

# Business

## Personalized pet care

*Vet provides family-oriented approach at Littleton's newest animal hospital*

By LAURA HERRINGTON WATSON  
For the Courier

**D**ogs dressed in Where's Waldo and Bride of Frankenstein costumes celebrated Halloween early at the grand opening of Littleton West Animal Hospital on Saturday.

Dr. Lori Reisig is the owner and sole veterinarian at the new pet hospital, which she opened in late August in the Bowles Village Center, which is across from Clement Park.

Like most veterinarians, Reisig has loved animals since her childhood. She anticipated opening a private practice before graduating from Colorado State University's veterinary school in 2009, and during her eight years as a vet tech and three years as a veterinarian, Reisig gathered knowledge on patient care and ideas for her own practice.

Reisig opened her practice because "I wanted to run things my way and the way pet owners want a vet to be." That way involves a family-vet relationship focusing on the needs of the pet, the family and the veterinarian.

"I believe you should spend time and build a long-term relationship, get to know people and their pets, and make decisions together," says Reisig, who has seen too many rushed vet appointments and exams, and too many pets examined by different doctors at every visit.

Reisig wants the families she serves to leave with a full understanding of what's happening to their pets and what their responsibilities are.

"Relationship-centered care" is part of her mantra, an ideal that Reisig says she couldn't achieve while working for other people.

Because of the large number of vet practices in the Denver area, Reisig knew she had to set her clinic apart. The "grapevine" of veterinary practices also provided ample support and resources in building her new business.

Reisig says pet care often is based on discretionary income, and pet owners can't always afford the best option. Still, she strives to inform families of all treatment possibilities.

Some patients have followed Reisig from previous hospitals, and friends and family also are bringing their pets to her.

"It's been really nice; everyone has been very supportive," says Reisig, adding that business has been picking up each week.

A native of Aurora, Reisig now lives



**DR. LORI REISIG**, seen at right with her dog, Joey, is the owner and sole veterinarian at Littleton West Animal Hospital, which opened last summer. Above, Turtle, owned by the Schwenk family, was named a Top Dog at the pet hospital's pre-Halloween celebration.

Photos by  
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near her hospital in Littleton, and says, "I do all my shopping here, and I figure since everyone else does too, it would be central for everyone."

The Schwenk family brought their dog, Turtle, to Saturday's costume contest, and the canine captured a Top Dog prize for his Where's Waldo costume. The Schwenks,

### Littleton West Animal Hospital

**Address:** 7735-1 W. Long Drive, Littleton; in the Bowles Village Center next to IHOP

**Phone:** 303-948-8858; fax: 303-948-8415

**Hours:** Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Wednesday, 7:30 a.m. to noon; Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. to noon.

who also have three cats, are happy that the hospital is near their home and are looking forward to a shorter drive to the vet.

Reisig is excited about her business becoming part of the community. "I'm excited to see people at the grocery store and ask how Sparky's doing."

Hospital manager Melanie Wagner worked with Reisig when the two were vet technicians. Wagner echoes Reisig's philosophy of care and taking time to know each patient.

"We want to make sure the care plan we pick for each family fits," says Wagner. "We want the best life for the dog or cat."

Education is the key issue for Wagner, who hopes to empower pet owners through public classes and information sessions about everything from exams and vaccinations to heartworm to animal behavior.

With one veterinarian and two veterinary technicians — or "veterinary nurses," as Reisig refers to them — the hospital has an intimate feel.

The clinic offers separate exam rooms for cats and dogs to help keep pet patients calm. A comfort room has a big plush couch and a door leading outside, so owners can bypass the front entrance when bringing pets to be euthanized. Reisig says families can stay in the room with their pets throughout the process.

The animal hospital also has a boarding area for diabetic cats only, and an outdoor dog run, a fenced-in area of concrete behind the building, that will soon have artificial grass and a roof.

Reisig shows off the digital dental X-ray device, a valuable tool for understanding an animal's overall health.

Although the hospital specializes in cats and dogs, Reisig says she will treat customer's gerbils, rabbits and other family pets.

"I think we're going to do well," Wagner says. "Everyone likes the doc, and the staff is really friendly."

## REAL ESTATE

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homes this year, and I didn't sell any in the previous five."

She has also seen three relocations so far this year, which is unusual, indicating that companies are moving people here.

The overriding market characteristic is low inventory, she said, which makes people nervous about putting houses on the market and then not being able to find another place to live.

It can still be very hard to close a deal sometimes, Jones said. For example, one seller with a contract for his \$400,000 Highlands Ranch house had to put it back on the market after the prospective buyer suddenly lost his job.

Statistics from Metrolist, which compiles data for the seven metro counties including Denver, show that active listings for September were 11,869, down 30 percent from 16,826 a year ago. In 2010 there were 24,590 active listings in September.

According to the Metrolist findings as of September 2012:

- The number of homes under contract was 45,057 year to

date, an increase of nearly 17 percent compared with the same period last year.

- The number of sold listings was 36,027 year to date, an increase of 17 percent, compared to 30,786 sold listings a year ago and 30,813 in 2010.

- Average number of days on the market is 78 year to date, a decline of 27 percent compared to last year.

- The average selling price was \$278,016 year to date, an increase of 8 percent compared with \$257,192 a year ago.

- The median selling price was \$230,000, an increase of 9.5 percent year to date, compared with \$210,000 a year ago.