

First-of-its-kind dog park dedicated

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Maggie is being remembered. When the 14-year-old bearded collie passed away in Feb., it left a deep void for Karen and Andy Menzyk. It is a void the couple filled with a new puppy and a donation to help build a park for dogs. Maggie's Bark Park will be the first of its kind in Tennessee.

Huddling under an umbrella, Karen Menzyk was on hand Wednesday to help dedicate the dog park in honor of her beloved pet. A frequent volunteer at the Williamson County Animal Shelter, Menzyk and the shelter's co-directors, Debby Leddy and Jan Lowe, often talked about developing a dog park on open space in front of the animal shelter that loops around the rear of the facility.

Menzyk remembered a similar dog park in the Canadian community where she and her husband lived for two years. Over the next several months, plans for the dog park began to take shape.

With \$7,000 donated by the Menzyks, and the blessings of County Executive Clint Callicott

and the help of County Commissioners Judy Hayes and Houston Naron, work will begin shortly to install a fence around a large area where dog owners can unleash their pets and allow the animals to run free in the expansive enclosure, just like Maggie could do at the dog park in Canada.

There will be even more for dogs to do in their park than just run. Leddy and Lowe are planning an agility course for pets complete with jumps and tunnels. County Parks and Recreation Director Doug Hood and his staff have been recruited to build the jumps and other fun obstacles for the agility area and Leddy is scrounging around for some discarded large plastic sewer pipes for use as tunnels. Helping design the overall park is Al Ritter, the man who oversees county facilities.

Exercise is especially important for dogs," Leddy said. "When dogs socialize they are more mellow and tend to be much less aggressive." She also noted with so many families living in apartments or having only small back yards for their pets, the dog park will allow ample



Braving rain, those on hand to dedicate Maggie's Bark Park are (from left) Jan Lowe, Doug Hood, Rogers Anderson, Karen Menzyk, Andy Menzyk, Houston Naron, Judy Hayes, Clint Callicott and Debby Leddy.

area to more fully exercise pets.

Benches are being installed for owners who would rather watch than try to keep up with their playful, rambunctious pets. There are even plans to install a drinking fountain for dogs in need of a drink after a hard workout.

For Karen Menzyk, there is another function the dog park can serve; for her the most important function. It will bring people to the animal shelter and help acquaint them with all the

services she views as a volunteer.

"The people at the shelter care so much and there are so many animals in need of good homes," Menzyk said. Her hope is that seeing dogs having fun in the new park will bring people in the door of the nearby shelter and more abandoned animals will find new homes.

Menzyk recalled a quote from another advocate for animals, Mary Tyler Moore, who said, "The only thing a shelter dog lacks is a home." □