

Al Casmiro has had a passion for dogs for as long as he can remember. When you first meet him, he tells you how even as a young child he cared for his family's dogs, often sleeping outside in their crates with them.

In 1990, he got a puppy, Princess and realized she was quite a handful and needed training. Al took her to a dog trainer. Al liked the way the trainer handled his dog and became motivated to get involved in Princess's training. This started a lifetime of dedication to dog training and rehabilitation and Al's organization, K9 Specialists was formed.

Al believes every dog is capable of rehabilitation. He believes the energy dogs feel from humans plays a big part in the behavior of the animal. If a human is stressed and anxious, a dog will focus on the stress and behave accordingly. He first trains people to relax, to be assertive and calm. He trains a human how to become the pack leader, gain the dog's respect. Within a few minutes, Al can tame even the wildest dog with his touch. By first establishing a "pack leader", Al can then begin to rehabilitate and train a dog.

There are three main components to Al's theory of dog training, exercise, discipline and affection. Every dog, big or small needs exercise; he needs a focused release for his energy. Dogs also need to be told how to behave; they need discipline, a quick correction of the negative behavior. Dogs also thrive on positive affection from his pack leader. A scratch behind the ears, a loveable tone of voice.

Because of his love of dogs, Al recently approached Harbor Humane Society about volunteering his services to rehabilitate shelter dogs. Because of the mass volume of animals Harbor Humane Society receives every month, it is impossible for staff to train dogs. And any issues that the dog came into the shelter with, can often be exaggerated under the environment of a shelter. Volunteers come in on a regular basis to help temperament test dogs and look for any aggression or behavior problems, but still, time is often of the essence with these animals. If an animal is perceived to be aggressive or potentially "unadoptable", he may need to be euthanized. Al has volunteered to help save the lives of these dogs.

Al is now taking three to four "unadoptable" shelter dogs each month under his caring wing. He works with each animal to rehabilitate the dog. He focuses much of his time and energy on the animal, turning each one into a loveable, fully trained family pet. Al's services are really two fold. He not only saves the lives of the animals he trains, by taking four dogs from the shelter, he also frees up needed space in the dog kennels, thus saving lives of many other dogs.

Kyle, an American bulldog is a perfect testament to Al's rehabilitative gifts. Kyle came to the shelter as a surrender from his first owners. He was aggressive, very hyper and unruly. Kyle landed himself in a kennel, where he remained for several weeks. Eventually, Kyle was adopted. However, his behavior once again landed him back at Harbor Humane Society. The shelter environment was truly the worst for Kyle. Although aggressive and miserable at the shelter, Kyle still managed to touch the hearts

of shelter employees, one veterinarian assistant in particular, Josh Mohler, decided to try to foster Kyle. He thought perhaps if Kyle was brought into a home, some of his behavior issues might subside. Josh was wrong and staff pondered what to do about Kyle. Al Casimiro was contacted and he agreed to take Kyle. Kyle spent three weeks with Al. In that time, Kyle learned to respect humans, he learned his place in a “pack” and became the remarkable dog that HHS staff new he could be. At the end of his “boot camp”, Marketing Director Abbei Monroe pitched in to help Kyle find a permanent home. “I took him to a movie premiere, Hotel for Dogs. He came to the crowded theater and was so calm my eight year old daughter could walk him around on a leash” stated Monroe. “If he can turn Kyle into such a mild mannered, wonderful dog, I know he can help numerous dogs and people.” Kyle has since been adopted into a permanent home and is doing wonderfully.

Together, Al Casmiro & Harbor Humane Society has established a new program, The Dog Whispering Fund. In order to work with these dogs, much time and resources are needed. With the staggering economy, HHS intake of animals is reaching an all time high and donations are reaching an all time low. Many wonderful animals are being euthanized simply due to a lack of interest, space and resources. Harbor Humane Society is once again appealing to the public to help us continue our mission. We believe that through Al’s generosity, families will be made thru the adoption of the dogs. A donation of \$1000 can help rehabilitate and save four dogs. Four dogs that otherwise might not make it out of the shelter.

For more information regarding the Dog Whispering Fund, please log onto www.harborhumane.org. To contact Al Casmiro & K9 Specialist, please log onto www.K9specialist.net.