lighthouse School and the Sunrise Adult Centre to bring comfort and affection to the people there.


"A therapy dog goes to places to meet old and sick people and children with challenges," Kenneth explains. "Sammy Jo would do tricks so they can smile and change their day."

Sammy Jo even starred in a fashion show at the Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman to raise money for the Humane Society and played a part in Annie at the Prospect Playhouse.

Despite being deeply saddened by her death, Kenneth went to the Humane Society the day after she passed and adopted another dog.

Kenneth has named his new pet Hope, and has been working with her to carry on Sammy Jo's important role as a therapy dog.

It's obvious that Kenneth loves what he does and that he is one of those lucky people who has turned a gift into a career.

"What I like about my job is to see a dog that was written off become top dog," he says. 



# Help make tails wag

Words: CATHERINE MACGILLIVRAY

Photos: STEPHEN CLARKE

The big-hearted people of the Cayman Islands Humane Society help dogs and cats desperately in need of loving homes.

And there are many ways that everyone can get involved to assist these adorable animals.

The non-profit organisation's mission is to find loving homes for homeless animals in the Cayman Islands and it promotes responsible pet ownership through a spay and neuter programme.

On average there are around 200 animals in the society's shelter, with monthly operating costs of around \$50,000.

"A large portion of this is our staff costs and veterinary bills," explains Humane Society president Carolyn Parker. "You can help by donating newspapers, clothing, books, or any household items, support our shops by picking up some great bargains, volunteer to walk the animals or simply give some company to those who are in our shelter, as well as adopting a dog or cat."

The Cayman Islands Humane Society, which was founded more than 30 years ago, is financed through donations from the general public and fundraisers such as the annual Furball and Petapalooza events.

Proceeds from the Claws It thrift shop and the Book Loft second-hand bookstore are also ploughed back into the shelter.

## Volunteers

Volunteers can help in many ways such as staffing the bookstore and the thrift shop, walking the dogs, socialising with the shelter dogs, puppies, cats and kittens, assisting with events, doing home checks on potential adoptions and lots more.

"The Cayman Islands Humane Society needs lots of volunteers," says Twila Escalante, who has volunteered for 25 years and is on the society's board. "Cayman is a transient community and volunteers come and go, so there is always a need for more. Whether you are working full-time, part-time, retired or not working, your help is always welcomed."

"You'll never find a more grateful and accepting friend than an animal you've comforted. A wagging tail and a friendly purr will keep you coming back over and over again and you will have made a best friend forever."


Visitors to the Cayman Islands can also help, so if you have friends or family coming to stay you can tell them about the animals at the shelter.

Some visitors have even offered homes to dogs they've met at the Humane Society.

Last year, for example, honeymoon couple Dawn and Claudio De Santis fell in love all over again with Nelson, a dog they took back to Connecticut.

Since then, and thanks to the pet-friendly policies of Cayman Airways, Dawn has helped find homes in the US for other lucky animals.

"My gratitude to the many wonderful supporters of Cayman Islands Humane Society both here and abroad," says Twila. "And a special thanks to Cayman Airways for their pet-friendly policies, we truly love them."

The Humane Society is located at 153 North Sound Road. Call (345) 949 1461 or visit [www.caymanhumanesociety.com](http://www.caymanhumanesociety.com) to find out more. 



The Humane Society  
22nd annual dog show  
is scheduled for 23  
February 2013.



## Book Loft

Bookworms and anyone who enjoys CDs, DVDs, games, toys and puzzles can find something at a great price at this second-hand bookstore.

Many books are just \$2 or less and the shop also sells various types of gifts, photo albums and other knickknacks.

Open Mon 12.30pm-4pm, Tues-Fri 9am-4pm,  
Thurs evenings 5.30pm-7.30pm and Sat 9am-3pm.

## Claws It Thrift Shop

If you are looking for lovely clothes and other goodies, you can be sure to find a bargain at this stylish boutique.

Open Mon to Fri, 10am-5pm and Sat 8am-4pm.

## Other ways to help:

- Adopt a pet
- Foster an animal
- Walk a dog
- Give a donation