Transcript of **Out of The Woofworks** Episode 16: “Starting In the Dog Training Industry with Ravenn Bang”

RACHEL: Welcome to Out Of The Woofworks, here with me, Rachel Forday, on a podcast where we’ll be talking about dogs, dog training, and more importantly human social issues, both in the dog industry and the world.

Today with have Ravenn Bang with us. Ravenn is a certified dog trainer with her business Please Pick Up Your Poop. We’ll be talking about what it’s like to start out in the dog training industry and our thoughts on regulation in this industry.

It was really wonderful speaking to Ravenn and hearing about her experience becoming a dog trainer and her insight. For any of you who are thinking about starting out as a dog trainer, this one is definitely for you. So let’s get right into it.

[Intro Music]

RACHEL: Hi, Ravenn. Thank you so much for chatting with me today. I'm so excited to talk to you. How are you doing today?

RAVENN: I'm doing pretty good, and I'm really excited to be talking to you too.

RACHEL: Aw, brilliant. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and what you do?

RAVENN: Yeah. My name's Raven Bang. I am a dog trainer and a shelter volunteer.

I just finished the Victoria Stilwell Academy online course around May, and then around the same time I started volunteering at a shelter.

RACHEL: Ah, that's really good to hear because I was a Victoria Stillwell Academy graduate as well, so that's really cool.

RAVENN: I know. I remember I reached out to you–

RACHEL: Yes!

RAVENN: –when I was interested in the course.

RACHEL: Yes, I remember that as well. And so it's brilliant to hear that you've done it and hopefully, you know, you've found it helpful as well. But I'm just curious, and I ask this of everyone, but how did you come into working with dogs? Was that something you knew that you would do or that you wanted to do since you were a child?

RAVENN: No. So careers with animals weren't really on my radar. I was obsessed with dogs growing up. I used to play this game called furry-paws.com. Um, so it is like a virtual kennel where you like raise and breed dogs and show and do sports and stuff.

RACHEL: Yeah.

RAVENN: So I was pretty obsessed with that. And I would read anything I could get my hands on, I would check out dog fancy from the library, but for some reason it just didn't click to me that I could work with animals.

So we had lots of dogs growing up, but we didn't really do a lot of training with them or anything. They just kind of lived in our house and that was fine. So when I got Molly, that changed because Molly was a little bit different from any of the other dogs that came into my life.

So like most dog trainers, I got a dog that had some behaviors that I wasn't really familiar with and I needed to help her through. So that's kind of how I got interested in training.

RACHEL: Oh, I love Molly. She's so cute with her fluffy ears. *[laughs]*

RAVENN: Yeah. Everybody loves her ears.

RACHEL: They're so fluffy. And how did she come into your life? Did you adopt her?

RAVENN: Yeah, so I knew I wanted a dog for a really long time, but I waited until my mid twenties because I take pet parenthood pretty seriously. So probably the same way that most people planned to have a baby, I was just waiting for that perfect time to get a dog.

But everybody in my life around that time was getting puppies, and these people were like way busier than I was. So I thought, you know, if they can get a dog, I should be able to get a dog now, even though it's not quite the perfect time.

RACHEL: Yeah.

RAVENN: So I went to a local shelter and... It was hard to pick a dog because I kind of had this fairy tale in my mind that I was gonna have like this great connection right away. We were just gonna like lock eyes and it's gonna go magical. But no, it was really hard to choose. So I kind of picked her almost on a whim, actually. But–

RACHEL: Yeah.

RAVENN: –you know, I took her home. She was about 15, 16 weeks and nothing about the experience was the way I thought it was gonna be. I won't like, go into super detail, but she came home pretty sick. She was covered in fleas and ticks and she had Giardia and I'd never had a dog with a parasite before, so I was like, "Oh, this is pretty gross". And I never pulled ticks off a dog before, so it was like a real learning curve, really fast.

