# Christie Mahaffey Earns Pet Dog Trainer Certification

***For Immediate Release***

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[***Bangor***]— - Dog trainer Christie Mahaffey, of Green Acres Kennel Shop in Bangor, has earned Level I certification through the Certification Council for Professional Dog Trainers (CCPDT), the internationally recognized certification program for pet dog trainers. Mahaffey now joins the more than 1000 Certified Pet Dog Trainers located throughout the US and in a number of countries outside the US.

The CCPDT's program (ccpdt.org) is the first national certification for dog trainers. Until the creation of the independently operated Certification Council for Professional Trainers in 2001, there was no nationally available certification process for dog trainers. Many schools teach dog trainers and offer certification for their specific programs. These certificates, therefore, reflect the teachings and quality of a specific school. Other organizations offer take-home tests for "certification." These tests are not monitored, nor are the testing processes standardized.

In order to develop a credible barometer for the dog-owning public to choose a trainer, the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) initiated a process to develop a standardized dog trainer examination. The APDT is the largest dog trainer association in the world and promotes humane training practices. In conjunction with a task force of approximately 20 nationally known dog-training professionals and behaviorists, the APDT developed the CCPDT certification examination.

The task force worked for three years to research and develop the comprehensive written examination in conjunction with an independent testing company. The task force followed rigorous standards to ensure that the process met professional testing criteria. A critical part of this process was the establishment of the separate and independent CCPDT to manage the accreditation and recertification of the pet dog trainers. The CCPDT also pursues development of future higher-level training examinations.

The CCPDT administered its first examination September 28, 2001, during the APDT Annual Educational Conference in Ellenville, NY. Since then, the CCPDT administers the test twice a year at 18 sites throughout the US and at the APDT annual educational conference. The Professional Testing Corporation of New York ensures that the test sites are professionally secured and monitored. Candidates who pass the exam earn the title Certified Pet Dog Trainer and may use the designation, "CPDT," after their names. All certified trainers must earn continuing education units to maintain their designations.

A graduate student at the University of Maine, Mahaffey has been teaching dog training classes at Green Acres Kennel Shop since 2002. She joins Don Hanson, Becky Ruggiero, and Kate Dutra as the CPDT’s teaching at Green Acres.