

# An Oral History of Addie Jaramillo

4<sup>th</sup> Street | Prater Way History Project

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A native of Reno, Addie Jaramillo is co-owner (with her mother, Lisa Jaramillo) of the Pet Play House at 2403 East Fourth Street. The business, initially located in a converted house next door to the current address, provides indoor/outdoor cage-free day care and overnight boarding for dogs.

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## ADDIE JARAMILLO

Interviewed on April 1, 2012  
Amanda Roberts, Interviewer

*A native of Reno, Addie Jaramillo is co-owner (with her mother, Lisa Jaramillo) of the Pet Play House at 2403 East Fourth Street. The business, initially located in a converted house next door to the current address, provides indoor/outdoor cage-free day care and overnight boarding for dogs.*

Roberts: I am here with Addie Jaramillo. We're here on 2403 East Fourth Street in the Pet Play House, where Addie is a co-owner. The date is April 1, 2012. Why don't you tell me a little bit about yourself. Let's start off with where you were born.

Jaramillo: I was born in Reno in 1988.

Roberts: Have you lived here all your life?

Jaramillo: Yes.

Roberts: Tell me a little bit about growing up in Reno. What was that like for you?

Jaramillo: Well, I love it. I'm really proud of Reno. A lot of people, I guess later on in my life, have talked about how it's not [Las] Vegas and it's trying to be Vegas, but I like it better than Vegas. I like to go to Vegas, but Reno is definitely, I think, a better place to live.

Roberts: And where did you go to school?

Jaramillo: I started out at Mount Rose Elementary School and then I went to Jesse Beck, and then for middle school, I went to Swope, and then Reno High and then three years at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Roberts: What was your major at the university?

Jaramillo: It started out as journalism and then I switched to studio art major and art history minor.

Roberts: Are you an artist yourself?

Jaramillo: Yeah, I guess, on the side. My main thing was photography. That's mainly what I like to do.

Roberts: There's certainly a lot of great opportunity out here, beautiful landscapes and things like that.

Jaramillo: Yeah, I think so.

Roberts: So what do you think about Reno? Has Reno changed for you since growing up?

Jaramillo: Well, I think more so recently. I guess my first real memories of downtown Reno and the tourism industry were when the Silver Legacy was being built and it kind of seemed like it was on the up and up, and more recently there are a lot of things closing down or in the middle of being redeveloped, and maybe it doesn't really follow through, so I guess it's different now. I'm sure it has everything to do with the recession, but it just seems like things are a little stuck right now.

Roberts: What are your favorite things about living in Reno?

Jaramillo: I personally like the nightlife. I like to go out to the restaurants that are here and do more tourist kinds of things. I'm not really into the whole outdoors thing very much. I go to Tahoe every now and then and I do like to go downtown by the river. I think it's a small town that has a lot of entertainment, but it's not something like New York.

Roberts: Did you graduate after three years of college?

Jaramillo: No, I didn't graduate. I was already doing what I wanted to do as a career, and a lot of the other people around me were going to school to get into a career, and I found that it was kind of holding me back from my career because I was having to go to school so much and I couldn't focus on my goals of being a business owner. My major wasn't something that I wanted to do professionally. Growing up, I'd always known that I was going to go to college. It was something that I had to do. It was kind of an option when I got into college because I had enough money to where I could buy a house, and another thing that I like to do is I want to buy property and rent it out.

So I had enough money to buy my first rental property and I was talking to my parents about it, and they were saying, "Well, you could either buy your first house or you could pay for college," and so I decided, okay, I'll pay for college and I did that.

Then I basically did all the schooling that I wanted to do in the photography and art area, and all I had left were some things like a math class and some extra stuff that I needed in order to graduate, and it was just holding me back so much from my job that I thought, I've already learned enough of the stuff that I wanted to learn, so I'm just going to leave it at that.

Roberts: It sounds like you got what you wanted out of college and then got out at the right time.

Jaramillo: Yeah.

Roberts: So you said your dream was to be a business owner and you are a current business owner here at Pet Play House. Is that something you were really interested in?

Jaramillo: Yes. I was pretty young when I got into this and it was just something that I was doing, and when I started thinking about what I wanted to do as a professional, the first thing I wanted to do was be a journalist. I did that in high school and I didn't really like it as much anymore, and since I'd been doing this for so long, being a business owner, and it was working out really well for me, I decided that's really what I want to do.

Roberts: How old were you when you got into this?

Jaramillo: Well, when I became a co-owner at Pet Play House, I think I was twelve. I was very young.

Roberts: I would have thought you'd have to be eighteen or something to own a business.

Jaramillo: No, not really.

Roberts: Maybe if it's a co-owner kind of thing.

Jaramillo: Yeah.

Roberts: I do know you're getting married in about two weeks, is that correct?

Jaramillo: Yeah.

