

App for pet meetups is a walk in the park

By Jennifer Cox
The Suburban

As a dog owner, it can be tricky to navigate the best ways to socialize your pet as well as get them some much-needed exercise. Dog parks and other off-leash areas are great, but how can owners be sure that the other dogs there will be friendly? Or what if there aren't any canines there at all – who will play with your pup?

So, dog owner and NDG resident Dov Punski, along with his three brothers, came up with the app DogPack, which launched at the end of September. It helps pet owners find the closest, most ideally suited dog-friendly hotspots to help dogs socialize, play, and get in some physical activity.

"I have been a dog walker for a few years

in the Montreal area and I realized that dog owners have one thing in common: they need to exercise their dogs," he explained.

After all, a tired dog is a good dog. "A large percentage of these owners, including myself, rely on trails, dog parks, and off-leash areas to help get our dogs exercise, and I used to hate arriving with my dog and finding out no one was there, or that there's a dog there that my dog doesn't get along with. Or, if you show up and your dog's friend is just leaving, that can be very disappointing too."

People who download this app, which is free, set up a profile for their dog and can see a detailed map of all the dog parks that are within 100 kilometres of their location. "Every dog has a personal profile with the dog's details: age, gender, weight, breed, and whether they are fixed, and all that informa-

tion is public. You can check in at different dog parks in real-time so you know who is there, and users can also add dogs to their 'pack' and post pictures or videos, where other users can like and comment on them."

Those who check into a dog park can then rate it as well, allowing pet owners to get detailed info on the dog-friendly areas they're interested in. It's an effective, easy way to socialize your furry friend with other like-minded dogs in a safe place.

Another unique aspect of the DogPack app is that users and their pooches can earn a wide range of prizes, discount codes, coupons, and raffle tickets from dog companies that they have teamed up with.

The app is extremely comprehensive and includes detailed maps of dog parks that are

located not only across North America, but Australia, Ireland, and the UK as well. In putting this information together, and thanks to his thorough research, Punski said he's come to realize that Montreal's dog park scene is lacking. "I've been looking around and searching all these different dog parks for the past year, and we really don't have a lot of quality dog parks in our area," he said.

This is why the app is especially useful to Montreal and West Islanders: They can find the areas that do have off-leash puppy play options. Punski has a four-year-old Belgian Malinois named Bear who was happy to assist him in his research.

For more information on the DogPack app, visit dogpackapp.com or download the app at the App Store or on Google Play.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Cummings Centre offers a wide array of virtual programs for winter session

By Mike Cohen
The Suburban

With a cold winter upon us and the Omicron variant rearing its ugly head, members of the Cummings Centre continue to benefit from an excellent array of online programming by using a computer, tablet, smart phone, or by dialing in from a telephone.

The Cummings Centre headquarters on Westbury Avenue in Snowdon always served as a hub of activity, as did off-site locations in St. Laurent, Chomedey, Westmount, Côte Saint-Luc, and the West Island. Serving the 50-plus community in the Greater Montreal area, the Cummings Centre quickly adjusted to the new normal and pivoted to Zoom programming soon after the pandemic began. It has been a big success. With winter registration now underway, a new moniker has surfaced: eCummings, highlighting the move online.

"Whether you are in the Sunshine State, abroad, or in the comfort of your own home, new program introductions, alongside your favourite classes and instructors, follow you wherever you go," state Cummings Centre President Nancy Cooperberg and Executive Director Pauline Grunberg.

Members like Gundie Robertson are just elated with the selection of classes and lectures.

"I have probably taken every course there is, from improv to the singing and writing groups and wine tasting," she said. "It is like attending a university, with so many courses available to take. The great thing is, there is no exam at the end of it."

