

# KAREN LEIPZIG LIZ, EMILY & JASON LEIPZIG

## DOGS ON THE FARM

Years ago, when Karen Leipzig was still a special education teacher in the Middletown Township school system, she left one of her beloved dogs at a local kennel while she and her husband went on vacation. When she picked him up, the dog's tail was between his legs. "I felt so guilty," she recalls. Something wasn't quite right. She noted also that the kennel had limited daycare. It all got her thinking. Flash-forward to 2002. Karen left her 20-year job, and the children she once taught were replaced by a different sort, with the same boundless energy and inquisitive natures.

"I always loved kids, and that's why I got into teaching. Now the dogs on the farm are my kids. They're my new students," she says. The farm in question is a five and one-half acre country estate and horse farm in the Chapel Hill section of Middletown, where Karen lives. The dogs (and cats, too) are guests at the business Karen launched there, called Dogs on the Farm. Today, the operation is a sophisticated, high-tech (including live webcams) family-run "play and stay resort" offering an array of services backed by well-trained staff. It can board upwards of 80 dogs, with an additional 50 in daycare, and provides a special facility for the felines—not to mention perks that include huge play yards and a custom swim park.

When Karen started the business, she knew that her "kennel" was going to be different. Karen, a horse lover, and her husband bought the farm around 1992, and subsequently opened a summer horse camp. The business took off, and she built an indoor riding ring. Her son Jason, then about 13 and who, today, is Karen's business partner, worked alongside her. They decided to phase out the camp, and upon the suggestion of friends, converted the indoor riding space into canine lodgings.

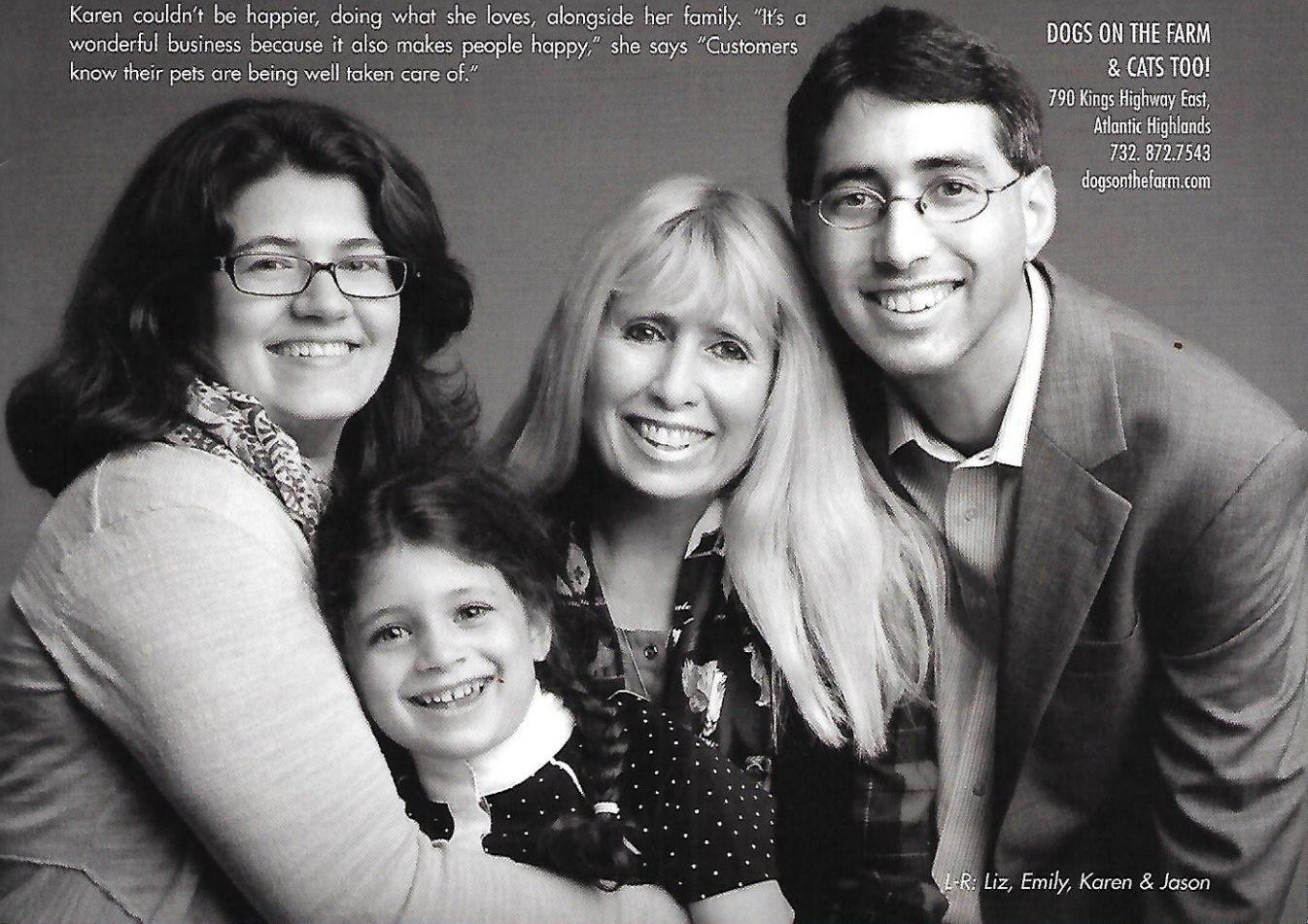
"That started the whole thing," Karen says, noting she was motivated by her love of animals and desire to stay at home. Jason—whose wife, Liz, is the company office manager—and Karen's other son, Arthur, went away to college, and later returned and soon joined the family-business.

"We took a chance," explains Karen. "I knew *nothing* about business. But at the time I said, I'm going to do it. We're going to be fine." She went to doggie daycare workshops, learned the ropes, and decided to offer the benefits of daycare to boarders. It worked.

Karen couldn't be happier, doing what she loves, alongside her family. "It's a wonderful business because it also makes people happy," she says. "Customers know their pets are being well taken care of."

## DOGS ON THE FARM & CATS TOO!

790 Kings Highway East,  
Atlantic Highlands  
732.872.7543  
dogsonthefarm.com



L-R: Liz, Emily, Karen & Jason