RACHEL: Oh my goodness. Yeah, that's a lot to deal with for your first dog, but I totally know what you mean about that. Sort of fairy tale idea of, you know, meeting the dog at the shelter. And they're like, "Pick me. Pick me." And we don't really get that. I know with Dave, he has never been the dog to do the "pick me" thing. He's just like, "Oh, you are here. Okay". *[laughs]*

RAVENN: *[laughs]*

RACHEL: And I know that you mentioned that you volunteer at a rescue as well. You know, I started my journey with dogs by being a dog walker at a shelter where I met Dave. So I'm always interested to know what it's like for others too. So can you tell us like what you do at the rescue and what has been your experience there?

RAVENN: Yeah, so I walk dogs there just like you did and it's fantastic. So I go there once a week for about three hours. I would go more if I could, but you know, I still work full time and now, you know, I'm starting a dog training business, so time is a little limited, but I walk dogs the whole time. I usually walk between six and nine dogs. It just depends on how hot it is. If it's not hot, like yesterday was a fantastic day, we can stay outside a little bit longer with the dogs.

RACHEL: Yeah.

RAVENN: So you know, we just go in the kennel and walk the dogs. It's been a really great experience. The shelter that I volunteer at... a lot of people I think don't wanna volunteer because they think, "Oh, it's gonna be so sad. How can you leave them there?" But if a dog has to end up at a shelter, the one that I volunteer at is a pretty great place for them to end up. So, I feel pretty good about that.

RACHEL: Yeah. Yeah, I know. I did think about that when I started volunteering. You know, like, "Oh, you have to go home and they're so sad", but you know, they're already there. And to be honest, some of them, you know, if they are in a shelter, if the shelter is good and they're getting enrichment and stuff, sometimes it's better than being in a home where they aren't getting anything or, you know, they're in a crate all the time and things like that. So...

RAVENN: Yeah, and I think there's been kind of a shift where... I do still see people saying, you know, "Adoption is for life, keep the dog forever". But I know for me personally, I've kind of seen a shift where I don't think that is how it should be. I think if you're not gonna be able to meet the dog's needs, then it's not great for the dog to stay in that environment.

Cuz I know, like with my cat– I have a cat that I took because I didn't want her to end up at a shelter and. I mean, I do meet her basic needs, but I will admit like I'm not the best cat parent cuz I'm not a cat person. And I still, you know, I wonder sometimes, like, would it have been better for her if she had gone to somebody that really appreciates her and all of her catness.

RACHEL: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, there's no shame in, you know, having a dog rehomed or having a pet rehomed essentially, because sometimes it's not the right fit. And I think that's really important to think about as well.

So just wondering, at the shelter, is this where you also get to use force free or positive reinforcement based methods?

RAVENN: Yeah, so that's another thing I really like about the shelter is they definitely do use force free and positive reinforcement. And they actually have a really great program for fearful dogs. So....yeah. They really try hard to make everything positive for the dogs there and I hope that someday I can also volunteer with training dogs there cause they do have volunteers that do that. But it's not open yet and I'm still a new volunteer, so I gotta pay my dues first.

RACHEL: That, yeah, I've been through that as well. I think I took a few months and then, you know, they kinda ask around if you want to join him to doing the training side of things. And I think we're very lucky to have found shelters that do the force free training.

But I'm just wondering, where did you first find out about using force free or positive reinforcement based methods? Cuz I know that it can be quite hard at first to kind of navigate what's the best way to do things.

RAVENN: So I kind of was always aware that there were ways to train with treats, and I also knew that there were other ways to train, like through, you know, the prong and the shock collars and things like that.

I didn't really realize until I started the Victoria Stilwell Academy that those methods were outdated. I just knew that I didn't want to use them.

RACHEL: Ah, okay.

RAVENN: And I think, a bit before I started the course, I read "The Culture Clash" by Jean Donaldson and that was kind of where I was like, "Oh, okay, that's... that's not the best way to do things. Great. Cuz I didn't wanna do that anyway, so."

RACHEL: Yeah!

RAVENN: But it's hard cuz I'll, you know, I, like I said, I've been obsessed with dogs for a long time, so all the information just kind of like blurs together like "When did I learn about this?"

RACHEL: Yeah, I know. It's really interesting because I've never been around dogs. I've never had dogs growing up, really.

