

Biography for Terena Thomas, B.S., CPDT-KA, CEIP

Terena Thomas began successfully training and competing with dogs as a child. Now, with more than two decades of running the Canine Country School, a successful dog training business, she has refined her skills at successfully instructing, both pooches and their humans, as well as a variety of other animals. Since 1986 she has pioneered humane, and effective training without fear, intimidation or pain for all species.

Animals have always been an integral part of Terena's life. Growing up as a birth child in a therapeutic foster family, she learned the importance of respecting life. Learning how neglect, violence and intimidation had negatively affected the children in her home, she concluded early on that setting clear boundaries with fair consequences solved or prevented many conflicts. She learned the same was true for animals. For years, Terena witnessed the animals soften the often angry demeanor of the foster kids; they were a conduit for healing the human spirit from trauma.

The children changed Terena's life, but it was an experience as a twelve year old while 'teaching' the 'Forced Retrieve' to her beloved German Shepherd Dog, IQ, that changed her future. When the ear-pinch technique was presented as the only training option, Terena began searching elsewhere for guidance, leading her to the writings of Karen Pryor. Terena and I.Q. won the Colorado State Championship soon after that, and the seed of training with positive methods was planted.

It was about that time in her life she also began developing and modifying equine lessons to benefit her high-risk brothers and sisters. The riding program evolved and was tested for effectiveness, implemented into equine assisted activities across the nation and published as, *It's Not Just Horsing Around With Defiant Kids*. After absorbing information from every book, seminar, workshop or event she could attend as an adolescent, Terena seamlessly stepped into earning her Bachelor of Science degree in psychology. She also co-authored the story of her family in, *Dandelion On My Pillow, Butcher Knife Beneath*. Speaking publicly about training and integrating animals into youth treatment programs has taken Terena around the world. Jordan, a target trained cow, thrills the children with her induced retrieve, jump over the moon and other fun tricks Terena taught her.

Formal education gives Terena the knowledge, while experience adds passion and realism. She performs with her menagerie and speaks publicly on behalf of all man's domesticated best friends- carnivores and herbivores alike, and how their very existence improves our lives on so many levels.

The Small Business Development Center (an SBA program) awarded her the 2003 WIRED award: Willpower, Initiative, Resolve, Enthusiasm and Determination, for her work on an apprentice training business plan. The resulting training company, Animal Behavior Academy teaches multiple facets within the animal world. Apprenticeship openings are full more than a year in advance.

She is a CGC Evaluator, Therapy Dog International, Inc Certified Evaluator, authorized instructor for the American Red Cross, a registered therapeutic horseback riding instructor with NARHA and certified as an Equine Interaction Professional by the CBEIP. She has been an active long time leader of her local 4H club, Roaring Fork Kennel Club and is the editor for the local newsletter Canine Corner. Paid or volunteering, Terena has been in the show world for years whether as an exhibitor, coach, non-sanctioned judge, superintendent or chairperson.

Sharing Terena's life on her farm is her adoring husband, Jack and their four-legged kids: a myriad of dogs, plethora of cats, Scottish Highland cattle and a herd of Arabian horses.