Roberts: Can you tell me a little bit about your fiancé and how you guys met?

Jaramillo: Yeah, we met, I think it was three years ago now. He was a bass player in a local band and his guitar player was dating my best friend, and then she introduced us at one of his shows at a place called Reno Pizza downtown.

Roberts: Is that place still there?

Jaramillo: Yes.

Roberts: Are you going to take a honeymoon or anything like that?

Jaramillo: Yes, not right after the wedding, because when I travel, I don't just do it. I like to plan it out and it would kind of be like planning a second wedding, so I'm going to wait until all the wedding planning's done and then I'm going to plan a nice vacation. So it's going to be afterward. It would be too stressful for me if I had to leave right after the wedding.

Roberts: What's your fiancé's name?

Jaramillo: Adam Goings.

Roberts: Is he still a musician?

Jaramillo: He is. He quit the band that he was in, but he still plays bass and he's looking to get into another band after the wedding, probably.

Roberts: Do you have an interest in music as well?

Jaramillo: Yeah, not as much as he does, but I like music.

Roberts: Let's talk a little bit about your business here. Can you tell me a little bit about Pet Play House and how it got started?

Jaramillo: Yes, we do dog daycare and dog overnight boarding, and we started it because we had a dog who was really bad and destructive at home and she needed to constantly be exercised. Even when we were taking her for really long walks, she still had too much energy and was being bad, so we looked into daycare. It's something that was a lot bigger in San Francisco and places like that.

We did have one here in Reno, and we checked it out and it wasn't really something that we wanted to do with our dog. It was just like a warehouse, all indoors, and it wasn't quite what we thought of when we thought, "Oh, doggy daycare, it sounds like a fun, colorful experience."

We figured that we must not be the only ones who felt that way, and we decided to open a dog daycare with our idea in mind, thinking that, okay, I'm sure some people like that, but I'm sure there are people who would like our idea, too, and that's how we started it.

Roberts: What kind of dog did you have that was so active?

Jaramillo: She was a mutt from the Humane Society. She was, like, a hound mix, I'd say.

Roberts: Can you explain what your philosophy was for doggy daycare?

Jaramillo: Our main thing was we thought the dogs would want to go outside, not just stay inside, because a lot of them are trained at home to go to the bathroom outside, so we didn't want them to be confused and worried about what's going to happen if I go to the bathroom in this inside area.

Lots of dogs like to go outside and run around. It's fun for them. They like to go to the park. We thought that lots of dogs were scared and upset to be in a cage and a kennel, so we wanted to open something that was more like home, that they would feel more comfortable in, so that's what we went for was homelike and indoor-outdoor. Cage-free.

Roberts: This is a really nice place. I've seen some of what you call doggy condos for overnight stay. They're pretty luxurious. Can you tell me a little bit about the condos and the accommodations here?

Jaramillo: We started out with all cage-free group boarding and then we found that a lot

of dogs don't do well being around other dogs at all times. There were some people who wanted their dogs to stay with us, to have a nice place, but they were dog-aggressive and needed to be kept away from other dogs, so we built these condos and suites that are still cage-free. There are no cages. They're actual rooms with walls and doors rather than a kennel. We still went with the homelike concept in that they have TVs, something that reminds them of something that they hear at home, and dog furniture that they can get up on, and pillows and rugs and stuff like that, so it's still not like a kennel. It's much better than that.

Roberts: This is a huge building we're in. But this isn't where the business started, correct?

Jaramillo: Right. We started next door at 2401 East Fourth Street. It was a brick house. It's still there and we still own it, but we basically only use it for the backyard now. That's where it started out for nine or ten years. Then we built this place and it took building it a little while, and then we moved in here, I think two or three years ago now.

Roberts: Why did you guys choose the house next door?

Jaramillo: Well, we looked at quite a few properties that were for sale at the time, and this one was really good because we would be able to have an outdoor area, which is what we were really going for because that would set us apart, and it was a really good location right off of I-80 and 395. We were thinking, well, people with kid daycares don't want to drive out in the middle of nowhere just for that. We were trying to make it convenient for people who were either on their way to work or on their way home, so that they could have a convenient place to drop off and pick up their dogs.

Roberts: And the business seems to be doing quite well, despite the economic recession.

Jaramillo: Yeah.

Roberts: So what made you decide to leave the house?

Jaramillo: We thought we would have a lot more freedom in having our vision completely what we wanted it to be if we started with a building that we designed, because going into a house, you have certain restrictions. You have to work with what you have. We couldn't really have our condos and suites and large daycare rooms in the house. We really needed to build something from the ground up. Even when we first started the business, that would have been what we wanted to do anyway. It would have been great to just have the money to completely construct a huge building, but we had to start it up and generate money and clients. But ultimately this is what we always wanted to do.

