Elizabeth Oliva, a 2000 Glenbrook North High School graduate, awards her dog, Luigi, with a treat at the Village Green in Northbrook on Oct. 16 after he successfully obeyed a command. DAYNA FIELDS/22ND CENTURY MEDIA
Local couple trains both dog, owner

Elizabeth Oliva and Carlos Aguirre think the biggest thing that dogs and people have in common is that they are both happiest when they have a job to do.

The Northbrook couple began Wolf’s Lair K9 in 2012, and since then, they have helped nearly 100 pet owners better understand and communicate with their dogs — which the couple says alleviates stress for both the dog and owner.

Aguirre’s interest in dogs peaked during his service in the United States Army from 2003-2009. He served two tours in Iraq and also spent time in Japan and Norway. In 2006, he earned the Purple Heart for taking shrapnel to the shoulder while under enemy fire.

“The dogs we worked alongside [in the Army] would find bombs, find weapon caches, they would apprehend criminals or bad guys, if need be,” Aguirre said. “So many different ways we utilized them, from the aspect of finding the things we need to find to just having a stronger camaraderie inside that small platoon because having a dog in the element puts a smile on people that you’re not used to.”

After the military, he attended Tom Rose Dog Training School in St. Louis and has worked at various training facilities around Chicago. The Northbrook residents. Day-time drop-offs are free for Northbrook residents.

What: Wolf’s Lair K-9 Perks: Flexible daytime schedule, pickup/drop-off for Northbrook residents

More Info: www.wolfslairk9.com or call (847) 691-7088

“We teach them what we have been doing during those day lessons so the owner can maintain it when the dog is with them,” said Oliva, describing her teaching as more hands-on than others. “We always look to tailor and customize the training according to your dog, because your dog isn’t going to learn the same as his dog or my dog.”

As much focus is placed on training the owner as is the dog because owners need to recognize that what they say or do influences their dog’s reactions, said Aguirre.

“Translation: a working dog, who has a job and loves what he does just as much as a the human who he’s alongside, you see a whole different side that’s unbelievable,” Oliva said.