



## Pastry chef has gone to the dogs



**Suburban Dog** . Lauren and Michael Kozanczyn are the proud owners of The Suburban Dog. Here they are shown with their own dogs, Bailey, a Bernese Mountain dog held by Michael and Tequila, a Rottweiler held by Lauren. The business walks and takes care of dogs and cats in south and east Oakville to south and central Mississauga. *Photo supplied*

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It started with selling home-made dog biscuits at Woofstock, the twice-a-year festival in Toronto that celebrates all things canine. That wasn't a stretch for Lauren Kozanczyn, the Mississauga-raised pastry chef who was then working a government office job. Eventually those dog biscuits led her to start The Suburban Dog in 2007. It's a dog-walking, dog-sitting, dog daycare and cat-sitting business based out of the house she shares in Oakville with her husband Michael, two dogs and three cats. "It was hard at first," said Kozanczyn.

Her husband, a chef, supported them the first few years. Now business is strong enough that they both work for The Suburban Dog exclusively.

"It's very much a cottage industry," said Kozanczyn. "A lot of people do it as a hobby, but in the last 10 years, the whole dog-walking industry has just boomed."

She says most of their clients are couples who both work and don't have children. Their pets are their babies. They have the money to pay \$20 for a dog walk, or for someone to visit their puppy or cat in their home while they're out.

Most of The Suburban Dog's work is dogs and cats, but over the years there have been some guinea pigs, birds and even iguanas they've taken care of.

They're busy enough now to have one full-time and two part-time employees.

The help is welcome as Kozanczyn is currently six months pregnant and not quite as able to handle multiple dogs in a leash-free zone.

She's doing more paper work and customer service these days.

The couple aren't ruling out expanding their business geographically using regional managers, but Kozanczyn doesn't see franchising in their future.

"This business is so customer-based it would be hard to translate into a franchise," she said.

They're careful to make sure the temperaments of the dogs they walk are sociable, and they love all sizes and kinds of dogs.

Currently their service territory extends from south and east Oakville to south and central Mississauga.

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