Roberts: This is quite a step up from what's next door. It's a small ranch-style brick home.

Jaramillo: Old house, too.

Roberts: And this is a huge building. Do you know how big it is, square footage?

Jaramillo: I don't know. Lisa [Jaramillo] knows more about that.

Roberts: What sort of clientele do you have here?

Jaramillo: Mostly higher-end economically, people who want to spend money on their dogs and can spend money on their dogs, not that we are extremely expensive in comparison to our competition, but people who want to spend the money to leave their dogs somewhere nice, rather than spend less money in a place that's not as nice or just with their friend or something.

Roberts: We talked a lot about dogs, but why not cats or any other sort of animals?

Jaramillo: That's always been a thought. That's what we were thinking about doing in the house next door, because right now the inside's not being used at all. We thought about that more seriously here and there, but I have cats at home and recently they got a sickness that's really contagious, and I was thinking about it. It's completely airborne and I'm thinking, gosh, if we just had one cat staying there, then all of the cats would be sick, and it's almost something that seems not really worth it unless you had each little housing unit on its own air system, because it's very contagious.

Roberts: That might be quite costly, though.

Jaramillo: Yeah, I don't know. What we were thinking recently was, cat sicknesses seem to be a little more costly. There are several cat-boarding places in Reno. We've talked to them, and aren't doing very well. A lot of people just want to leave their cats home. Cats do tend to be a little more stressed out when you take them somewhere else. They tend to like to be in their own environment more, so we're not sure it would be quite as successful a business as a dog daycare would.

Roberts: I think that cats tend to be sort of independent.

Jaramillo: Yes. A lot of people, when they go out of town, just say, "I leave a bowl full of food and my cat eats it, and then by the time I come back, the cat's fine and still alive and everything." Dogs aren't quite the same.

Roberts: Certainly not. They need much more attention. You do have cats at home, though, so you have nothing against cats?

Jaramillo: No, not at all. I love both cats and dogs.

Roberts: Just maybe it's not as practical.

Jaramillo: Yeah, and personally, I just know my cats wouldn't do well in a boarding situation. We had a dog who really needed that type of thing, so that kind of personal experience is why we went with the dog thing and haven't quite crossed over to the cats yet.

Roberts: You talked about several business opportunities in the area. Do you have something else going on? Do you own another business?

Jaramillo: No, I don't own another business. It's something I definitely want to do. A lot of my energy is focused on this right now, and also we're thinking about expanding this business, so once that's all done with, I will have plenty of time. But definitely I don't want this to be my only thing.

Roberts: How would you like to expand on this business?

Jaramillo: Whatever we do, we want to keep with the same concept that we've been doing, in that it's luxury and there's outdoor access. Unfortunately, if we were to go somewhere else, we might not be able to have outdoor access. We can here because we're grandfathered in. The zoning changed on us, but because we owned the property and we were already doing outdoor with the dogs, it's still fine. But if we built another building at another location, it might not be the same case.

We've been thinking a lot about expanding, taking down the house next door and building something there, or just building on top of what's already existing here, or buying property around us. There are a couple of places around here that we've looked into—some of them have been for sale and some of them haven't been, but we've talked to the owners and said that we're interested in buying.

Again, this is a really good location, so we would have no problem expanding here, and it's kind of scary to think of having to go to another location and not really being sure if it's a really good location and not being able to fill the spaces that you've built. I think we're leaning more towards expanding here, but we haven't ruled out another location somewhere else.

Roberts: I guess things are going well. Are you full here on a regular basis?

Jaramillo: Yeah, we are. It's kind of disappointing that we have to turn clients away. A lot of people thought when we built this place that we built too big and that we wouldn't be able to fill these spots, but we were immediately full. So we have an opportunity to make even more money and we can't because I don't have the room to accommodate more clients. So that's kind of disappointing.

Roberts: How many dogs do you think you have here on a regular basis?

Jaramillo: During the week we have a lot more. I'd say on our busy days we have up to 140, but on a normal day during the week, about 120. On the weekends we don't have as many in daycare, but we're completely full in boarding always on the weekends, so I'd say it's maybe fifty dogs on the weekends.

Roberts: How many boarding units or condos do you have? How many dogs can you board?

Jaramillo: Well, we have twenty-two of those individual units and some people have more than one dog that they keep in there, so it can be anywhere from just twenty-two to a little bit more if there are some more dogs in their family. Then for the slumber party we take ten to twelve dogs a night, which is the group option, the boarding option.

Roberts: It might get kind of crazy if you have more than that.

Jaramillo: Yes, I think they probably want to stay up and play, so a nice small group is good.

Roberts: Do they tend to go to sleep when they're all out here?

