

Self-employment leads to a rewarding business in animal care

by Ruby Arsenault

Rebecca Profit opened **Becky's Boarding & Kennel** in a perfect location in rural PEI.

She works as a casual at a local post office and also helps out at her parent's business, Race Trac Gas bar in Alma. "I really wanted to find something else that could provide an income," says Becky, who admits running a home on her own can be tough financially.

A few years ago when she purchased a farmhouse property in Deblois, an idea came to her. "I grew up on a farm, and loving and caring for animals came naturally. I decided to open a boarding and kennel service to provide a safe and caring environment for pets.

"I also keep goats and chickens, and as people asked to bring their children to see the animals, it drew attention to my new business."

As she shared the daily activities at the farmhouse on Facebook and Instagram, to her surprise, the business grew. "Clients liked seeing daily photos of their pets enjoying the country life. When I posted that my goats would enjoy snacking on left-over Halloween pumpkins or Christmas trees, people were happy to drop off items and visit.

"On an average day, I could be caring for up to seven dogs, plus my own two," says Becky. "So many dogs of various sizes and personalities can make life very fun, challenging and interesting. But I truly enjoy each moment.

"Some dogs have special diets, so they must be separated and not able to eat other foods. I walk the dogs all together. You would be surprised how fast they learn a routine.

"After exercise and outdoor play, we all settle in for an afternoon rest time. It can be a busy schedule.

"I charge \$20 a day per pet. Owners supply the food and leashes. I purchase supplies such as dog food and treats. I have tried to maintain a small budget, and I purchased liability insurance. I am open to caring for other pets, or to offering a pick up or delivery service. I could also visit pets in their own homes."

Skills needed to own and operate a boarding kennel:

- Patience
- Ability to multitask and stick to a schedule
- Basic bookkeeping skills
- Ability to make sound decisions

Rebecca was eligible for funding through the SkillsPEI Self Employ program, which allows her to draw EI for a negotiated period of time. "This support is vital, because it ensures an income if and when I have a slower week.



Rebecca Profit is now barking down the path to self-employment by opening up an animal boarding service. Submitted photo

"I look forward to where this business will take me and to the fur babies and owners I will meet along the way. I may even consider some form of expansion in the future."

For more information, call **Rebecca Profit** at **902-856-1091** or visit www.facebook.com/Beckys-Boarding-Kennel or on Instagram at **becky'sboardingkennel**.



The Self Employ PEI program is funded in whole or in part through the Canada-PEI labour market agreements.

Bioscience company uses state-of-the-art technology to connect with animal patients

by Heidi Riley

New to PEI, **VetNOW** is an American bioscience company that has developed a cloud-based virtual care platform which allows veterinarians and specialists to do high definition video examination from any device or location.

"Animal health and nutrition products and services are one of the cornerstones of the PEI BioCluster," says **Rory Francis**, Executive Director, **PEI BioAlliance**. "VetNOW is a great example of the kind of leading-edge technology and global business opportunity our academic, government, and business partners are working together to attract to Prince Edward Island."

"Our company, which is headquartered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, very recently opened a Canadian division at the Atlantic Veterinary College (AVC), and the PEI BioAlliance and the provincial government have been very welcoming," says **Dr. Apryle Horbal**, equine veterinary surgeon and head of VetNOW.

The company's platform transmits information about animal patients such as blood oxygen levels, respiratory and heart rates from faraway places in Canada to Veterinarians at the AVC who will help diagnose and treat animal patients.

"We plan to expand far beyond our current general practitioner and specialist advice and expand our technology and our services," says Dr. Horbal. "We are excited to work with the PEI BioAlliance to do this.

We have many other partnerships in the US, and we are just beginning to work with the Atlantic Vet College."

Employment opportunities on PEI in the coming year

- Veterinarians to offer advice and expertise remotely. "Each vet will be able to do the work of four working in the field because there is no time lost traveling between patients."
- Liaisons with the college
- Project Managers
- Software experts to wireframe, design, and develop the software
- Customer Service people
- Coordinators
- Paraprofessionals such as veterinary nurses
- Technicians to install and maintain hardware

"About a dozen people currently work with the Canadian arm of VetNOW, and there are plans to hire about another 20 almost immediately."



Dr. Apryle Horbal, head of VetNOW, with equipment designed for remote veterinary care. The Bluetooth-enabled peripheral devices include an EKG device, blood glucose meter, device to measure oxygen in the blood, a camera that can zoom in on the affected area, and a video screen.

Contact **Robert Jordan** at rjordan@onehealthsolutions.com for further information about employment opportunities.

Visit www.vetnow.com

For the full interview, visit www.employmentjourney.com and search **VetNOW**.

For more about the **PEI BioAlliance**, visit www.peibioalliance.com



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