



Aflie's Poochie Playlot – Illinois SBDC at Governors State University

It all started with two busy professionals, Rose and Patrick Cotter, and a chocolate lab named Auggie. Auggie wasn't getting the exercise and socialization she needed and there was nowhere for Rose and Patrick to turn. That is when they realized "there needed to be a place for people to take their dogs where they could get this and loving care."

In 2006, after much sweat and preparation Rose and Patrick started Alfie's Poochie Playlot. The business took off and grew year after year. In 2012, unfortunately Patrick passed away. It was his support of their dream that kept Rose going.

Her reputation as a dog-lover and passion for ensuring dogs were placed with other dogs who had the right temperament, kept customers coming back. In 2014, Rose had grown the business to the point where she needed to expand to a larger facility.

After being referred to the Small Business Development Center at Governors State University, Rose worked with her advisor on developing a business plan with financial projections in order to obtain a loan to purchase a building down the street and make renovations for the expansion. As a result, she doubled her capacity to 65 dogs including space for training.

Her keys to success have included having a staff who is on board and totally dedicated and ensuring she takes the lead with her employees to demonstrate her passion. "Either you're in it or you're not with this type of business," says Rose. Her business philosophy is to treat the customers' dogs as you would want your dogs to be treated.

She also says, "working with the SBDC was a great eye-opener for me. It made me be more of a forward thinker and want to do more financial analysis and look at the business side of things. The SBDC provided great customer service and made it easy to put my guard down and not feel overwhelmed so I could focus on what needed to be done."

To find out more about Alfie's Poochie Playlot, go to <http://www.alfiespoochieplaylot.com>.