Jaramillo: Yeah, they do. We do try them out before accepting them into the slumber party, and sometimes puppies don't work out very well because puppies do want to always play if there's another dog around, but generally, since they've been in daycare all day, after dinner they're pretty tired. Every now and then you'll have a dog that wants to stay up all night, but for the most part, it goes pretty well and they fall asleep.

Roberts: Let's talk a little bit about Fourth Street then. You like your location here on Fourth Street?

Jaramillo: I think it's very good for business in terms of the traffic and the freeway proximity. The people around here aren't very appealing and I think sometimes that does take some business away from us. We do have some people who say, "Your business is on Fourth Street. I'm not so sure I want to bring my dog here."

We try to reassure them, "Oh, you know, it'll be okay." But definitely the worst part about being here is the reputation it has, the street.

Roberts: What sort of reputation do you think Fourth Street has currently?

Jaramillo: There's a lot of crime and prostitution. It has very low-income living arrangements, which, unfortunately, brings in some criminals and that kind of stuff.

Roberts: Recently there was a homeless shelter built on Fourth Street a little ways down from here. Do you think that has affected the area as well?

Jaramillo: I definitely think so. The homeless people obviously don't have cars that they can drive away from the homeless shelter, so once they're there, they're hanging around this entire street. They look homeless. They have all their belongings on their backs and people are frightened of that. It's definitely not a good thing that there are homeless people all over the street.

I regularly have to go out there and tell them that they need to leave our property,

and they ask our customers for money or cigarettes, even. Some prostitutes have even thought that our customers were pulling over for them in our parking lot and they would try to get in their car, and I have to tell them that they need to leave. So, yes, they definitely bother our customers.

Roberts: You have prostitutes around here as well?

Jaramillo: Yes.

Roberts: Do you think Fourth Street's changed since you started the business here? And what was that, thirteen years ago?

Jaramillo: I don't think it's changed a lot. I haven't been alive to see it anything other than this, really. It's always had a really bad reputation as long as I've known it. I guess maybe the older I've gotten, the more I've paid attention to it, so maybe it seems like it's gotten a little worse, but it's either stayed the same or maybe even gotten a little worse. I don't know. It definitely hasn't gotten better, I don't think.

Roberts: I guess the city is trying to address some of these issues, and this Fourth Street Project that we're working on hopefully is part of that.

Jaramillo: Yeah, I would hope so.

Roberts: Where would you like to see Fourth Street going in the future? What type of business would you like to see around here in the future?

Jaramillo: Well, I think things like bars wouldn't really be a good idea because of the people who hang around here. There are already a lot of bars here and they're not nice bars. They're kind of dive bars. I think it would be nice to bring in a strong business, maybe some sort of chain that could bring in clients that aren't just the ones who are hanging out here and living here.

When I go shopping, I know everything's always on Virginia Street or McCarran, and there are a lot of things like Best Buy and the mall right there. It would be nice to have something where people would come off of Fourth Street and know that there's some sort of Best Buy or a grocery store or something like that, something big that they could go to, and then other businesses could build up around that. Something big would bring a lot of people in and then littler shops can open up around there and get the people who think, "Oh, I just went to Walmart. Maybe I can grab a coffee on my way home," or something like that.

Roberts: Are you pleased with the flow of the traffic here and the transportation on Fourth Street?

Jaramillo: Yes. I wouldn't say our main clientele is drive-by. A lot of people just know about us from word of mouth, but we definitely do get a lot of people who come in to us and say, "You know, I drive by all the time and I finally decided to stop in because now I

have a dog." I like how busy it is. There are a lot of people going past—it's a pretty busy street to get from point A to point B, so I think it's pretty good. Especially for businesses it's really good, I think.

Roberts: What would you say about the businesses that are here currently? When I think of Fourth Street, I think of a wide variety of businesses. You've got you guys here, the luxury doggy daycare, and right next door is a bar, and across the street there's some industrial use and mechanics, and there's an auction house and ironworks and art and all sorts of stuff like that. So to me it's an eclectic street, and I wanted to get your opinion of that sort of thing.

Jaramillo: Yeah, it definitely is. It was, I think, more geared towards industrial until recently. A lot of businesses maybe aren't right for this street, like there are a couple bars that always close down and open up the next week as a different place. It's kind of hard to open a lot of businesses here, because there are not a lot of people who go here, other than those who are traveling through to go to work or getting off the freeway to go to another business that's here. A lot of people come here just for us and because of us. Maybe now they go across the street to get a soda or to get gas, something like that. There's not a whole lot of big businesses right here.

Roberts: There's been a lot of recent construction projects in the area, and right here on the freeway, I think your exit is closed right now.

Jaramillo: Yeah, now it's closed. I think it's been a week, maybe two weeks it's been closed.

Roberts: Do you think that the construction going on around here has affected your business at all?

