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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to provide a reference for Kelsey Cullen, a dog trainer who worked with my boston terrier Lotus and me for almost 3 years, in a variety of settings, including one-on-one sessions, group classes, and organised dog socials. Kelsey consistently demonstrated strong performance across the following areas:

Teamwork and Leadership

From my very first interaction with Kelsey, her main goal was to empower me and build my confidence in my training skills. She accomplished this not by directing from a distance, but by working collaboratively with me throughout the process. Kelsey took the time to understand our starting point, set expectations together, and then continued to guide and support me so I felt capable of applying the training independently.

Kelsey also demonstrated leadership within group settings. During group classes, she was able to conduct individual check-ins multiple times, while still effectively instructing the broader group. This balance of attention and direction helped create an environment where every participant and dog could learn and progress.

Through our training journey, I've also observed Kelsey lead and guide a new dog trainer. She made sure to prioritize the mentee's learning while keeping focus on Lotus.

Communication

Kelsey's communication style was a major strength and supported multiple learning preferences. After private sessions, she provided a hands-on transfer of skills, using a clear, structured approach: she would demonstrate once, then coach me while I practiced, and finally observe me complete the task independently.

In addition, Kelsey reinforced learning by providing video follow-ups from private training time with Lotus, as well as updates on the specific skills being practiced. This created continuity between in-person sessions and helped me retain and understand what successful practice looked like.

Kelsey also ensured training goals remained clear and relevant by continually checking in during and after sessions. She didn't assume the original objectives were enough but rather ensured the training plan and the purpose of commands stayed aligned with our goals over time.

Applied Knowledge and Skills

Kelsey's applied knowledge was evident in how she taught commands with purpose. In our one-on-one sessions, she continued to ask about our goals and the reasons behind different commands to ensure Lotus was set up for success.

She also helped me develop responsible, realistic training goals by explaining the reasoning behind specific behaviors and the role each command played. This approach improved the effectiveness of our training while also supporting both of us to feel confident: Lotus in the process, and me in how I was applying the knowledge.

Information Gathering and Organising

Kelsey began with thorough intake and planning. From the first day, she completed intake interviews that covered our goals and my current knowledge, ensuring she had the information required to create a suitable training plan. Once intake was complete, she suggested a structured training plan while continuing to check that our objectives remained the same and adjusting where necessary.

She also organised follow-through in a consistent way. After group classes, we received written recaps via email, helping ensure that verbal instructions from class were reinforced and applied correctly over time.

Additionally, Kelsey's organised dog socials created a safe learning environment where dogs could engage appropriately while participants received real-time instruction and observation. Kelsey and her teammate maintained attention on each dog, led play sessions intentionally, and provided practical observations that reinforced learning in the moment.

Overall, Kelsey is a skilled, supportive, and thoughtful dog trainer who applies knowledge effectively, communicates clearly, and builds confidence in others through structured instruction, all with compassion and empathy. Her ability to gather information, organise training plans, lead group environments, and transfer skills to clients made a meaningful difference to both Lotus's training and my ability as a handler.

I recommend Kelsey without hesitation for training roles that require strong teamwork, clear communication, practical skill application, and organised program delivery.

Sincerely,

Joelle Moon

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Lotus's Handler / Client of Kelsey

Virtual Learning Strategist with VLS Canada