And so when I went into the shelter and they were teaching about force free or positive reinforcement based methods and you know, kind of keeping dogs under threshold and things like that. Like, in my mind, I still have this, I guess, punishment culture as part of me being like, "But how does that work? How can that be possible?" you know?

RAVENN: Yeah. Like, it was interesting because you know, when we think about dog training, like traditionally, like a few years ago, like, even though I didn't have any exposure to that, there was still like somehow... maybe it's from watching Animal Planet, I don't know, but... *[laughs]* Um, you know, there's definitely like those methods, like you know about them even though maybe you didn't ever use them, but positive reinforcement training. It's weird because that seems so counterintuitive like that that's the best way for some reason.

RACHEL: Yeah, for sure. I think we have all been conditioned to have some of these ideas and like you said, potentially also Animal Planet. *[laughs]*

RAVENN: Yeah.

RACHEL: And uh, you know, seeing those programs sometimes that aren't always, you know, using the best methods. But like you said, we're both from the Victoria Stewart Academy and I finished mine just before COVID started, so that was a fun, interesting time to start a business. But was it hard for you at first kinda navigating the training world You know, what were some of the challenges or barriers that you had?

RAVENN: So I started looking at trading programs probably like 2018, 2019.

RACHEL: Mm, okay.

RAVENN: And the cost was a huge barrier.

RACHEL: Yeah.

RAVENN: They're very expensive. So that was really challenging because I don't grow up. In a very affluent family. You know, I have a... my mom was a single mom with five kids. She's lived paycheck to paycheck her whole life. And I know that as she gets older–she's gonna be 70 soon–that I need to be prepared to take on more financial responsibilities. So dropping a few thousand dollars on a training course was a bit challenging.

So that's why I waited until COVID started and everything kind of felt really life or death. And that's when I was like, "Okay, I can take this risk now". Because you know, like the world was just–we didn't know what was gonna happen. So I thought, you know, what am I waiting for? Now is a great time to take this course.

RACHEL: Ah, I see!

RAVENN: My sister, at the same time–I have an identical twin sister and she was also thinking about, you know, "Where do I wanna be after all of this is over?"

And she started taking a yoga certification, a running coach and being a personal trainer certification. So, you know, watching her do all of that, I was like, I really should also maybe think about doing what I wanna do in the future. And I really was getting more interested in training.

I started listening to Drinking From The Toilet, and that really... There's an episode, it's episode #115. I looked it up last night. *[laughs]* She had a few black women dog trainers on there, and so representation is really important. So knowing that, there were people that looked like me out there and that they were doing what I kind of wanted to do, that really gave me the courage to take that next step.

RACHEL: Oh, wow.

RAVENN: Um, and it's a really great episode, so I recommend listening to it.

RACHEL: Yeah, yeah. No, I definitely remember that episode. It's Drinking From The Toilet, from Hannah Branigan's podcast. so yeah.

RAVENN: Yeah yeah! There's Smart Bitch, Ayoka Bubar, and then says, Cecilia, I cannot remember her last name, but her training name used to be C3BAT but I think she's since changed it.

RACHEL: Yes, I remember that episode. Oh, so that had quite a big impact on youl. And I'm just wondering if you are comfortable with sharing, Have you also experienced racism or even microaggressions just in this industry, or in the sheltering world, or even when you're just out with your dog in your daily life?

RAVENN: So definitely when out with my dog, that's... *[sighs and laughs]* Yeah. There were a lot of challenges before I moved. I just recently, last year I moved to Colorado, but before we moved, living in Arizona, like we experienced quite a lot of situations that I can't help but wonder if things would've been different if I was like a big, burly white man.

RACHEL: Mm-hmm.

RAVENN: Molly is not great about people and other dogs. She really loves personal space. She doesn't wanna say hi to you or your dog and I had a lot of neighbors that really didn't want to respect that. They would insist on their dog greeting us even when she's on her hind legs barking at them. A few neighbors would intentionally let their dogs off lead–

RACHEL: Oh dear.