Jaramillo: I don't think it's affected our business. Our people still come to us. It's a little more of a hassle. They tell us that they were almost late because of it, but it hasn't turned anyone away from us. I think a couple other businesses around here have reached out to us to help them with some promotions to get more people here despite the construction, so it makes it seem like some other businesses are being affected by it. But not ours—our people are still coming to us.

Roberts: Which businesses have contacted you about that sort of thing?

Jaramillo: The Chevron down here right off Galletti. They are running a promotion with the Halfway Club next door, where if you buy five gallons of gas, you can go to the Halfway Club and get a free sandwich, and I think the idea is that if they're there, they're also going to buy a beer or something, so that helps both businesses. With us, we explained to them that we don't really need to promote ourselves, so they were saying, "Okay, well, maybe we can say that if you come to us and get five gallons of gas, then you can get a free treat from Pet Play House." It wouldn't really bring people here because we don't need that right now, but it would still be a promotion for them.

I think definitely the gas station needs it. If you can't get off of the exit in a timely manner, you're just going to go to the next exit and the gas station that's there. So I think it's definitely hurting them. You don't really have a loyalty to a certain gas station, I don't think.

Roberts: I have a couple specific questions about Fourth Street to ask you—mostly about the corridor of Fourth Street, which includes the street itself and the businesses around it. So do you think transportation issues play a big role in the health of the Fourth Street corridor?

Jaramillo: The health of the people or the businesses?

Roberts: Probably both.

Jaramillo: I don't think it's bad for the businesses. I think it's good. I think it's a lot of traffic. It's always busy, except for at night it slows down, but during the day, even on weekends, it's always really busy here and I think that's good for businesses. For people, I don't think it's affected them at all, so I think it's all right.

Roberts: Are you happy with the current way the street is set up for transportation through here?

Jaramillo: I think so. I haven't really thought of any problems with it.

Roberts: What do you think are the greatest transportation needs in the corridor? Is there something that needs to be done out here on Fourth Street?

Jaramillo: Well, I don't know. It's not really a transportation need, but maybe some sort of landscaping along the street. It kind of looks like a divey area in terms of the street, and then it's just dirt or a fence or something like that, so maybe something like that would be nice to make it look a little better.

Roberts: So some aesthetic enhancer?

Jaramillo: Yeah, like an island or something with flowers.

Roberts: How do you think that would help the street?

Jaramillo: Well, I think it would encourage the other businesses around here to make their places look a little better, because a lot of places have weeds and broken-down fences and signs, and it's hard to spend the money to fix all that if your neighbor's place looks just as bad. You know, if you have some motivation to make your business look a little better, then you would probably do it. You wouldn't want to be the only one on the street who's the eyesore. I think that would be good. It would encourage everything to look a little better around here.

Roberts: Do you have any plans or ideas or something you'd like to do for your property aesthetically?

Jaramillo: Yeah, we had to put in some street art. Building this place, we were required to spend a certain amount of money on art and landscaping, but we have a couple other plans that we would like to do. Unfortunately, there's a lot of street foot traffic around our windows, which is kind of a problem with the dogs, because we had to make a big window also. The city thought that people would want to look at the dogs and it would be an entertainment kind of thing, so we had to make that available to them and it's turned out to be not good for the dogs. They get excitement aggression when people stare at them through the window and knock on the window, so what we're thinking about doing is making little decorative things that block people from going right up to our windows. And we wouldn't want to just have a fence-type thing. It would be an artistic thing with dogs' pictures, going with our theme here of dogs. So we do have some ideas.

Roberts: You mentioned the city wanted a large window? Was that a requirement?

Jaramillo: I don't want to say too much about that because I'm not sure how correct that is, but I remember in the process of building this, they did mention that they wanted our large window right on the street so that people walking by would see it rather than it being set back. Like I said, I'm not sure how correct that is. It was a while ago and I wasn't really part of that conversation with the city, but I remember that being something about it.

Roberts: So they did have something to say about it at least?

Jaramillo: Yeah.

Roberts: And you mentioned a minute ago about street art. What exactly does that entail?

Jaramillo: Well, it didn't matter what it was, but we had to spend money on some sort of artistic piece in order to have this building here, and a certain amount of money on the landscaping. They had some opinions on it. They wanted it to be a bench, and we thought, well, we don't want homeless people sitting on a bench that's considered our art, so we went with our little metal sculptures out there instead. But unfortunately, people tie their bikes to that—it's better than having people sleeping on benches, but it didn't work out as well as we thought it would.

Roberts: I didn't realize those were out there. Can you describe the sculptures for me?

Jaramillo: They are converted pieces of bike racks that have cutouts in metal, so I understand why people put their bikes there because it looks kind of like a bike rack, but it's our art piece. We have two of them out there.

Roberts: It's meant to be decorative, but you used part of a bike rack.

Jaramillo: Yeah, and there's a lot of other things downtown that they are bike racks, but they're artistic bike racks, so it's a trendy thing. We went with that.

