

# NAPPS 2017 Business of the Year

## Park Cities Pet Sitter, Inc. Delivers Pet Care in a Big Way

By Arden Moore



Joette White is perfectly content to be imperfect. And she is quick to acknowledge mistakes or setbacks. Powered by a can-do spirit, she transforms life lessons into triumphs as owner of Park Cities Pet Sitter, Inc., one of the country's largest and most successful professional pet sitting companies.

“I am not afraid to admit my flaws and mistakes in both personal and business arenas. But I have learned from them and have been willing to change when things were not working and as a result, I have a thriving business to show for it,” says the always-candid White, who bounced back from financial distress to direct a company that exceeded \$1.2 million in income in the last fiscal year and is on track to grow by nearly 6 percent this year.

She took over the reins when she purchased PCPSI in 2000 and now oversees a loyal staff of 41. She and her team continue to expand services to grateful pet parents in the Dallas area.

For her savvy business skills, people skills and desire to raise the bar on quality pet care for the pet sitting industry, White has earned the title of NAPPS 2017 Business of the Year.

### What Clients Say About Park Cities Pet Sitter, Inc.

As part of the requirements in the application process to be considered for 2017 NAPPS Business of the Year honors, pet sitters had to include comments from clients. Here is a sampling from satisfied clients:



*“I spend a lot of time traveling and at one point, I was commuting to D.C. PCPSI took care of my pets, my house, my plants and made sure that everything was safe and secure while I was away. I like the PCPSI approach to providing pet service. They really focus on meeting the specific needs of the individual. Joette adapts quickly to my requests and always has a proposed solution.” — Lori Fink, of Dallas, who relies on PCPSI to care for her dog, Lucy and five cats.*

*“Joette and her team have been unbelievably flexible with us and we’ve used their pet sitting service since 2002. Joette really listens to her clients, and understands that for people like me, my dogs are my kids. They are always right there to help out and I trust them completely with my ‘kids.’ I can’t imagine not having them in our lives.” — Starlette Johnson, of Dallas.*

“Joette has been through rough times with her business, but all of this has molded her into the great person and successful business owner that she has become,” notes NAPPS President Yvette Gonzales, who serves on the nominating committee and operates As You Wish Pet Sitters in the Denver area.

Cathe Delaney, NAPPS administrator, adds, “I was a big fan of Joette back when she served on our board and still am today. She is approachable

and she is very passionate about NAPPS and it shows. If you ask her for something – say write an article or make a phone call or help on a project, she does so without hesitation.”

And White is there with innovative solutions for her clients. When longtime client Lori Fink was hobbling on crutches at the same time her dog tore a ligament and needed to go to the hospital for surgery, her car’s battery died.

## Business of the Year Perks

The NAPPS Business of the Year Award is presented to a member who has demonstrated outstanding business practices and vision in maintaining and growing their business. The honor includes:

- Complimentary participation in the 2017 Education and Networking Forum in Chicago (inclusive of registration, lodging, and transportation).
- Professionally prepared customized public relations press release to local media by the national NAPPS office.
- The Park Cities Pet Sitter, Inc. company logo displayed on the NAPPS website for one year.
- Recognition of the Park Cities Pet Sitter, Inc. company during the 2017 Education and Networking Forum.
- Indefinite use of the "NAPPS Pet Sitting Business of the Year 2017" logo.

"Joette came to the rescue in her mini-van and drove me and my dog to the hospital so she could have her needed surgery," says Fink.

"I use to judge how my business was doing by how much money was in my bank account. But when the recession hit in 2009, coupled with some bad spending decisions, my business was not looking so great," recalls White. "I knew I had to make some changes. I needed to learn how to focus on the numbers and pay attention to the metrics to know how my business was really doing."

Recognizing the need to find individuals who have strengths in the areas she was weakest, White hired Erin Fenstermaker, a business strategist, about five years ago. Fenstermaker has guided White on updating her technology for scheduling, email, voice mail and the use of smart devices by



Joette White hired Erin Fenstermaker (left), a business strategist.

all staff in the field as well as set financial goals while paying close attention to the numbers.

"Joette is a people person who gets the fundamentals of this business better than anyone I know in this industry," says Fenstermaker. "Her success is due to the fact that she provides great service to her clients and she treats the people on her staff well."

White recognizes the importance of a well-trained staff and in providing education to her



clients on pet care. She has hosted dog and cat behavior workshops, cultivated relationships with veterinarians and expanded services to now include overnight stays, dog training and litter box cleaning.

"The average employee at PCPSI has been with the company almost five years, and we attribute that to setting clear expectations and regularly reminding the staff how grateful we are for their hard work," says White. "This is our 'secret sauce' and why we have grown for so many years."

And when it comes to fielding any complaints or concerns from clients, White responds, "We jump on them immediately. Addressing complaints as quickly as possible lessens the length of time a client may be upset with us, and tends to make the complaint easier to resolve. Customer service is the core of Park Cities Pet Sitter."

Referrals remain the biggest source of new business for PCPSI. These referrals come not only from existing clients but also from veterinarians, building concierges and property managers. Current clients earn \$20 toward future service for each new referral.

"Our average client generates about \$1,100 per year, which we believe is quite high for the industry," she says. "It is much easier to grow your revenue by keeping existing clients happy and adding additional services."

Her management philosophy identifies these top priorities: customer service, staff morale, staff training and retention. "If staff are happy, respected, well-trained and feel valued, they will stay," she adds.

Christy Van Ravenswaay joined PCPSI in 2014 as a pet sitter and is now office manager. "Joette doesn't claim to be Miss Perfect. That is comforting for me. If I do mess up, it is not the end of the world. She takes the time to explain the process on how to get through an issue."

## PCPSI Identifies Ambitious Goals

White is on track to pursue a five-year goal: to approach the \$2 million mark in sales, add another 20 pet sitters to the roster and perhaps, open a retail location to continue expansion in the Dallas market.

"We would also like to be the first pet sitting company in Texas to offer health insurance to our full-time employees and are taking steps for that to happen in the next 18 months," she says.

The year 2017 marks three special milestones for White. In addition to this NAPPS honor, she will celebrate

her 50th birthday as well as the 25th anniversary of PCPSI.

"Winning this honor, well, it is hard for me to put into words as this was something I have wanted for a long time," says White. "There are so few things to be recognized for in our profession and we are both humbled by it and super excited. Now, we cannot wait to shout it on the rooftops and in social media. This is quite an honor." ■

## Facts about Park Cities Pet Sitter, Inc.

Location: Dallas

Established: 1992

Staff: 41

Owner Joette White is active in NAPPS conferences and networks with pet sitting business owners all over the country.

Mission statement: "To be the client's trusted resource for their pet's entire life."

Innovative service: Recently provided iPads to all full-time staffers and switch to a better scheduling software system called Pet Sitter Plus.

Member of NAPPS: Since 2000.

Website: [www.pcpsi.com](http://www.pcpsi.com)