

Michael Ellis School Immersion Program

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*Program Dates: **March 12, 2012 – August 24, 2012** (22 weeks)

*Program Tuition: **\$18,995** (includes school tuition and housing)

Overview - The Big Picture

The M.E.S. Immersion Program represents an opportunity for students to gain a comprehensive education in dogs and their training from one of the most gifted and knowledgeable trainers and teachers in the world of dogs today. Michael, along with his talented and dedicated team, are opening up their training school and lives to students so that they may be able to experience dog training on a very intense and intimate level. This program is designed to be a hands-on, life-changing, intensive dog-training education that prepares students to move forward into the dog-training field with the tools and competence needed to excel in multiple disciplines and multiple areas of study. We are seeking students with a strong work ethic, an open-mind, a passion for training, and a desire to learn.

Details – What You Will Learn

Broken up into 5 parts, the M.E.S. Immersion Program will delve deeply into 1) Protection Training (Schutzhund/IPO, Ring Sport, and practical protection disciplines), 2) Detailed Obedience systems (for Pets and Competition Dogs), 3) K9 Scent Work (Tracking, nose-work/detection work), 4) Learning Theory/ Behavior (Behavioral Modification, Rehabilitation, Aggression, Problem solving), and 5) Public Relations / Business Management (Private Coaching, Group Coaching, Shelter Volunteer Programs, LLC / S-Corp. Business Start-up and Management).

The Immersion Program will comprehensively tackle the above listed areas of study from both a theoretical and practical/hands-on approach. Theoretical learning will be approached primarily through class lecture and discussion, assigned readings, and independent study. Practical application will be obtained through training and application with our own and each other's dogs, and through our Solano County SPCA Improve-A-Dog Program (explained in greater detail below).

Class Structure

The 22-week Immersion Program allows students to attend the entire M.E.S. course curriculum twice. In the first cycle, students will participate in the traditional format along side short-term M.E.S students. The second cycle will allow Immersion students the opportunity to assist Michael and his team in teaching and demonstrating skills to short-term M.E.S. students.

Traditional Class weeks (Weeks where short-term classes are in attendance)

- Team Obedience Training, exclusive to Immersion students, occurs from 9a.m.-10a.m. during traditional class weeks
- Immersion students then attend Traditional classes from 10a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Friday
- An additional Team Training session will take place following classes each day.
- Immersion Students will attend weekly 'Touch Points' with Michael to ensure training goals are being achieved, to troubleshoot problems, and to address additional training topics.
- On designated Team Tracking days, sessions will begin at 8a.m., meeting at various parks and fields throughout Fairfield and Suisun.

Non-Traditional weeks (Weeks where no short-term classes are scheduled)

- Team Training occurs from 10a.m. – 1p.m., Monday – Friday
- Nose-work / Scent Detection Lectures with former DoD trainer/handler Andrew Ramsey of Ramsey K9
- Team Training will take place in various locations around the Bay Area
- Twice a week ‘Touch Points’ with Michael to trouble-shoot training and address additional topics

**Student success will depend heavily on independent study and work ethic outside of class structure and regularly scheduled team-training times.*

Program Requirements

M.E.S. Improve-a-Dog Program: M.E.S. has teamed up with Amy Peterson and the Solano County SPCA to afford immersion students the opportunity to gain real-life hands-on experience working with rescue dogs with the goal of providing an understanding of the following areas (relative to the dog’s needs and long-term benefit): obedience, positive social interaction (dogs/humans/environmental), rehabilitation (fear/aggression/counter-conditioning/habituation/desensitization), behavioral modification (redirecting/boundary training/confidence building/problem-solving), as well as improving the overall well-being of the dogs.

Further Details:

- We will place students with a rescue dog in accordance with an agreement made between the student, SPCA and M.E.S.
- Student keeps and works dog for period of 3 or 4 weeks (depending on dog’s needs)
- Following ‘completion’ of training, student presents dog to potential adopter or returns dog to SPCA
- Student is fitted with another dog after completion of each ‘improve a dog.’
- With M.E.S. Instructor and SPCA consent, students that so desire, will have the option of training more than one ‘improve a dog’ at a time. Approval will depend on student’s individual ability and work ethic.
- Through duration of Immersion Program students will be encouraged to work with at least 6 different ‘improve a dogs.’
- Students will be evaluated on quality of training and relationship facilitated with individual dogs.

Student’s own dogs(s):

Students will be encouraged to train their own dogs in a number of varying dog disciplines, to include:

- Puppy Preliminaries: socialization, ‘hold’, luring, reward ‘event’, crate-training, markers, touch-pads, positions, spatial awareness
- Competitive level obedience, (Lectures will focus on specifics of AKC/UKC, ScH, Ring)
 - Examples of exercises we stress: focused heeling, static positions, in motion positions, touch-pad work, leash pressure, send-away, scent discrimination, retrieve, recall, jumps (hurdle, long/broad jump, palisade/A-frame)
- Protection Sport Exercises (ScH/sleeve, Ring/suit)
 - Grip development, out-guard, escort, transport, hold and bark, object guard, entries, call-off, blind searches
- Tracking (ScH style tracking)
- Scent-Work (article, building, field searches – area of focus dependent on student’s interests)
- Retrieve work (specific and generalized)
- Detailed communication systems including reward markers, binary feedback, operant and classical conditioning, and proper use of aversives.

