Dear Wholistic Hound Academy Family,  
  
Yesterday, Governor Northam issued a [statewide order](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/all-releases/2020/march/headline-855292-en.html?fbclid=IwAR3oSOJ3dkXDCZ6yqZCBQcAXM222MwC4h3VVYAfn9gCgd5cUsIonHT4a26s) to protect the health and safety of Virginians and reduce the spread of the novel coronavirus, or COVID-19. At this time, dog training and animal care facilities are not included in the list of non-essential businesses that must close. However, Wholistic Hound Academy considers your/your family’s safety and health and that of our staff to be our number one priority.  As such, we will continue to offer our group classes remotely through the **FREE** Zoom app.  
  
We resumed classes this week last evening using the live Zoom platform and they went very well. In fact, we got a big thumbs up from our students. We were able to engage with our students and we even held a graduation ceremony in one of our Good Dog 101 classes.   
  
**ZOOM ACADEMY CLASSES**  
If you don’t currently have the **FREE** Zoom application, you will need to download it onto your phone, iPad, tablet or desktop. Prior to your class, we will send you a link to access the Zoom classroom, where we will be conducting our classes just as we would if you were here. So, in order to participate in the ZOOM class, you will need your dog and treats. Please find an area that approximately 8' x 6' if possible, and has good lighting. We realize many homes in Alexandria have smaller rooms so we will adapt as necessary. As is our practice in our live group classes, we will first explain the training concept to be taught, then discuss or demo the exercise, and then have you practice it with your puppy or dog.  
  
We are developing a number of very exciting and helpful classes and workshops that will be announced very soon. Please check our current list of [upcoming classes](https://wholistichound.dogbizpro.com/Public/Registration/Index.aspx) that have been transitioned to the Live Zoom platform. Even some of our agility classes can be held remotely with limited or no equipment. Ground and focus work is the foundation to so much in agility training.  
  
**OUTDOOR PUPPY SOCIALIZATION AND TRAINING CLASSES**Our Academy has a very large parking lot and adjacent green space. We are considering how we can make use of this area for possible puppy socialization and training activities in the near future. This would only be able to happen if we can successfully implement safety protocols to ensure social distancing and best practices in light of the situation. In the meantime, here is a wonderful article on what you can be doing to [socialize your puppy](https://www.avidog.com/puppy-socialization-in-the-age-of-coronavirus/) in this age of the caronavirus.  
  
**DAY ACADEMY CONTINUES WITHOUT INTERRUPTION**  
The Day Academy is a great option to provide an outlet for your puppy or dog while you have to work from home.   
We are also offering a “valet retrieval service” upon your arrival at the Wholistic Hound Academy parking lot (behind the Academy building at 18 Roth Street).  If you would like us to come out to the parking lot and retrieve your pup at the beginning of the Day Academy (8:00 a.m - 8:30 am.), simply let us know and call us when you get here.    
  
Also, we recently began our **PUPPY DAY ACADEMY**, which is a half day program. If you have a new puppy and wish to enroll him/her in the Puppy Day Academy, please let us know. We are looking at how we can expand this program to other days and times, as well. We will also be posting information on how to continue socializing your puppy to the wide, wide world while maintaining social distancing practices.   
  
**PRIVATE LESSONS WILL CONTINUE AS SCHEDULED**  
We are continuing to hold our one-on-one, in-home, or Academy-based, private lessons. If, for any reason, you are not feeling well or need to cancel, please cancel your appointment in a reasonable time and we will reschedule it for a later date.  
  
**WHAT TO EXPECT GOING FORWARD**  
I believe that our services are needed more than ever as people, their children, and their dogs have limited outlets for exercise and social activity during this local, State, National and International health crisis. Please remember that (much like children) your dogs can react to disruptions in their routines with increased stress, anxiety, boredom, destructive behaviors, and other unwelcome symptoms. Here at the Academy, we are up for the challenge of shifting our classroom and teaching models to help you and your dogs adapt to the situation at hand.  
  
This is a time for us to remain calm and optimistic for each other, our families and our animal companions. We must truly “make lemonade out of lemons.”  We want to keep you, your family and your dogs happy, healthy and engaged as much as possible. We are planning to offer a number of other training options during this period to give you and your pup fun and effective training challenges, including Facebook Live sessions and a special private Facebook group. These changes to our business model are still being worked out, so please stand by while we develop these new and exciting training options for you and your dog during the weeks ahead.  
  
Please follow us on social media to get live updates:  **Instagram @wholistichound and Facebook at www.facebook.com/wholistichound.**  Once we set up our private FB group, you will receive an invitation to join.  We realize that not everyone is on Facebook, so we will make use of Zoom and emails as much as possible.  
  
We will be monitoring the situation very closely. We all want to get back to our daily routines and lives as soon as possible. We will keep you posted on this fluid situation and any changes that may need to be made, including getting back to business as usual.  
  
If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at info@wholistichound.com or call us at 703-962-6335.   
  
**We are here for you, your families and your dogs!**  
  
Happy and Healthy Training!  
  
Sandy Modell, CPDT-KA  
Founder and CEO  
Wholistic Hound Academy, and   
the entire Wholistic Hound Team