



## Dog Days

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MONIQUE LAMOUREUX HAD A ROUGH START IN life but now her days are going to the dogs and she's very excited about it.

Originally from Vernon, British Columbia and a proud descendant of the Cree and French nations, Monique was given the name Apschimosus (Aps-chi-mo-sus) or Little Deer, by one of her fathers (her step parent), a medicine man named Lonewalker. She is the middle child of five in a large and diverse family, and has drawn on her own inner strength to transform her life into something most people only dream of.

At the age of fifteen she found herself out in the world making her own destiny. In her young

life she was always moving and juggling between three sets of parents. She grew up fast, creating her own stability when she moved out on her own. Balancing school and part-time jobs was difficult. Monique left school and supported herself by working and waiting tables in restaurants and pubs, but life was not satisfying. Knowing education was important, she completed her General Education Development program (GED) from Okanagan College and began searching for a more rewarding direction in life. A newspaper advertisement for “Ben Kersen & the Wonderdogs Professional Dog Trainers Program” captured her interest and presented a new career option.

With a new career path clearly in sight, Monique first tried freelance dog training, but knew she was ready for a greater challenge. After further research she contacted the Community Futures Development Corporation of North Okanagan and with their help began working on a business plan. At the same time she took part in the Aboriginal Business and Entrepreneurship Skill Training Program.

It took four months to complete her business plan, but Monique's success proved it was worth the effort. By July 1, 2006, she had her own business as a certified dog trainer offering obedience training, behaviour modification, dog walking/hiking and puppy consultation. She also specializes in canine aggressive behaviour management. Business is so good that Monique is now booking up to two weeks in advance often working twelve hours per day doing what she loves.

In her spare time Monique volunteers for the SPCA and says old dogs can learn new tricks. She also spends lots of time with her best friend Kona, a one year old Border collie. “I want to make a difference in the lives of people and the dogs they own,” she says. “Having a dog should be a joy and inspiration, but like anything else worth having, it takes time and effort.”

In the future, Monique hopes to further her education in dog agility training, expand her business and own more dogs. She has learned a lot from her trial of fire and says “You have to have faith in yourself. If you look for faith from others you will only disappoint yourself.” 