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BIO 407

Professor Alarcon

### **Reflection #3**

During the time in CARL, I have learned how the behaviors of other dogs can vary drastically.

An example would be the two dogs Maple and Simba. In the cage, they chase and play with each other. When exiting them from the facility, Simba becomes scared and stressed, while Maple has an aggressive reaction towards the dog. Additionally, every dog walk is different each time.

Some dogs are super energetic to walk, while others are unwilling to or resist walking the dog trails. Other dogs will prefer to enter arenas and play with the toys provided. And there are dogs so energetic they can do both the walk and the arena. In addition, I've come to have a better understanding that not all dogs will approach you with excitement. It is important to keep in mind that all dogs go through their own traumas. I can relate due to the past experience with dogs. If a dog has been abused, it will reflect on their status. Dogs also take time to find the trust for everyone. It can be common for a dog for the first time not to be comfortable when he/she has not been introduced to the individual. One thing I took to reflect is that sometimes one bad experience should not intervene with my current standing. Given the time and bonding with a dog, it displayed a trust that I had not had before with dogs. It took a while for me to break the fear factor that I had with dogs for a long time. These few have surely regained the confidence of being able to bond with dogs. This service has helped with my long-term goal of reducing my fear of dogs. For some, I am able to approach them. When I started, I was afraid to enter the dogs' cages. Although some dogs are still difficult to bond, I have come a long way from when I first traumatized by the dog that attacked. Another goal I had was being able to properly leash the

dog and properly walk them. Even the most casual walks continue to grow the confidence of being able to train dogs. One skill I have learned is to have patience with dogs. When dogs do not comply, it can be frustrating. An example would be with Baby. She had a spontaneous behavior with constant stops during the walk. But it is not easy to examine the behavior of a dog. Another skill is reading their movements. Time after time I was able to correctly predict whether they would try to jump, try to start running, or whether they would start to get stressed. One thing I contribute at the community site is dedication to giving people more time to work on other parts of the facilities. The more volunteers, the more the leaders in CARL can focus on other problems that can occur in the facility. Additionally, by giving dogs love and dedication, it gives a chance for this good behavior to stand out for the possible adoptable families to see. I think the little stuff that I do for the dogs makes them feel more comfortable and at a better place to feel trusted by other people. I have learned in my community that there are amazing people out there who are willing to make a commitment for the better of these animals. I loved it a lot that the people I got to interact kept a smile and were super outgoing. I also acknowledged the communication throughout the weeks that CARL did so that each animal is under maintenance. This communication and bonding only benefit the animals who have lots of stress. One thing that I would like to change is enforced animal laws. Owners can be irresponsible and should be penalized for any action that has occurred from their pet. The stress of many of these animals is greatly due to the improper ownership or unconditional situation that an animal is in. If laws are enforced, this will make owners reconsider if they are able to manage an animal. Additionally, I think there should be restrictions to breeding. Overbreeding in the long term leads to problems within the animal. Secondly, this again should be the if the owner is committed to breeding all the dogs and managing every one of them. Of course, it is very difficult to find all the people

who own animals. If permits to animals could somehow be added to society, the population of dogs can start to gradually become maintained. It will lastly result to unfortunately having to put down the dog. One way to solve this issue is by creating some type of application that can report the issues that occur daily. With the way society stands, an app should be created to report certain issues and to keep the community updated. Just like crime reports, some similar system can be helpful to track injustice acts. One way I can explain animal welfare moving forward is start by explaining that pit bulls need to stop being scapegoats for society. In propaganda, pit bulls are blamed by the majority of people as well as social media. We as humans are to blame for this biased opinion that pit bulls are the most aggressive species. Studies demonstrate that they are otherwise, yet someone like me is convinced that they are some aggressive breeds. One way to attract more people to participate with CARL is by providing more presentations of this organization. I am less than 20 minutes from the facility, yet I did not know about this until Professor Alarcon discussed it. If other universities or High Schools can get informed, I'm certain there will be people who will find a organization like CARL appealing. It does not just have to be walking the dogs, but also to assist managing the facility. There was one day when a group of high school kids came to clean up the facility. I am certain their contribution made a big difference to the people that manage the facility. It can also help if professors were to give extra credit opportunities to assist in CARL. People can help with CARL in many ways, it's a matter of what works best for their interest and scenario. I am grateful for the time I was able to spend in CARL. I have been better trained to take care of dogs. Additionally, I have gained confidence that has taken years for me to get due to unsettling events that have occurred in my past. The people that I connected with during the weekends were some of my best times spent. When I had the time, dog walking gave me a change of pace of my semester when I needed it most.

Fortunately, I am still able to volunteer with the organization when I am given the chance to. I believe when CARL becomes more aware to the community, they are going to have a bigger impact than what they do. It'd be beneficial for CARL to get sponsored by the County of Ventura. The county is always updating people with news and events occurring. This can help to sponsor the dog events that occur often. The thing that I saw well was the structure of the CARL organization. Given the limit of space, from the first day I entered, I was impressed by the communication and the response daily from the leaders. Credit goes to the leaders who direct all the volunteers. To me, I have to thank them for the confidence that I gained from the times I volunteered. They made sure to correct any minor mistakes I made and would approach me when I felt confused. The leaders that I got to connect with during the time was with Sandra and Chrissy. They are both wonderful individuals and I can't emphasize how great and knowledgeable these two are when it comes to dog behavior. With the time I have left for this semester, I am considering continuing to walk the dogs if I am given the time to do so. The only way I can consider this organization to be improved is by promoting events for dogs. It is easier said than done, but if there are ways that this organization can be more seen in the public, there is a chance for a dog to get adopted. If the number of volunteers increases, the organization will eventually reach out to more connections, extending the goal for this organization. CARL is a wonderful program and I hope that this organization continues to grow and that people will acknowledge it.