

Meet Gulia Adams of Furtastik in Lincoln Park

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Today we'd like to introduce you to Gulia Adams.



Gulia, who was born in Moscow Russia and immigrated to the US in 2000 when she was 20, has always loved animals, especially dogs. After many trying many jobs Gulia became a bather for a larger dog services business in Atlanta Georgia. After meeting her future husband, Bob, a Chicago resident, Gulia moved to Chicago in 2008 where she attended, and graduated from, the Dog Grooming Academy in Schaumburg. To gain more experience, before attempting to open her own store, Gulia was a grooming manager for Petco for several years.

The idea of Furtastik started her dog Oscar, a treasured member of the family. She believed he deserved a much better option for his grooming, daycare, and boarding needs. She tried almost every local facility and found them all to be lacking in some way. We couldn't believe there wasn't a place that was clean, cheerful, intimate and provided real hands-on attention for Oscar and his friends. Most daycares we tried actually charged extra for petting and cuddling.

So starting Furtastik® in July 2010 was her solution. She limits pet daycare enrollment to no more than 25 dogs at a time and our overnight boarding is limited to no more than 15 dogs at one time.

Has it been a smooth road?

Starting any business requires you to 'ride through' some bumpy roads. The first year was difficult as there was plenty of existing competition in the surrounding Lincoln Park neighborhood. Luckily Gulia had been well prepared by attending many advisory sessions at the Chicago Small Business Center. She also applied for and was granted a small business loan from Accion which was instrumental in helping her survive the start-up growth stage.

Her success was noted by Accion and she was profiled in their 2010 annual report. The city was also so impressed she was cited as an example of the Small Business Centers' positive impact by Mayor Richard Daley in his state of the city speech that year!

So let's switch gears a bit and go into the Furtastik story. Tell us more about the business.

Furtastik is a 3,000 square foot, climate controlled facility which offers a variety of pet care services: daycare, boarding, grooming and specialty retail. The key to Furtastik is its limited enrollment and careful screening of new clients. Gulia is passionate about dogs and animals which translates into her high standards of care and quality of service. Furtastik is a cage-less facility and, because of its loyal clientele and extensive screening ensures that all dogs are properly matched with their playmates. In the facility there are many separate play areas that can accommodate varying sizes and temperaments which ensures a fun and safe daycare or boarding experience for the dogs.

How do you think the industry will change over the next decade? I think the "big box", large enrollment dog daycares will give way to smaller, hands-on facilities like Furtastik.

Pricing:

- Full Grooming starts at \$50
- Baths start at \$20
- Daycare as low as \$18 per day (when purchasing a prepaid package)
- Boarding as low as \$40 per night (depending on number of nights)

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