

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 24, 2011

### **National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS) Elects Three New Board Members**

MOUNT LAUREL, N.J. – The National Association of Professional Pet Sitters (NAPPS) recently elected three leading professional pet sitters, Jessica Dwyer, Michele Gonzalez, and Kara Jenkins, to join its Board of Directors for three-year terms, effective January 1, 2011.

The newly-elected officers join current board members, President John D’Ariano of A Pet Sitter Plus of Boynton Beach, FL; Past President Monica Leighton of Professional Pet Sitting in Venice, FL; President-Elect Sherry Suhosky of Jack Rapid Runners, LLC in Placitas, NM; Secretary-Treasurer Kristen Burton of Your Best Friend Pet Sitting in Hamlin, PA; Director Marcia Breithaupt of Liberty Home and Pet Services, LLC in Naples, FL; and Director Yvette Gonzales of As You Wish, LLC in Highlands Ranch, CO.

NAPPS is the only non-profit pet sitting association run by members, for members, and the NAPPS Board of Directors is comprised of pet sitters, business owners and entrepreneurs who are leaders in the at-home pet care industry. In this capacity, board members are responsible for helping to shape the agenda and direction of the association, providing tools and support to foster the success of members’ businesses, promoting the value of pet sitting to the public and advocating for the welfare of animals.

#### **Jessica Dwyer**

Jessica Dwyer, founder of Whiskers At Home L.L.C. in Bellevue, WA, was elected as Director. Before starting the company in 2009, Jessica had 15 years management experience in the service industry working for Marriott International, along with 20-plus years experience providing personal pet care. Jessica grew up with a Chow Chow, Ring Neck Parrot, rabbits, multiple cats, and rode horses until age 15. Currently Jessica has four cats in her family. Jessica is a Volunteer Adoption Counselor for Purrfect Pals Cat Shelter, and the Volunteer Coordinator for the National Association of Professional Pet Sitters. Whiskers At Home L.L.C. currently has three employees with 115 Pet Parents.

#### **Michele Gonzalez**

Michele Gonzalez, founder of Fur Feather Fin Pet Care in Owings Mills, MD, was elected as Director. Following 15 years of office management, human resources, marketing and contract administration in the audio/visual industry, Michele founded Fur Feather Fin Pet Care in 2006 to pursue a lifelong dream of working with animals. Having volunteered over the years with various local shelters and rescue organizations, Michele witnessed many pets abandoned because their owner did not have the time to properly care for them. The desire to help these pet parents helped guide the foundation of her business. Fur Feather Fin Pet Care provides service in two Maryland counties and Baltimore City, with coverage provided by Michele along with a team of five independent contractors. Michele began her NAPPS volunteer service as Membership Committee Co-chair in 2009, followed by serving as Membership Committee Chair in 2010.

## **Kara Jenkins**

Kara Jenkins has owned and managed TLC House & Pet Sitting Service, LLC in Chandler, AZ since 2001, and was elected as Director. TLC provides daily visits, mid-day dog walking, and overnight visits for over 600 clients. She and her ten pet sitters are also qualified to provide at home health care. Kara's love for animals began at an early age. Growing up in the northwest suburbs of Chicago, she and her family raised many different types of animals including cats, dogs, birds, gerbils, fish, mice, and horses. While working at her mother's boarding and grooming kennel, she learned about the different types of cats and dogs and their behaviors, in addition to all facets of the kennel's operations including marketing and sales. After college, Kara worked in the health industry, but felt something was missing. It was then when she decided to follow her dream of working with animals and started TLC. For the past ten years she has been an active member of APPSA, the Arizona Professional Pet Sitters Association, and currently serves as Vice President. She also was the chair of NAPPS' Animal Welfare and Law Committee. When she is not running her business she enjoys spending time with her husband, Joe, and their Lab/Golden Retriever rescue dog, Hunter.

"I'd like to congratulate Jessica, Michele and Kara for their dedication to the pet sitting profession, and welcome them to their new role as Directors," said NAPPS President John D'Ariano. "I'm confident NAPPS' programs will benefit from their extensive knowledge and experience, and thrive under their leadership."

**About NAPPS:** NAPPS is a national non-profit trade association dedicated to promoting the welfare of animals. The Association aims to help the pet owning public, those interested in pet sitting, and professionals engaged in the in-home pet care industry by fulfilling its vision statement, serving as "the most respected authority in professional pet sitting." It does so by providing the tools and support to foster the success of its members. Additionally, pet parents can benefit from NAPPS' free resources including a disaster preparedness guide, tips on how to select a pet sitter, nationwide referral service, and quarterly teleconferences aimed to educate the pet owning public. To find a pet sitter in your area, check out NAPPS' nationwide "Pet Sitter Locator" at [www.petsitters.org](http://www.petsitters.org). For more information on NAPPS, please follow [@TheNAPPS](https://twitter.com/TheNAPPS) on Twitter or join us on Facebook at [facebook.com/TheNAPPS](https://facebook.com/TheNAPPS).

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