Roberts: Did you have a local artist design them for you?

Jaramillo: My mom did that. She designed them, but our construction people put it all together because they needed to be welded and drilled in. We couldn't do all that.

Roberts: Do you enjoy working with your mom here at the Pet Play House?

Jaramillo: I do. It's comfortable. There are certain days where we're not here together. We're only here, I think, three days together and it's comfortable. I always know that she can handle things and she always says that I can handle things, so it's pretty nice, better than working for someone you don't really know that well.

Roberts: It's always nice to have confidence in your business partner.

Jaramillo: Yeah, it's quite relieving.

Roberts: Do you have any managers here, or do you take on those responsibilities?

Jaramillo: That's what we do right now. We're just the ones doing the management. It's really hard. It's a lot of work, very time-consuming. You think that when you're a business owner, you shouldn't really be working more than your employees, but that's what we're doing right now, for sure, and we've been doing it for a long time. We're ready to step away a little bit and hire a manager. We've been looking for the right person now for a while, so it takes a lot of letting go, trust, but we have to do that at some point.

Roberts: When you get a manager, you might have some more time on your hands. What would you like to do after you bring in a manager?

Jaramillo: I would want to do it because I'm getting married and I'm going to be having kids, and I can't imagine right now with how much I work, I wouldn't even see my kids. I wouldn't ever be able to go to their school functions or anything like that. I would never see them. So for me, I'm going to be trying to live a normal life.

For my mom, she's getting older and she wants to—not retire. She's not that old, but she wants to be not working so much. She's just going to, I would think, spend more time at home, probably.

Roberts: How many hours a week do you think you spend here, on average?

Jaramillo: Well, I work every day about, I'd say, fifteen hours, probably.

Roberts: Fifteen hours a day?

Jaramillo: Yes. Both of us do because we do some night shifts, as well, so I have one day

off—well, it's not really a whole day, but it's pretty much a whole day off.

Roberts: You're here six days a week, then.

Jaramillo: Well, I'm here seven days a week, but I get to leave during the day on one of those days.

Roberts: That does seem like quite a bit of work.

Jaramillo: Yeah. I've done it for a very long time, so a lot of people say that, but it's normal for me, so it's all right.

Roberts: And you spend the night here too? How often?

Jaramillo: Yeah, we're staffed twenty-four hours a day. I spend the night once a week. We have two other employees who take shifts, and then my mom as well.

Roberts: I guess with a kennel, someone has to be here.

Jaramillo: Yeah, and that's another thing that sets us apart. A lot of other kennels aren't staffed twenty-four hours, and if I were to leave my animal somewhere, that would panic me, so I would feel more comfortable with a twenty-four-hour place. Something could happen at night.

Roberts: Is it just one person here overnight?

Jaramillo: Yeah.

Roberts: Well, let's get back to some of our Fourth Street questions.

Jaramillo: Okay.

Roberts: I've got a couple more for you. Let's see. Are you aware of any safety issues in the corridor? For example, is the traffic too fast or are there any bad sightlines, where you come around a corner or something and you can't see? Anything that strikes you as a safety concern?

Jaramillo: I don't think so. Personally, when I drive here, I think traffic speed is pretty effective. If it were slower, I don't know. Like I said, people use it as a way to get from one place to the other, so I think if it were slower, that would be a little frustrating for people. They'd probably just be speeding anyway. For as long as we've been here, I don't think I've seen an accident right in front of us or anything, and I haven't really heard of it being an accident-prone area, so I don't think there are any speed or sight problems.

Roberts: What do you think about the arrangement of lanes and the number of lanes out there? Are you satisfied with that?

Jaramillo: I think it's good. I think the turn lane is really good because there are a lot of businesses here that you need to turn into. It seems to work pretty well with the kind of traffic that's here.

Roberts: So you don't think they should be modified in any way? For example, should buses have their own lanes or anything like that?

Jaramillo: No, I think the buses just pull over right by the bus stop and that seems to be all right. I don't think it should change now.

Roberts: And you like having a central turning lane?

Jaramillo: Yeah. I think that's good.

Roberts: What would you like to see for pedestrians and bicycles in the area?

Jaramillo: Well, one thing I notice is that pedestrians sometimes have to weave around because there isn't always a sidewalk for them. I don't know if that's because sometimes they have shopping carts, though, because they can't drive the shopping cart on the dirt areas, so sometimes they have to go into the street, especially in the winter. If it's snowing, people have to walk in the street because there are no sidewalks, nothing that can be shoveled, and the only thing that's clear for them is to walk in the street, so I think sidewalks everywhere would be good.

Roberts: You want sidewalks?

Jaramillo: Yeah, I think so.

Roberts: And how wide? What do you think?

Jaramillo: I don't know, just like a typical sidewalk, I guess.