There is no shortage of virtual courses available once again this winter, including a slew of new and exciting offerings sure to entertain and inform. You can celebrate the exploits of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in a three-part workshop series. And the music does not stop there as award-winning singer/songwriter Rob Lutes recounts The Stories behind the Songs. Lutes will take registrants on a four-part chronological tour through major



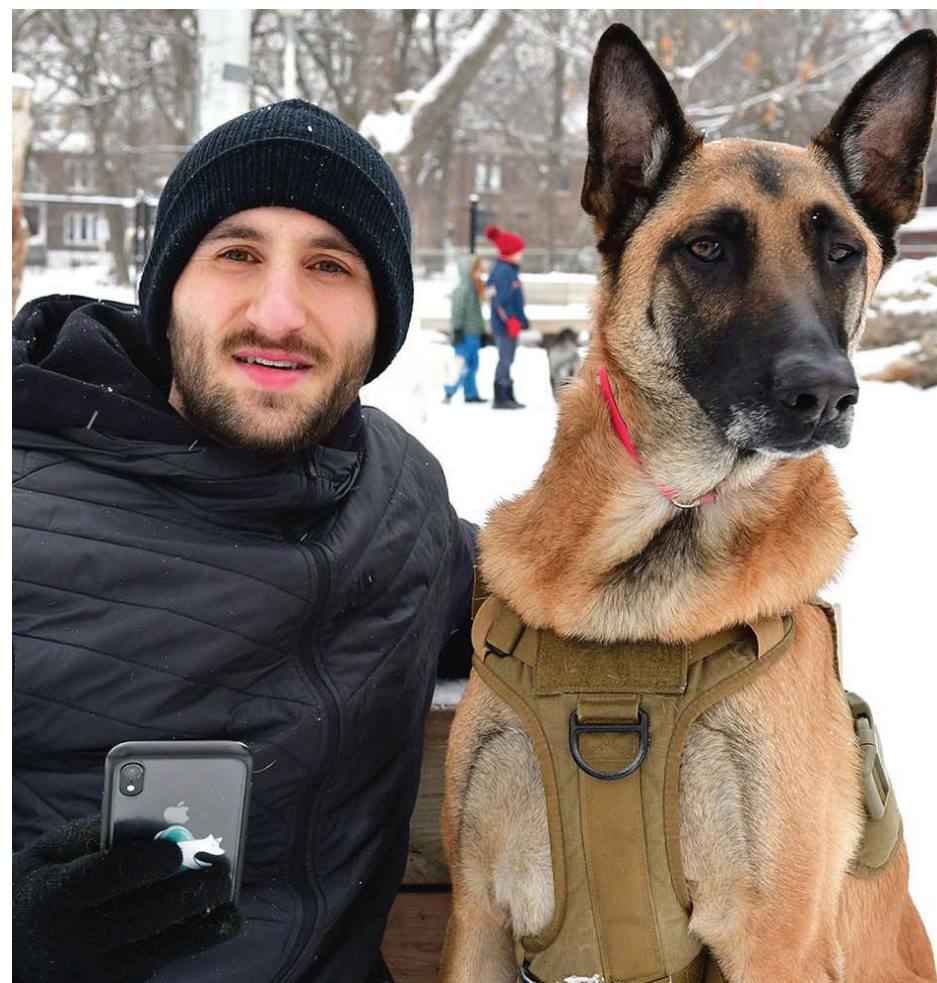
Member Gundie Robertson is elated with the programming offered

movements in American popular music, from minstrel songs to ragtime and the blues.

The Global Affairs courses offer a wide range of interesting topics and discussions. You can examine the minds of much-maligned Criminals and Dictators, such as Bugsy Siegel and Joseph Stalin with Dr. Jack Hirschberg or Uncover a Changing Israel in a Changing World with Csaba Nikolenyi. Virtual Travel allows you to explore new cities and countries in complete safety.

There is an excellent selection of courses in the areas of fine arts, crafts and cooking, music and performing arts, continuing education, and fitness. Some interesting speakers, like health reporter Aaron Derfel, are lined up for virtual lectures. "A Cummings Centre membership is truly the best gift you could possibly give yourself," adds Robertson.

You can now register online at cummingscentre.org/registration or by telephone by calling 514-343-3510 weekdays from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



"Dog owners have one thing in common: they need to exercise their dogs," said Dov Punski.

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