RAVENN: –um in front of us. Like they'd make eye contact with me, kind of gimme this smile and let their dog loose. So there's just... there's a lot of animosity and issues and I got told a lot that I needed to train my dog, which, you know, as a dog trainer now I'm like, "Yeah, I'm supposed to train my dog when you're constantly letting her practice this behavior that we don't want."

RACHEL: Yeah.

RAVENN: It doesn't make a lot of sense, but...

RACHEL: Yeah. You're trying to manage the situation.

RAVENN: Yeah. I just, I always wondered like if being a petite, young black woman made any difference in that, because my mom is a white woman and she had a lot of different experiences when she's out with my dog.

So, you know, she didn't have those situations coming up. People would not let their dogs off loose. They would give her that space if she told them "No, they can't approach". So...

RACHEL: Yeah.

RAVENN: I just, I don't know if race did play into that or not, but it kind of felt like it at times.

RACHEL: Yeah. It felt like you're not being heard as much, I suppose, about what your dog needs. Yeah.

RAVENN: Yeah. And it was... it was really frustrating because I just felt like people weren't giving me like the same respect that maybe they were giving to other people in our neighborhood.

RACHEL: Yeah, that's really hard because I know you are already trying your best to manage your dog who's having a hard time, so that can be really, really stressful without that understanding from the people around you.

I mean, quite recently, me and one of my friends, you know, we've been encountering this person who lives kind of near us in the same neighborhood, and they kind of let their dog out just free roaming, you know.

RAVENN: Oh, no...

RACHEL: And then she'll catch up...She'll catch up eventually, and then she'll end up yelling at us, even though it's her dog off leash.

And then those couple times where she said to me and also to my friend separately, "Go back to where you came from!"

RAVENN: Oh no, that's...

RACHEL: And it's just like, wow.

RAVENN: Ugh, that must ruin a lot of your day.

RACHEL: Yeah. I mean, it's one of those things, isn't it, that we have to deal with. So I always, you know, I said this before my podcast and also in my posts, that it's hard sometimes to try and advocate for your dog when this is what you end up facing. You know, when you are trying to just make sure your dogs are not too scared.

RAVENN: Yeah, and also, I mean, I'm kind of an introvert, so I'm not like the type of person that normally is very loud and outspoken, but when it comes to my dog, I have to be. I have to tell people because you know, for her sake, I don't want her to ever feel like

she's not safe with me when we're outside because I'm letting people get too close.

But also for other people's safety. I've been on other end of the leash of a dog that's bitten somebody before, and I just never wanna experience that again. So yeah, I really try hard to advocate for her space.

RACHEL: Absolutely. That's so important and I think these are some considerations that maybe not many people realize that you have to have when you're interacting with people and being out with your dog in public.

But I wanted to say that I really liked one of your recent Instagram posts where you mentioned that a concern that you have about the training industry is this push for regulation. And I'm totally with you in the sense that I worry about what regulation looks like and especially I guess, who's doing the regulation. So I'd love to hear more about that and kind of what your thoughts are.

RAVENN: Yeah, so there's been a lot of talk about regulation in the industry lately, and I kind of feel like, should I have an opinion on this as just like a new dog trainer? But I mean, I am a person that lives with a dog and I plan to have lots of dogs, so I think I do deserve to have an opinion. *[laughs]*

RACHEL: Absolutely!

RAVENN: I do worry a lot about what regulation looks like because I think people have unrealistic expectations about it. I think people really need to examine: What are your goals with adding this? Is it just to decide who gets to use the term "dog trainer", or are we hoping that this will help eradicate some of the aversive training techniques?

Because if we look at industries that are already regulated, I'm not sure that regulation is gonna be able to change how we train dogs. I mean, even if they require an exam, if people still have access to aversive tools and techniques that doesn't... you know, just because

they sit for an exam that says positive reinforcement is best, it doesn't mean that they're gonna stop using those techniques, right?

RACHEL: Yeah.

RAVENN: And also another thought that I had about that was, the real thing that I wanna see changing in dog training is again people to stop using those aversive techniques and also try and understand that their dogs are sentient beings with wants and needs. They're not objects, so trying to stop objectifying them.

