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Who let the dogs out? Everyone, as they enjoyed Wagging Wednesdays in West Fulton Market.

Credits: Fido to Go!

Gourmet dining goes to the dogs for Wagging Wednesdays benefiting animal groups

By Kathy Mordini, Chicago Pets Examiner

West Fulton market is going to the dogs – at least on Wednesday evenings. Thanks to Josie Jendro of Chicago Party Animals, Tracy Werner of Fido to Go and Chicagofoodtrucks.com the West Loop location has become the go-to location for gourmet treats for people and their dogs for Wagging Wednesdays.

The idea came after Tracy Werner and her Fido to Go! (F2G) gourmet pet treat truck started to participate in Trucking Thursdays at Ethel's Beer and Wine Dive. Various gourmet food trucks from Chicago set up shop in the neighborhood and people stopped by for food and camaraderie often with their dogs in tow.

"I invited Josie to stop by and check out the event one Thursday and we looked at each other and said – we could do this next to Party Animal's West Loop location," says Werner. "The first event was August 4 and the first two weeks it has grown in leaps and bounds."

Many of Chicago's gourmet food trucks that you often see roaming around the city set up shop in the area around Chicago Party Animals at 1133 West Fulton Market from 6:30-9 p.m. People and their dogs may wander the area to socialize and try some new food. Dogs may wander off-leash inside Chicago Party Animals, which is a dog-friendly event venue.

"Because we wanted this to be more than just a social event, we decided to connect with local animal rescue organizations to make each event a fund raiser," adds Jendro of Chicago Party Animals. "Each organization provides volunteers to serve as hosts and bartenders. All proceeds from the drink donations go to that non-profit."

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So far the local Bull Mastiff Rescue and the Puppy Mill Project have been beneficiaries. On August 17, it will be the Chicago Canine Rescue; on August 24, Wright-Way Animal Rescue; and on August 31 it will be One Tail at a Time. Jendro adds that the French Bulldog Rescue, Trio Animal Foundation, Found and Sit-Stay-Read are also planning to participate.

It's also a natural extension of both businesses. Chicago Party Animals hosts dog-friendly events, many of which benefit local shelters and rescues and F2G caters many similar events. F2G is owned by Werner and her business partner Donna Santucci and is the area's only gourmet food truck catering to dogs and cats.

"We offer natural sweet and frozen treats for dogs and cats with human grade ingredients," adds Werner. "We offer gluten-free and grain-free products so that even animals with allergies may have their own natural treats. We go to dog parks, festivals, special events for shelters and rescues and also have partnered with Chicago Party Animals to provide treats at their events."

F2G creates their own treats and partners with local gourmet pet treat companies to offer their unique fair. They often add their own special twist to events. At a reunion party for One Tail at a Time, they brought pumpkin Pupcakes (cupcakes) and offered dog friendly frosting and toppings so people could create their own special treats. They also hosted a paw art booth so that dogs could create their own masterpiece.

Learn more about upcoming Wagging Wednesday's at the Meet up page or on Facebook and about Fido to Go! online and on Facebook and Twitter.

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