



Photos by John Berry/The Times Herald

Bagel, a beagle, above, is one of the clients at Cubby's Canine Castle, the new dog day care facility in Whitpain. Sarah Winkelvoss, below right, owner of the day care facility, and Danielle Tilman, left, play with some of the dogs at the day care.

## No dog days here

### Cubby's Canine Castle provides day care and activity for your pooch

By GARY PULEO  
Times Herald Staff

**WHITPAIN** — A cubbyhole for Cubby?

Not a chance.

This five-year-old demanded a domain befitting a Yellow Labrador of her distinction and grace. And so Cubby's Canine Castle came to be.

That may sound like the intro to a children's bedtime story, but it's actually the preface to what owner Sarah Winkelvoss hopes will become a sought-after doggie day care center in Blue Bell.

**fyi**

**Cubby's Canine Castle**  
1265 DeKalb Pike  
Blue Bell  
610-272-0300  
www.cubbyscaninecastle.com

Winkelvoss had been working in Chicago a few years ago and subletting Cubby's daytime needs to able providers.

Yet she yearned to get off the road and out of the software racket. Maybe start her own doggie day care facility back in Pennsylvania, somewhere near her native Delaware County might be the answer.

"With my background as a customer, I figured I knew what people needed for their own dogs," said Winkelvoss, now a certified pet care technician and member of the North American Dog Day care Association.

For starters, flexibility in drop-off and pick-up times for Fido would be nice, she reasoned.

"Some places have specific drop off and pick up times, but if you have a non-traditional job, you need more flexibility than that, and that's what we try to provide here," Winkelvoss noted.

"We have no set times for dropping or picking up your dog, so that can be done anytime within our hours of 6:45 a.m. to 7 p.m."

While some facilities focus on

fringe benefits like hot tubs and TVs, you won't find any pooches lolling about on chaise lounges watching soap operas all day at Cubby's.

This place is more like a furry fitness club, minus the Evian bottles and iPods.

"It's definitely more about exercise and interaction here," Winkelvoss said. "We try not to let them sit and watch TV, because that's what they can do at home. Dogs get dropped off in the morning, play all day and so when they go home at night they're really tired. This is a good way to give them a full day of exercise. When the parents get home they don't have to worry about it."

Doggie day care is still a young industry, continually evolving with pet owners' changing needs, she noted.

12 hours a day."

Pet boarding is available to clients. Winkelvoss maintains an apartment on the premises so she's always aware of what's going on and is available in an emergency.

"As a dog owner, that makes me feel very comfortable to know that someone is staying over, in case a dog gets sick or something," she allowed. "If something does come up it can be addressed."

Winkelvoss and her assistant, Nicole McBride — who conducts Cubby's obedience classes and training courses — are also devoted to finding good homes for dogs through their work with Brookline Lab Rescue.

"It's nice to have a business where I can do more foster care than I did before, but I can't do so much that I let it impact the business," Winkelvoss said.

Potential Cubby's playmates must cut the mustard, behaviorally, before being enrolled, Winkelvoss explained.



"There's a changing attitude toward pets, and there's also a change in the American lifestyle," Winkelvoss said. "People work longer hours and are commuting longer hours. So 20 years ago, there might have been a stay-at-home mom, and people weren't gone for

"We meet with the owner and the dog, watching the dog's body language," she said. "After that, we take them and introduce them to other dogs and see how they interact with them. This is a social environment, and it's not the right one for every dog."