And I don't think that regulation with dog trainers is gonna help with that much because there's definitely more people that live with dogs than there are dog trainers, right?

RACHEL: Yeah.

RAVENN: So when we talk about who's spreading all the misinformation, it's not necessarily other dog trainers. It's a lot of people that have lived with dog for 20, 30 years and are on Facebook, you know. "This is how I've done things forever and this is what works. So you should try this too."

So I would rather people put the energy that they're putting in wanting regulation into like, how do we make it so people can't buy shock and prong collars on Amazon? And how do we reach the general public with all of this updated information that we have about how dogs learn?

RACHEL: Yeah. Kind of focusing on education of the general public so that they can make the choice that we hope that they will make.

I know that over here in the UK, in Wales, they have banned shock collars and prong collars, but have seen that people still use like the e-collars and then just tell anyone who's kind of checking on them that, "Oh, we're just using the vibrate option", which I don't think is part of the rule, but you know. It's just interesting that even with laws governing these things, sometimes it's really hard to change what people are doing. Or even if they don't, you know, use a shock collar or prong collar, they can still punish their dogs in other ways.

You know, squirt bottles are really common, slip leashes with the leash corrections...

RAVENN: Yeah. So I feel like education is definitely like... we need to be putting more emphasis on reaching the general public about the new ways of doing things.

RACHEL: Yeah.

RAVENN: Because, squirt bottles for sure. Like a lot of people don't think that those are harmful, but they can be really harmful.

RACHEL: Oh, absolutely. And I mean, I'm guilty of this as well.

When I first kind of had a cat when I was, you know, a student and I was trying to get him out from underneath my bed and I used a squirt bottle and I regret that forever.

RAVENN: No...!! *[laughs]*

RACHEL: I know I didn't know any better, you know, and I always think about how ever since he passed away that I am in this field to help animals because I all the regret I have. *[laughs]*

RAVENN: I think we all have animals in our past that we wanna do better by going forward. That's not uncommon.

RACHEL: Exactly. It's like I'm doing this in honour of you. I'm so sorry. But I think I only did it once, thankfully. But people don't realize that it is so scary and you know, the cats already under the bed and already they're scared. So adding that on top of it is just not gonna help.

But yeah it is this thing of like, as much as... I mean right now, you know, we have certifying boards that are supposed to regulate, I suppose, the members that are part of it, but we still see people using aversive methods or aversive tools. So it's hard to say that full on regulation will solve the problem.

RAVENN: Yeah, I don't know, because I know at least in the United States, I just think that... like what does regulation look like and then how do we protect consumers and what does that look like, and what does enforcement of regulation look like? And then just like enforcement of any other law in the United States, you know, who's going to be bearing the brunt of that? I just, I have a lot of questions.

RACHEL: Absolutely. Yeah. No, and I remember. There's kind of a legislature going around about sort of this topic and when it first came out there was some language in there that made it sound quite racist and ableist, and there's a lot of concerns that "Who is writing this?" You know. And in the future if there is gonna be regulation, who's writing that and who do they have in mind when they say, this is a "dog trainer"?

RAVENN: Yeah. And also, you know, who's gonna profit off of it because I'm assuming that if we're gonna be, you know, having to take an exam or something, or do continuing education credits, like who's gonna be profiting off of that and how do we decide what the costs are gonna be? Like, are we creating more barriers for people getting into training? And if we are, how does that help dogs if that might mean less dog trainers are less people interested in getting into training?

RACHEL: Mm. And less diverse people being able to be in training as well.

RAVENN: Yeah. Because you know, who's better to reach some of those communities?

Like, I mean, if I had met maybe a dog trainer that looks like me sooner, maybe I would've been more interested in training and maybe I wouldn't have struggled so much with Molly early on cuz it was quite a process, learning how to help her to feel better in the world.

RACHEL: Yeah, exactly. And I think that representation is so important and we're still not always seeing a lot of it, but hopefully that will change.

But I'm just wondering, what do you hope to see change in our industry, maybe more specifically, to be better for both dogs and people who care for them?

