

THE COMMERCIAL APPEAL

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2010 | COMMERCIALAPPEAL.COM

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POOCH PATROL



Mathis Young, owner of Aussie Pet Mobile, blow-dries Neely after a recent bath in his mobile grooming van. Mark Weber/The Commercial Appeal

Mom-son mobile grooming business cleans up in pet-pampering Memphis community

By **LINDSAY JONES**

Special to *The Commercial Appeal*

Although he was fearful when they adopted him, 3-year-old Toby Artz has blossomed into a mommy and daddy's boy.

When his parents are out of sight, Toby lies pining at the bottom of the stairs in his Germantown home. When they sit on the couch at night, he plops right between them and grumbles if they try to move him over.

"He's our baby," said his devoted mom, Melinda.

He's also a rescued shih tzu that doesn't like to be bathed by strangers — or didn't, until Melinda found the folks at Aussie Pet Mobile.

The business is a local pet-grooming franchise with two fully equipped vans that travel all over Greater Memphis, pampering dogs and cats.

"The No. 1 reason that people like the service is it's so much better for the pets," said Miriamne Young, who answers the phones and sets appointments for her son, Mathis, and his three grooming technicians. "It's less stress; there's no caging. They're in their territory and they can see out (the van's windows)."

Until Aussie, Toby would snap and snarl at his groomer. When the woman told Melinda that Toby would have to be tranquilized for his appointments, it was

AUSSIE PET MOBILE

Phone: 255-2812

Hours: 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m., Monday-Saturday

Online: aussiepetmobile.com

actually spend a little time with him before they take him out to the pet mobile."

Even though house calls are pricier than stationary grooming, Aussie serves about eight to 10 pets a day per van, said Mathis Young, the franchise owner.

At age 27, Young decided to leave his banking job at about the time his mother started looking outside the flooring business.

"And I told my mom, 'Let's do something together,'" he said.

"We both love pets, but we saw a very big need," his mother said. "We did a lot of research and saw that Shelby County is one of the most pet-friendly communities in the United States. And we wanted to do something where we felt like we could make a difference and not just (have) a business, and we have discovered, indeed, the greater Memphis area truly treats their pets as their children."

When Mathis Young turned in his

the last straw.

"I didn't want to put him through that, and I really love the fact that (the Aussie technicians) come to the house," she said. "They can come in and give him a treat and

resignation at Paragon National Bank, "They were like, 'What?'" he said.

"I really wanted to be a silent partner, (but) I just decided you can't run a business from afar. That's when I quit the bank."

But, he added, his colleagues were very supportive and now gladly receive his Aussie Pet Mobile e-newsletter.

If some were skeptical when Young decided to swap his cufflinks for rubber gloves and dog shampoo, he was thrilled at the prospect of running his own business. He'd been talking to a consultant who helped him and Marianne comb through a variety of franchise opportunities until they hit on the one that appealed most.

So the Youngs underwent a month's worth of Aussie training in California (the company originally was started by an American living in Australia), and jumped through other hoops as well. Once they convinced the franchisor that Memphis was ripe for another mobile pet business, they put the rubber to the road.

Mathis tapped his sales and marketing skills while his mom helped provide structure and support.

They added another van after passing their one-year anniversary last month. They've also paid down some debt and are seeing decent cash flow.

Business is so good, Young helps with grooming at the Humane Society and is serving as the title sponsor for Spay & Neuter Services of the Mid-South's "Spaytacular" gala Nov. 14 at The Parkview.