

President's Report AGM 2020

I am pleased to present my report tonight at our first online AGM.

This year we are extremely proud to celebrate our thirtieth anniversary and at the same time have been faced with unprecedented challenges. However, with wonderful members, dogs, Liaison Officers, Assessors and committee we see Covid-19 as a surmountable setback and will progressively recommence sharing our dogs as before.

Once again, it has been a busy and productive twelve months and I would like to summarise some of the strategic highlights:

We have formed alliances with the NZ Society of Diversional and Recreational Therapists, IDEA Services and are building a relationship with the Department of Corrections.

Our alliance with NZSDRT facilitates ease of communication and encourages relationships between facility therapists and our Liaison Officers and members.

IDEA Services (IHC) has several hundred homes throughout NZ and our Liaison Officers are encouraged to place member/dog teams at these whenever possible.

After several months of working through processes, four member/dog teams are visiting specific units at the Hawkes Bay Correction Centre on a monthly roster basis. This is proving beneficial to both prisoners and staff. Thank you to Chris Partridge and her members for their work bringing this to fruition and paving the way for other relationships with Centres around NZ.

Last May saw the first of our annual Founder's Day events – an initiative proposed by Beverley Jocelyn. It was heart-warming to read about the various get-togethers around the country. Beverley assisted with arranging these and sent appreciation certificates to members for recognition of their service.

We are fortunate to receive an annual grant from NZ Lotteries and were thrilled to be featured on a NZ Lotto advertisement last July. Four of our Wellington members and dogs were filmed visiting Te Hopai Rest Home and Hospital, this showcased the many benefits of pet therapy and our work in facilities. Many thanks to Margaret Ranum and Carolyn Williams for coordinating this.

In January this year we appeared on television again, this time on a TV One Good Sorts item featuring our Founder Eileen Curry visiting Woburn Masonic Rest Home in Lower Hutt. It was fitting and rather special as this was the first rest home Eileen visited thirty years ago. We received a flurry of new applications – the first within five minutes of the programme! Rachel Davison and Sandy Fea were a great help and super ambassadors – thank you!

As part of our volunteer recognition plan we have launched a new initiative, Regional Member of the Year whereby Liaison Officers are invited to nominate a member from their



region. Each nominee will feature in our newsletter and social media and receive products from our sponsor Ziwi. Thank you to Rachel Butler for proposing and coordinating this.

Covid-19 – this has presented challenges, ones we have not met previously. With the suspension of all visiting prior to Level Four Lockdown, the emphasis on communication with our members and supporters has been greater than ever to help members feel connected.

Covid-19 also brought about the postponement of the Liaison Officer Appreciation day, but with credits being carried over we are all set for March 2021. We were extremely disappointed to be faced with this decision, but our many hours of planning have put us in a good position for next March.

Financially we were extremely fortunate to receive a generous donation last February from a member of the public which will be used for training Liaison Officers and members.

Dogs NZ continue to provide wonderful support by way of an annual grant and providing space in their monthly Dog World magazine which gives us access to the NZ dog community. Our thanks to Steven Thompson and his staff for their support and a thank you to Sandy McAllen for coordinating our monthly articles.

Our partnership with NZ pet food company Ziwi enables us to enjoy unencumbered growth and therefore to enhance our work. We are extremely grateful to the staff at Ziwi for their support and appreciation of the service we provide.

Operational Highlights

Display kits have been provided to Liaison Officers for use at presentations to community groups. We plan to roll out additional kits this coming twelve months. Thank you to Beverley Jocelyn for her time spent on assembling and shipping these.

With the kind assistance of Christina MacIntyre of RedDog Marketing, we have developed a Photo Library which enables key members to access material for publications and presentations. Christina also monitors our website with a monthly Google Analytics report which gives us useful information on our audiences. From this we can implement any necessary changes.

Christina has also set up a YouTube channel with videos being added progressively.

Acknowledgements

Without our members, dogs, Liaison Officers and committee we wouldn't be where we are now thirty years on, for collectively you are the cornerstone of this organisation.

The committee is made up of extremely passionate people who fit many hours of their time on Canine Friends work around jobs and businesses.

My sincere thanks to you all –



Beverley Jocelyn, Vice President for your tireless work on our quarterly newsletters and the Founder's Day initiative.

Leanne Gibson, Secretary for the many hours you spend answering emails, working on our website and database, coordinating agendas and making sure our meetings run smoothly via video conferencing.

Dallas Hopkins, Treasurer for keeping a keen eye on our finances and giving wise advice for the future. Dallas also has an interest in strategic planning and adds a lot of value to these discussions.

Annette Dougherty, Applications Manager – for dealing with a daily average of three applications (in normal times), processing these on receipt to the final step of sending a new member pack, which is a large workload. Annette also manages our stationery supplies.

Rachel Butler, our Auckland Liaison Officer for several years and more recently our LO training and support person ensuring new LOs feel supported from the outset. Rachel also introduced our Regional Member of the Year initiative.

Sandy McAllen, our Whanganui Liaison Officer, for administering our Facebook page and coordinating our NZ Dog World articles.

David Verrinder for your input from both a business and general perspective and help with the Special Childrens Christmas Parties and other public events.

Sandy Fea for sharing your many years of experience as a visiting member and your broad knowledge of dogs.

Last February Carolyn Williams resigned from the committee after several years working on our communications. Carolyn's passion and experience is clearly evident in all our written communication material.

Alison Law has retired due to ongoing work commitments. Alison's knowledge of health and safety regulations and procedures has proved invaluable and gives us a sound base going forward.

Liaison Officers – you are the glue which keeps this organisation together. Thank you for your reports which we thoroughly enjoy reading, they give us good insight of what is happening around the country.

Members and your wonderful dogs- be proud of yourselves – what you do is amazing.

Eileen Curry, our Founder who has asked me to say tonight how very proud she is of everyone involved and is thrilled facilities are approaching us now to resume visiting. Eileen at 94 maintains a keen interest and still has the ability to keep myself and other committee members in line!

Eileen, we are very proud of you and the wonderful legacy you have created.



Finally, a quote I read recently which I think is very appropriate:

“If you want to go fast – go alone, if you want to go far – go together.

Thank you and I ask that this report be accepted.

Vicky Graham

President