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HERMITAGE

# Chiropractor who loves animals has adjusted his practice

By Karen Huynh  
Herald News Intern

Dr. David A. Smolensky is a licensed human chiropractor who loves animals. More than 10 years ago, he combined the two to go into pet chiropractic. Saturday he was the guest speaker at Hillcrest Dog Park and Wellness Center in Hermitage, demonstrating pet chiropractic.

He said he and his wife have four dogs, their property in Mars, Allegheny County, is surrounded by a farm with "about any animal imaginable," and his wife loves wild birds. "We have no children so the dogs are kind of like our kids ..." he said.

And then there are the birds. "We go through about 200 pounds of bird seed a week," he said.

Dr. Smolensky, who works at Mars Family Chiropractic Center, has been a chiropractor for 21 years. In 1995, he said, his human clients were doing so well under his chiropractic care that they requested that he adjust their pets as well. So he decided to obtain his degree in animal chiropractic.

Three hundred hours later — after sessions covering 30 hours a month over the course of 10 consecutive months at American Veterinary Chiropractic Association — he obtained his degree.

"There were very few dogs at first, but over the last couple of years, it's really grown," he said.

Dr. Smolensky has adjusted a variety of animals including dogs, cats, horses, bunnies, wild birds, chinchillas, a bull and even an iguana.

"Chiropractic is the science, art and philosophy of natural healing," Dr. Smolensky explained. "Specifically the object of a chiropractor is to locate, analyze and adjust vertebral subluxations of the spine because, in and of themselves, they are detrimental to the proper functioning of the body."

Animals have spines very similar to humans; the variation occurs in the number of

vertebrae they have in their spines.

"The smallest animal I have ever adjusted was a wild humming bird," he said. "I literally had to use my fingernail."

"First and foremost chiropractic care is a complement to veterinary care, but absolutely not a substitute for it," Dr. Smolensky stressed. "Chiropractic is a holistic approach to wellness and care."

He explained that the nervous system is the control system of the body and the brain controls the rest of the body via the nerves. The nerves then exit between the vertebrae so that when a bone moves out of its normal position, the only place it can go is onto a nerve.

"The end result is that the body will malfunction in one way or another and create a symptom," he said.

"The truest demonstration of the effectiveness and efficacy of chiropractic care is on animals because there is no belief system," he said.

Animals respond 10 times faster than humans to chiropractic care, Dr. Smolensky said, for two main reasons. One, animals absent a belief system have no preconceived notions about what works or does not work. Two, animals are not under as many stresses as are humans.

"Their biggest stress is when they eat and when they play," he said.

The objective of chiropractic is to address one cause of potentially many problems, he added.

During the demonstration, Dr. Smolensky aligned the back of a Shih Tzu named Dakota.

"He is a shy dog and when he felt confident enough to approach him and when I dropped the leash in the end it was a big deal to me," Marci Kline, the owner, said. "He approaches females at any point, but will not approach males, even males he knows."

"I wanted to sit and bawl," Ms. Kline said.

Hillcrest Dog Park and Wellness Center recently opened to rave reviews.

"They have brought so much to this town," Marti Angott-Grata, of the Humane Society of Mercer County in Hermitage said, referring to John Flynn, the owner, and Roberta Knauf, the pet funeral and activities director.

Ms. Knauf explained that they began the wellness center after speaking to people who had lost their pets prematurely.

"We realized we could help people by having education programs so that they can give their pets the best possible care and extend their pets' lives," she said.

In addition to demonstrations, the center offers weekly and monthly activities such as grief counseling and a pet book club.

Dr. Smolensky will return to the dog park and wellness center once a month.

Information: [www.hillcrest-flynn.com](http://www.hillcrest-flynn.com) or 724-347-5100.



Dr. David A. Smolensky of Mars Family Chiropractic Center, adjusting a Golden Retriever's back. Smolensky demonstrated pet chiropractic techniques Saturday at Hillcrest Dog Park and Wellness Center in Hermitage.

Gene Paulson/Herald

## RECALLS

### Gerber cereal recalled over choking hazard

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gerber Products Co. recalled all packages of its organic rice and organic oatmeal cereals Friday because of potential clumping of the baby food, which can pose a choking hazard.

Gerber said it has received complaints of choking but no reports of injury.

The company said a "limited quantity" of the cereals could contain lumps that do not dissolve in water or milk. The cereals were distributed nationwide and to Puerto Rico and the Caribbean.

Food and Drug Administration compliance officer Sandra Williams said the agency was aware of the voluntary recall "and we concur."

Gerber spokesman David Mortazavi said the company

was recalling 306,760 packages of organic rice cereal and 167,724 packages of organic oatmeal cereal.

All codes of the two products, sold in 8-ounce boxes, are being recalled. The organic rice cereal UPC code is 15000 12504 and the organic oatmeal cereal UPC code is 15000 12502.

The baby food should be not be eaten, and customers can call the Gerber parents resource center at 800-443-7237 or 231-928-3000 to return the product and receive a full refund.

Gerber dominates the U.S. baby-food market, with the company holding a 79 percent share, according to Morgan Stanley.

In April, Switzerland's Novartis AG agreed to sell Gerber to Nestle SA for \$5.5 billion. Gerber is based in Parsippany, N.J.

On the Net:  
Gerber Products Co.: <http://www.gerber.com/>

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