Dogs! - ‘What are my options for bringing or obtaining a dog for the program?’

Because of the intensity and in-depth training of the Immersion Program, it will be necessary for students to obtain a dog with certain inherent skills that will allow both dog and student to successfully train in all the

designated areas of study required by the program. While there are many breeds of working dogs, sporting dogs, herding dogs, and others that can perform well in much of the curriculum, because the immersion program does deal with aspects of protection sport and training, it may be in the best interest of the student to obtain a breed suited for such work.

Puppy-Lease Program: Because of Michael's long-standing involvement in breeding programs around the country (including his own – Loups du Soleil), we have unique access to many talented puppies from quality and reputable breeders locally and afar. Immersion students can choose to take part in our *Puppy-Lease Program*, allowing us to fit them with an appropriate puppy for the duration of the program with the option to buy at the program's conclusion. Students will not be required to purchase the puppy up-front but can choose to purchase the dog (at the standard puppy price) when the Immersion program is completed.

Extra Curricular – ‘What else can I do with my time... !?’

Students will have the opportunity to participate in many extra-curricular activities both inside and outside of the school's influence. The California Bay Area is hopping with incredible dog-training events, people, organizations, and activities. Immersion Students will have the opportunity to be exposed to many of these outside activities. Specific extra curricular opportunities available through the school:

- Membership in Ring Club Training (Lindsey and Forrest's private club): meets every Saturday from 12-5pm
- Public Saturday Drop-in Program: meets every Saturday from 9-12
- Private lesson shadowing: students are encouraged to shadow and assist Michael, Lindsey and Forrest in private lessons
- Foundation Development Participation: Lindsey and Forrest are heavily sought out for the obedience and bite-work foundation they do. Puppies and young dogs are sent from all over the country.
- Other local competitions (depending on timing and availability during program duration)
- Solano County SPCA Volunteer program
- Local French Ring Trial field trip

Housing – ‘What's the living situation...?!’

The tuition cost for the immersion program includes rent in a 3 bedroom, 2 bathroom, ranch-style house located 10 minutes from the school in Fairfield. Each student will have a private bedroom and share a bathroom. The home is equipped with individual exercise yards for dogs, an open backyard, and a large field in the back to run dogs. Students will share a fridge, freezer, cupboard space, garage space, parking space (in drive-way and road) and common living quarters.

Dogs are allowed in the house with students bearing the responsibility of maintaining the cleanliness of both inside and outside areas. Students are also required to be accountable for their dogs at all times. While the living quarters represent a laid-back environment, specific house rules will be discussed at the beginning of the program to ensure safety, quality training, and fairness for all parties.

Because of town ordinances, and consideration for each other, dogs will not be allowed to bark excessively indoors or outdoors. Dogs will also be required to have a clean health record (fecal/blood work) and be up-to-date on vaccines.

The home belongs to M.E.S. Instructor, Lindsey Sommer. Regular check-ins will be made to ensure living conditions remain safe, clean, and appropriate for all tenants.

What to Bring / Preparing for the Program...

*The Immersion Program is 22 weeks long. Students are advised to bring any items that will increase the convenience, safety, ease, and productivity of their transition to, and time spent at the M.E.S. School in Fairfield, CA.

Some suggestions include:

- computer
- car (big enough to crate two dogs)
- dog training equipment (leashes, training collars, bait bags, toys, training bag, harness, etc., some of which is available for sale at the school)
- clothing (cool & warm weather)
- pillow / blanket
- reading material
- crates (2)/ x-pen
- notebook / writing utensils
- audio recorder
- camera
- GPS
- money / debit card
- hygiene items
- identification (driver's license, s.s. card, birth certificate, green card, etc.)
- cell phone
- chargers for related devices (computer, camera, phone)
- important addresses or contact information
- sunscreen
- sunglasses
- foldable chair
- dog blankets

Miscellaneous – Other Cool Information!

- California is considered by some to be the Mecca of progressive dog training. The state, and the northern region specifically, is littered with dynamic trainers, exciting events, dedicated clubs, progressive thought, and many exciting opportunities. This world is available to all and tapping into these resources depends heavily on the motivation of the individual student.
- Michael has developed many friendships throughout his career in dogs, which affords us the opportunity to tap into the experience, wisdom, and thought of some of these unique individuals. Occasional guest Q&A's will be scheduled when access to these trainers presents itself.
- The Michael Ellis School is located near the San Francisco Bay area. While we do spend an exorbitant amount of time in the dog world, the area in which we are located provides individuals with countless activities and experiences they can choose to pursue outside of dogs.
- Other informal topics of study covered throughout the course include: decoy certification rules (Mondio / French / IPO); Business development and management discussion/lectures; AKC CD, CDX, UDX routine lectures; Breeding and genetics discussions; behavioral troubleshooting brainstorm sessions; and much more
- We have students in attendance from all over the world. Participating in class along side these students will give immersion students an opportunity to gain knowledge and experience on dog-training thought, technique, and practice, not only in our region or country, but from all over the world.