Roberts: I guess it is sort of spotty. There are some sidewalks. There's a sidewalk in front of your building, but not all of them.

Jaramillo: Yeah, our property next door doesn't have a sidewalk. There's some landscaping right where the sidewalk should be, and people have to either walk one way or the other to go around the landscaping. Next door to us, they have a kind of a gravel area, but it's not a sidewalk, and I notice a lot of people with shopping carts get stuck there and they have to drive them into the street because of that.

Roberts: You mentioned that especially during winter there's a problem, so the sidewalks aren't maintained or nobody does it. You know, they have the little sidewalk snow movers. They're like miniatures of the street version. So nobody comes out and maintains the sidewalks during the winter, the ones that are here?

Jaramillo: Well, we do, you know. We shovel our sidewalk and we have our landscaping company that shovels our whole parking lot with the snowplow thing. I think other people must do it, but definitely not everyone.

Roberts: Have you had to do that this year? We've had sort of a mild winter.

Jaramillo: Yeah, there were just a couple days where I had to shovel.

Roberts: You had to shovel? [laughs]

Jaramillo: Yeah.

Roberts: Couldn't give that to one of your other employees?

Jaramillo: No, you know, it's a safety issue for our clients, so while they're doing all their stuff, I want to make sure that no one falls down in the parking lot. We don't want anyone suing us for that.

Roberts: Have you ever had a problem with a customer having a problem with the area, with Fourth Street? Have they expressed any concerns to you?

Jaramillo: Some people, with the panhandlers, will express their concern. You know, there are some people who prostitutes thought that they were picking them up and they locked their doors, but the prostitutes kept trying the door, and then when they locked the door, I guess that they took offense to that because they think that they're ugly or something and they get really mad.

I don't know if it's a mental health problem or a drug problem, but there are some crazy people around here who will harass our customers and us. I'd say it was a year ago, there was a woman who was completely naked walking down the street. I don't know if she was aware that she was naked, but all of our customers saw it and some of them were calling the cops because you can't have that out there. It's kind of embarrassing, for sure. I know they don't think it's our fault, but they have to see it because they're coming here.

Roberts: Have the police been attentive when you've had situations like that?

Jaramillo: Kind of. They're always around here anyway and we've had to call the police a couple times, one time for a woman who pulled her pants down in front of us and started peeing on our property. With that woman, apparently they know her, and they told us that they thought that we shouldn't press charges because she's crazy and if she just gets back on her medication, she'll be fine. Then a couple days later, she was doing it again, so that was kind of frustrating. The police sometimes say, "Oh, don't do anything. This person, we deal with them all the time," and it's sad. She obviously needs money to get on her medication, but she doesn't have it because no one will ever hire her. But it's not something that we want to deal with either.

Roberts: I guess that's kind of a hard place to be in.

Jaramillo: Yeah, but whenever we call the cops, they come pretty quick, so that's good.

Roberts: Have the clients said anything about the street itself?

Jaramillo: No, not really, nothing other than the recent construction being a problem with the freeway, but nothing else other than that.

Roberts: With the Fourth Street Project, they've been discussing perhaps making some changes here. Do you think that would be a positive thing?

Jaramillo: I think some changes would be really good. If things looked nicer, I think it would encourage everyone to make everything look nicer. It encourages people to come here. I know on Wells, I personally really like the streetlights and the little art thing in the roundabout. I think that made that place look better. Doesn't look so down. So I think some aesthetic stuff would look good.

Roberts: And we talked about sidewalks and you do want to see some more sidewalks.

Jaramillo: Just, I think, a consistency would look good. I think it also looks like it's a finished property, because a lot of times it's just dirt and it has weeds in it, so I think if it looked like it had a sidewalk, it would look a little better.

Roberts: What about something like bike lanes? Have you noticed a lot of bicyclists out here on the road?

Jaramillo: Some bicyclists. Not more than usual. I know there are a lot of bicyclists on Arlington because I think a lot of people like to use that bike trail by the river, but for here, I'd say that the main thing is the car traffic. That's what people mostly do.

Roberts: So do you think they need bike lanes?

Jaramillo: I don't think so. The bicyclists who are here, they do pretty well with riding their bikes just as they would on any other street without bike lanes.

Roberts: How do you feel about parking in the area? Would you like to see parking changed in any way?

Jaramillo: I think maybe for any of the businesses that might be new, or in a developed building, or where someone built a building, I think it's good to require that they have a parking lot. We were required to have a certain size parking lot. I know the business next door to us, the Halfway Club, they don't really have a parking lot and it's definitely not big enough for the type of business they are. A lot of their clients park here, which isn't good because a lot of times they've been drinking and they run over our fence. So I think parking for the businesses that are here would be good. If everyone had a parking lot, that

would be good.