RAVENN: I, again, I'm hoping that it's harder for people to find aversive tools because I think a lot of people don't want to hurt their dogs. I think they're just sold on the idea that dogs have to act a certain way in society.

So I'm also hoping that we can change people's minds. Kind of like how a lot of people, when they think about loose leash walking, they're thinking that their dog needs to walk in a perfect heel–

RACHEL: Yeah.

RAVENN: –when in reality their dog, you know, as long as it's not pulling and it's having a good time, you know that can be a great walk for you and your dog.

So I'd love to see people kind of understanding that what they used to think a perfect dog looked like, maybe that's not really what they need and that's not what's gonna be best for their life or for their dog.

RACHEL: Yeah, absolutely. And as you are, you know, starting out your business as a dog trainer, have you found that that is the case with the people that you're working with at the moment, or is that something that people are starting to think about a bit more?

RAVENN: The few people, I haven't worked with a lot of people yet cuz I'm still pretty new, but the people that I have worked with, yeah, they definitely have this idea that their dog needs to be walking at a perfect heel or it's not a well behaved dog. You know, any like pulling and not... they didn't seem to realize how beneficial like sniffing was for their dogs or that their dog might experience the world in a way that's different from how people experience it. So I think that we have a long way to go as far as educating the average dog owner about that, that dogs don't see the world the same way that we do.

RACHEL: Yeah. And to really, I guess, normalize the idea that our dogs have their own world and they deserve to have their own interests and things that they like to do as well. And that may not always align with what we want in a dog.

RAVENN: Oh yeah. And that, that was a journey for me too, because Molly doesn't actually like to go for walks. She would much rather lay down outside and just enjoy the sun and watching people.

RACHEL: Aw!

RAVENN: And that was such a learning curve for me because I was embarrassed at first to just be sitting outside with her and her laying in the grass, cuz I don't have a backyard. So I have to do this out in public where everybody can see me. *[laughs]*

RACHEL: Yeah. *[laughs]*

RAVENN: And so at first, you know, it was really embarrassing and people would sometimes even pull over and be like, "Is your dog okay?" And it's like, "Yeah, she's fine. She just wants to do this right now."

RACHEL: Awww...

RAVENN: And so it took a while for me to understand that this is something that she enjoys doing. And I know she enjoys doing it because we had, at our last place, actually a really big dog park. So if nobody else was using it, obviously, cuz she's not a fan of other dogs, you know, she could run around and do whatever she wanted, but she would just love to soak up the sun. Even when it was like 120, I'd be like, "Hey kid, we need to go inside. It's too hot". And she's like, "No, let's stay out here". *[Laughs]*

RACHEL: Awww *[laughs]*. She loves to sunbathe.

RAVENN: Yeah. She really, really does, so...

RACHEL: That's so sweet. Yeah, because I think people's impression is that dogs like going on walks and they have to walk this amount every day.

RAVENN: Yeah and that was my impression. I thought we have to get you–but it was actually not fun for her. Even if I took treats, it just wasn't what she wanted to do.

So I would try and lure her on these long walks with treats and she would just I could tell that she wasn't happy doing that. So eventually I was like, "Okay, maybe that's not for you and we can do these other things."

RACHEL: I love that. And yeah, it's not–I mean, some dogs would definitely love the long walks and everything–

RAVENN: Oh yeah!

RACHEL: –but it's not every dog right? And I love that you listen to her and that kind of had you on your journey with this sort of training. I really like that.

As you are a new trainer, I'm just wondering, do you have any words of encouragement or advice you'd like to share with people who are thinking about starting in the dog training world?

RAVENN: Yeah, I would say reach out to other trainers and asked them how they got started. That's one thing that I did. I emailed a few trainers to see how they were doing during the pandemic and what does the day in their life look like. And everybody was so friendly and willing to answer all of my questions. I was like really shocked cuz you know, these people are busy and I'm not paying them, but they answered all my questions.

RACHEL: Yeah.

