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Pet services has grown into big business in central Ohio

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Claudine Kosier never gave much thought to having her 13-year-old dog, Tango, photographed.

"Until my dog was diagnosed with cancer," she said.

Kosier's so-called "heart dog" was given only three weeks to live. After he passed away, Kosier learned digital photography and designing to create keepsakes to remember her pet. She later started Simply Dog Photography in 2010.

"People want those special memory of those pets and they can't get them of their own," she said.

Kosier's photography business is among the number of unorthodox pet services available to pet owners in central Ohio.

American pet owners spent an estimated \$69.36 billion on their animals in 2017 compared to \$41.2 billion in 2007, according to the American Pet Products Association.

Kosier often works with clients who went through a similar experience to the one she had with Tango.

She spends up to two hours on average for a photography session and designs those captured images into specialized products from matted prints to canvas wall art to wall galleries.

Kosier recently opened a studio on Livingston Avenue in German Village to host clients for consultations by appointment.

But her sessions with the dogs can get a little chaotic, Kosier said.

She remembered one dog running away at Highbanks Metro Park and came across a dead deer.

"I never know what I'm walking into because dog personalities are so different," Kosier said.

Meanwhile, Shannon Anello's dog walking and sitting services has grown since she started the business in October 2015.

Anello used to work in marketing and graphic design for 20 years before she was laid off and decided to start a business from her longtime animal passion.

"The times have changed quite a bit," she said. "Pets are now more treated as children."

Anello added additional services in 2016 including a pet attendant service at weddings. Anello said they can walk owner's pets down the aisle and take care of them during the event. She even dog sits them overnight.

"We're kind of the caregivers behind the scenes," she said. "It's easier on the bride and groom when a professional is handling it ... on their big day."

So far, Anello has done one wedding but would like to do more.

"It was very rewarding," she said. "I made this dream happen for them because they didn't think it was possible."

Now a certified animal trainer, Anello said its important to be able to control the animals and be comfortable with them.

Pet care has also evolved from annual check-ups with a veterinarian and enrollment in obedience school. Some owners go to services such as massages, acupuncture and reiki, an alternative medicine that uses touch to heal.

Marcy Wright, the owner of Pawsite Kneads, has offered massages and reiki for nearly 15 years.

The retired special education teacher has spent her whole life around dogs and took more 150 hours of training to provide the service to one of her two German Shepherds that had spinal problems. "Massages for dogs isn't just a spa day it really is beneficial to them in a lot of ways," she said.

For instance, Wright has her hands all over the dogs and sometimes comes across lumps and other abrasions that need to be checked.

Other benefits include improving a dog's circulation system, easing their arthritis and keeping them in shape.

She offers the service at her home, an office at a veterinarian clinic or at the pet owner's home. She also provides the service at dog-related events. "It's been a lot of dogs over the years," she said.

The challenge is often finding the right technique for each dog. Wright recalled having to do a specific routine with a particular dog to massage her.

She also remembered helping a foster owner of a dog that survived Hurricane Katrina. The rescue dog would not sleep and would pace the owner's floor.

But after Wright massaged the dog, the owner said it was sleeping within the next two hours.

"You don't always get dramatic results like that," Wright said.