Hanson Completes Professional Animal Training Seminar at Chicago's John G. Shedd Aquarium

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[***Bangor***]— Don Hanson, co-owner and Director of Behavior Counseling and Training at the Green Acres Kennel Shop in Bangor, has completed a 5 day professional animal training seminar at the John G. Shedd Aquarium in Chicago. Taught by Ken Ramirez, the Shedd's Executive VP of Animal Care & Animal Training, the course focused on; basic and advanced operant conditioning, animal enrichment activities and non-training interactions, husbandry training, problem behaviors and aggression. Several species were discussed in the class; Beluga Whales, California Sea Lions, Pacific White-sided Dolphins, Sea Otters, Magellanic Penguins, Barred Owls, Great Horned Owls, Red Tailed Hawks, and three rescue dogs. While the class is designed for zoo and aquarium professionals, many dog trainers also attend.

When asked why a dog trainer would attend such a class, Green Acres' Hanson responded: "*There are several reasons I attended this class. First of all the training philosophy used at the Shedd and other marine mammal parks is the same as ours at Green Acres' – reward behavior you like and manage to prevent behavior you don't like. Secondly, the method of training, operant conditioning or what we call clicker training, has been in use by marine mammal trainers for years before it became common in dog training. The fact is all animals, even humans, learn via the same basic tenets of operant conditioning. Third on my list - Ken Ramirez is one of the best animal trainers and best teachers of animal trainers in the world. This program has given me many new ideas that will benefit Green Acres' clients but also our staff of professional dog trainers. Lastly, as a professional I am committed to life-long learning. Too many dog trainers have decided that they know all there is to know and consciously made a choice to stop learning years ago. By not keeping current with the vast improvements that have been made in our profession they're doing a great disservice to their clients, the animals they work with, and themselves. And oh yeah, the opportunity to interact with Beluga Whales and Sea Lions up close and personal… it's awesome! I never would have learned that Beluga's like to have their tongues tickled as a reward if I had never met Naya.*"

In business since 1965, Green Acres Kennel Shop at 1653 Union Street is a Pet Care Services Association (PCSA) accredited facility offering boarding, daycare and grooming for dogs and cats, as well as pet behavior consultations and training classes. Voted Best Kennel every year since 2002, Best Pet Store every year since 2007, Best Dog Trainer every year since 2011, and Best Pet Groomer in 2013, the Green Acres retail store offers a wide variety of wholesome pet foods, treats and quality supplies. For more information, please call 945-6841 or visit www.greenacreskennel.com.

Don & Tyler at graduation

Rewarding Naya with a tongue tickle

Naya shares a secret with Don