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Barking up the right tree!

Mum and daughter team up to launch Teesdale dog fostering service

A MOTHER and daughter team have embarked on a canine adventure by setting up the Teesdale franchise of a dog fostering service.

Ann and Clare Lowes are the local faces of the UK-wide pet care service, Barking Mad, which aims to let people leave their pet pooches with a 'foster' family when they are away.

Ann, who has worked as a laboratory technician at Teesdale School and a nurse, said she decided to get involved with Barking Mad after meeting a fellow animal lover on holiday in Northumberland.

By **Kaye Jemmeson**

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"We had gone to Northumberland because we could take our springer spaniel, Finn, because I didn't like the idea of putting him in kennels," said Ann.

"While we were there we met someone else who was with her dog and started talking about Barking Mad and how she ran a franchise."

It didn't take long for Ann and Clare to decide that this was a perfect opportunity to combine being at home with Finn, their

love of animals and a passion to have their own business.

"It seemed like fate," explained Ann.

Barking Mad, which was recently featured on the Chris Evans Show, arranges accommodation for dogs and certain other pets in a genuinely caring environment with host families.

Ann said: "It allows the dogs to be looked after in a home with all their creature comforts around them. It means the dogs can stick to their routine."

"The host families listen to what the owner wants for their dog and looks after it to their

needs. It's a great alternative to a kennel because sometimes you worry that the dog won't get enough, or the right sort, of attention."

Barking Mad has become a huge success all over the UK and says that this is down to the pets being carefully matched with the host families in an environment similar to their own.

"The owner might have a holiday but the dogs have a holiday too - they love it. Sometimes when they get back home they are tired out," said Ann.

"But it's great seeing the dogs reunited with their owners and the owner can see that they are happy and have had a great time. It gives owners that peace

of mind that their dog is in good hands."

As well as being able to provide Teesdale residents with a home-from-home for their beloved pets, Ann and Clare are also on the look-out for host families.

The perfect fosters for pooches should be able to provide one-to-one care for the dogs, demonstrate a clear understanding of pet care, maintain the pets existing home life routine and exercise and feed them.

For further information about Barking Mad contact Ann or Clare on 01833 695153 and for further information about the service visit:

www.barkingmad.uk.com

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Young Gainford business brains aim to taste success

A GROUP of young entrepreneurs from Teesdale have set up a business which is sure to whet the appetite of anyone with a sweet tooth.

The youngsters are all pupils at Gainford School, and as part of their business and enterprise lessons, the group of Year 4 students, Nathan, Johanna, Michael and Grace, decided to sell home-made fudge.

The group, mentored by Angela Kingsley, worked together on the venture to decide on everything from the new company's name through to its branding.

Nathan said: "First, we had to evaluate different business ideas. We looked at other things, like posters, stationery and cakes, but fudge making was one we could definitely do."

Grace added: "We could have done face painting, but we didn't know how to do the designs. We had to choose something we could do properly."



I BUDDING ENTREPRENEURS: The Year 4 students who have set up The Fudge Factory TM pic

did a survey and asked teachers what they thought would work best and they chose the name."

Johanna, who made a lot of the fudge, said: "We use vanilla essence, condensed milk, icing sugar and butter to make the fudge. We have to melt the

rigorous testing processes until they came up with the eventual recipe but they had willing taste testers.

Nathan said: "My dad's a good fudge taster and although he said it was a bit sickly, he said it was nice."

The children will be selling the fudge at Staindrop School Christmas Fair on Thursday, November 22, between 6pm and 8pm and again at the craft fair at Gainford School on November, 29 between 6pm and 8pm.

All the proceeds made from the events will go back into funding the school's next business group venture.

Ms Kingsley said: "They have only had eight weeks, so they have had to learn very quickly. They have worked really well together as a team and this has helped them express all their individual strengths and skills."

Nathan added: "It's been brilliant and has helped us all work together. I

