

# 'Gentle' dog trainer honored for her work

BY SHARON COTAL  
Staff Writer

CANYON COUNTRY — A local dog trainer who promotes the use of gentle, positive training for canines was recently honored by the Association of Pet Dog Trainers.

Nicole Wilde, 45, of Gentle Guidance Dog Training in Canyon Country, was awarded the Ian Dunbar Member of the Year Award during a ceremony held Sept. 13 in Kansas City, Mo. About 900 dog trainers, veterinarians and other canine professionals attended the event.

"I feel very honored to be recognized," Wilde said. "This award is given to a member who promotes the organization, which in turn promotes dog-friendly instructional guidelines."

Wilde always has loved dogs and trained her own pets when she was a kid. But the first time she took her dog to a training class, she didn't like the training methods used.

Instead of giving up on her dream of someday becoming a dog trainer herself, Wilde developed her own reward-based method, with dogs being shown from the beginning what is expected of them and then being rewarded with food treats, praise, a game or something else they enjoy when they comply.

She started out training dogs part-time by visiting her clients in their homes, but soon realized she should be training dogs full time. Wilde opened Gentle Guidance in 1999.

Since she can't be everywhere at once to demonstrate her training methods, Wilde has written three books, the latest of which is titled "Help For Your Fearful Dog," released this year. She has also written three instructional books for dog trainers.

Wilde just returned from teaching a seminar in England and has plans to teach more seminars in Australia in 2007 and Belgium in 2008. Her books have been translated into other languages.

"My friends tease me now about being 'internationally recognized,' but what it means to me is that the message of gentle dog training is getting out there," Wilde said. "It's getting to trainers in other countries who will then use those methods to teach their clients, so that gentle, positive training ends up in homes worldwide. That is my goal."

Wilde's books can be ordered at [www.phantompub.com](http://www.phantompub.com). She can be reached at Gentle Guidance at (661) 299-5704.