RAVENN: Um, and then, you know, I reached out to people like you once I picked a program that I thought would work for me and my dog. Uh, I picked Victoria Stilwell Academy because there were some other programs like Karen Pryor, but I knew that my dog

wasn't really a great candidate to go to the intensives. And so I had to think about that.

So definitely look at what are the program requirements if you're gonna do a formal program. And reach out to people that have done it, ask them "What was your experience like?" That's definitely the best thing to do and I didn't meet anybody that wasn't willing to answer my questions. So I think most people will find that the communities can be a really friendly place.

RACHEL: Yeah, definitely. And I'm happy to talk to anyone as well about this. I've had Zoom calls with people, you know, talking about this sort of thing and kind of starting out in the industry because we need more dog trainers and–

RAVENN: We do!

RACHEL: –I feel like sometimes there is this scarcity mindset and I think it's good that, you know, we have more people to refer out to, you know, in different parts of the world, or people want in person, people who want online. I think it's a nice thing that we have a community.

RAVENN: Yeah, and you know, like I said, everybody that I've met so far has been really friendly and really welcoming. So I hope that everybody going forward has the same experience.

RACHEL: Yeah, absolutely. I think just makes everything a lot easier. Because sometimes there is this impression of the force free world being less welcoming. I've not ever experienced that personally, and I'm glad to hear that you haven't as well. So that's brilliant.

And before we go, I just wanted to ask, is there anything else you wanted to add or that we might have missed speaking about today?

RAVENN: Yeah. I would also like to add, if you are interested in a career with animals, I really recommend find a local shelter near you or a rescue and see if you can get involved in volunteering,

because that has really helped me grow a lot cuz I'm meeting all different kinds of dogs every single week.

And also I feel really great about helping my local community, so I definitely recommend doing that if you're interested in a career in animal.

RACHEL: Oh yeah, absolutely. I think being in the shelter has taught me like so, so much because, for me at least, our shelter was filled with dogs that were mostly like quite fearful or reactive. So you learn very quickly, you know, how to keep dogs under threshold and just avoiding dogs and being like, "Don't come near me." you know. *[Laughs]* It's just all kinds of management techniques right from the start. So it is really amazing to start from volunteering at a shelter. So that's great advice. Thank you!

Finally, if people would like to reach out to you, what's kind of the best way for them to do so?

RAVENN: Yeah, so I'm really active on Instagram and Twitter, so you can find all of my social media profiles on my website, and it's www.pleasepickupyourpoop.com

RACHEL: Cool. And since you've mentioned that, what's the story behind Please Pick Up Your Poop?

RAVENN: Okay, so like I said, before I moved to Colorado, we had a lot of aggressive situations and and a lot of stress. So I had to do something with all of that anger. So I started writing a book, *[laughs]* and the title was... You guessed it: Please Pick Up Your Poop.

RACHEL: Oh!!!

RAVENN: So that's where that came from. And I think, it may not sound like it's associated with dog training, but it is memorable. So that's kind of why I decided to use that as my business name.

RACHEL: I honestly love it so much. *[laughs]*

RAVENN: *[laughs]* So I also started a newsletter recently, it's called Positive Learning Events, and the website for that is www.pawsitivele.com. So if anyone out there is wanting to find free learning opportunities like webinars, like mini conferences like we've had recently. There's just been so many free learning opportunities lately. I really wanted to create a way that it was easy for people to find them.

RACHEL: Oh that's fantastic and I think that would be really, really helpful for dog guardians everywhere. So thank you for that. But yeah, fantastic. Those will all be in our show notes on our website. Thank you so much for being here with us and your ideas on the topics we discussed. I really appreciate your insights today. So thank you so much. We'll chat again soon.

RAVENN: Take care.

RACHEL: Thank you. Bye!

[Outro Music]

RACHEL: Thank you all so much for listening! As mentioned, you can find links and transcriptions in our show notes. If you can't the link in the description, you can find them on my website dogatheart.co.uk/podcasts. If you enjoyed the podcast and would like to support us and what we're doing, you can buy us a coffee at buymeacoffee.com/dogatheart . You can also get updates about future guests and episodes on our Instagram @dog_atheart, I'll see you in the next one!