Roberts: Does your parking lot suit your needs?

Jaramillo: It does. Sometimes, like I said, other people will park here, and at our busy times, that's when we notice there's a problem, but it's, again, because people are parking here who aren't supposed to be, who aren't part of our business. But for the amount of clients we have in the busy times, it's a good-size parking lot.

Roberts: You said perhaps more parking would be helpful. What about something like on-street parking?

Jaramillo: I know they have signs everywhere that say, "Parking for this Business Only," but again, if there's on-street parking, I think that people would be parking here if they're going to the bar in front of our business and we definitely wouldn't want that because we're a business that needs to be quiet and dark at night. All the dogs will wake up and when people are in our parking lot after hours, it creates a problem for us, and I'm sure for other businesses, when they close at night and no one's there, I don't think they would want people in front of their place parked either. I wouldn't want on-street parking.

Roberts: You guys have an interesting business in that someone is here twenty-four hours a day, so you get to see what happens at all hours of the night and day. Do you have problems at night with noise or traffic or anything like that?

Jaramillo: Not at night, not with noise or anything. The only problems that we have are the criminals around here at night.

Roberts: What sorts of problems have you had?

Jaramillo: Well, they'll just look in our parking lot for stuff to steal and they always try your car doors. You have to have your car locked. They'll try and steal whatever's in your car. We had to get cameras because there was one time that my mom didn't lock her car and it was ransacked, and now that we have cameras, it alarms us every time there's someone in the parking lot. We didn't even realize how many people go through our parking lot looking for stuff to steal until we got the cameras. Now it wakes us up. It alarms us and we watch them do it. And sometimes they'll even sleep in our parking lot. There's an area that's hidden, it's behind our dumpster, and we'll find people sleeping there or using the bathroom there or stealing stuff.

Roberts: Has anyone tried to come into the building?

Jaramillo: Yeah, people always look in the windows and they do try and break in. We haven't had anyone steal anything ever, other than from our parking lot and from my mom's car. Next door, I think people think is an abandoned house, because they probably look in the windows and so they think it's okay to just sleep there. We've had people who've kind of been living there. Until we got the cameras, we didn't really realize there

were people who were claiming that as their house, on the porch. It's a problem at night, definitely.

Roberts: We're hearing a doorbell. Is that the alarm for the parking lot?

Jaramillo: No, the alarm for the parking lot, we turned that off for the recording, but that's the doorbell that rings every time the door opens.

Roberts: And I guess you do keep the doors locked at night, right?

Jaramillo: Yeah. A lot of it has to do, also, with the fact that we don't want the dogs escaping either, but definitely if the doors were unlocked, I know it would be a very bad thing. There would be people in here a lot, I'm sure.

Roberts: So are the dogs allowed to go outside in an enclosed area at night?

Jaramillo: Yeah, yeah. They're allowed to still go outside. We have the sliding doors to the yard that are open, and we have pretty high fences and all the gates are locked. It's not really a fence that I think someone could climb.

Roberts: So you've never had a problem with that?

Jaramillo: No, not in the backyards. I feel pretty safe about the backyards, especially because there are lots of dogs here too.

Roberts: What do you do when you find someone sleeping on the porch or around your property?

Jaramillo: Well, personally, I get mad. You know, I probably shouldn't—the right thing would be to call the cops or something, but I always get really mad and I go out there and confront them. I also have a gun, not that I would ever expect to need to use it on them, but if they were to ever attack me, I guess I'd have that.

Roberts: Yeah, just for protection.

Jaramillo: Yeah, and I always confront them. At first I'll watch on the cameras, and if they're just passing through, I won't do anything, but if they're looking for a really long time, I think clearly they think that no one's here and no one sees them, so I let them know that I see them and I tell them that they need to leave. Sometimes they'll say that they're just looking for stuff, and I have to say, "Well, I'm sorry, you know, that's our stuff. It's not stuff for you to take. You need to leave."

Roberts: Is there an intercom that you can talk to them through or do you actually have to go out there?

Jaramillo: We have to actually go out there. They have a feature—it's a motion feature,

where every time it senses someone's there, it can play a recording that says, "Private property. You're being recorded," but because there's so much traffic on the street, we think it would just be playing all the time, so we didn't enable that feature.

Roberts: Yeah, you might be right.

Jaramillo: It would probably be saying it nonstop.

Roberts: Yeah, and if somebody hears it all the time, they might think that it's—

Jaramillo: —not really a real issue.

Roberts: Well, is there anything else you'd like to say about Fourth Street or the business, anything we may not have covered?

Jaramillo: Not really, I guess just that I wish it wasn't such a poor area. I wish that something could be done about the low-income people living here and I wish some businesses that could generate more money would move in here. I think it would be good.

Roberts: Okay, well, I just want to thank you for your time.

Jaramillo: Thank you.