

President's Report

AGM 2021

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

We are extremely proud to celebrate 31 years of visiting rest homes, hospitals and hospices. This time last year I reported that we saw Covid-19 as a surmountable set-back, and with regular communication with our wonderful members, dogs, Liaison Officers, Assessors and committee we navigated through changing Covid-19 alert levels. I am pleased to say we have experienced continued growth, in turn extending our reach into more facilities. In many areas we have lists of facilities waiting for member/dog teams to commence visiting. Covid-19 has actually played a part in highlighting the need for our service.

We all know of the benefits our visits provide to rest home residents and patients in hospitals and hospices, but I would also like to include the benefits to our volunteers. I read an article recently which reported people who have a sense of meaning and purpose are likely to live longer and joining a group of volunteers who share your values is a way of boosting a sense of meaning and purpose. Volunteers open minds, open hearts and create joy.

Strategic Highlights

Our alliance with the NZ Society of Diversional and Recreational Therapists has proved invaluable particularly around Covid-19 and related visiting restrictions. We are excited to be invited to the Society's annual conference in August and will have member/dog teams present.

Hawkes Bay and Waikeria Correction Centres have teams visiting specific units on a regular basis.

Our features in a Ministry of Social Development newsletter, the AgedPlus magazine and through Eldernet's website resulted in a flurry of new applications from most regions.

We produced a Rest Home Resource Kit to help rest homes understand our service and this was posted to 400+ facilities. We also produced a brochure for those rest homes we are not visiting but want to learn more about us.

We worked with NZ Post to secure significant savings for our newsletter mail outs.

Operating Highlights

We have supplied four of our larger regions with branded banners for use at public events, presentations to community groups and group visits.

Due to visiting restrictions over the last twelve months our Regional Member of the Year Award was put on hold but will be reintroduced for 2021.

We have also updated our PowerPoint presentation to help Liaison Officers when addressing local organisations.

Earlier this year we introduced a Volunteer Mentor initiative which gives new members the opportunity to discuss their first visits with a committee member who is a trained counsellor.

Although Covid impacted on Founder's Day celebrations last year, with Zivi's support we were able to send appreciation certificates to those members who reached one, three, five and ten years' service.

Partnerships

We are extremely grateful for Zivi's support over the last three years and to know this is continuing. We are proud of our association with such a successful N.Z. owned company. Thank you to Nigel and his team for your recognition and wonderful support which enables us to strengthen as an organisation and progress our ability to help people in need.

We value our partnership with Dogs NZ which enabled us to hold a national Liaison Officer Appreciation Day in Wellington on 6 March. This event included training sessions, open discussions, the opportunity for these key members to share experiences and most importantly to express our appreciation of their commitment and work.

We love being part of the Dogs NZ family and the opportunity to feature in their monthly Dog World magazine. Thank you to Steven and his staff.

Acknowledgements

As **Members** we have common values and are united by our love of dogs and by the desire to help people. Thank you all for taking the time to share your dogs, to spend time with others and for bringing joy and special moments to those in need.

Remember, no act of kindness, no matter how small is ever wasted.

The committee:

I feel fortunate to have spent many hours this last twelve months with such a great group of people who share common aspirations and passions for this organisation.

My sincere thanks to you all -

Beverley Jocelyn, Vice President who has again produced our quarterly newsletters – the lifeline of Canine Friends. Beverley is always ready to listen whenever needed and will give a sound opinion and view on any issue.

Leanne Gibson, Secretary whose efficiency and commitment is amazing. Leanne receives and actions numerous emails each month, manages our database, prepares our agendas and arranges our meetings.

Dallas Hopkins, Treasurer monitors our finances and offers advice on future planning.

Annette Dougherty, Applications Manager deals with all our new applications – sometimes up to six a day. Annette serves as our “gatekeeper” ensuring these applications fit with what we do, this often takes extra time. She also coordinates our stationery supplies.

Rachel Butler, our Auckland Liaison Officer handles our largest membership, conducts all assessments and guides new Liaison Officers into their roles. Rachel’s knowledge of dog behaviour and training is invaluable and often called upon.

Sandy Fea , a long serving member whose experience is well regarded. Sandy has a particular interest in assessments and how visits are conducted. She also makes our supply of extra small scarves.

Rachel Davison, our Lower Hutt Liaison Officer manages this growing area. Rachel especially loves accompanying new members on their visits and is always willing to lend a helping hand.

Helen Moriarty, our Wellington Liaison Officer is also managing a fast growing area. Helen’s career in the health sector has proved invaluable to us over the past twelve months, particularly around Covid issues.

Carol Drew, Auckland is a counsellor and initiated our volunteer mentor programme. She is passionate about helping people so we hope to see this programme develop further.

Gabriella Robertson, Christchurch joined the committee last year and also arranges group visits. Gabriella’s bubbly personality and passion for dogs is clearly apparent at our meetings.

Scott Mansfield, Christchurch joined the committee in March. Social media is one of Scott’s fortes so we are pleased to have his knowledge and understanding of this ever-growing part of our organisation.

Liaison Officers, Assessors and Placement Officers:

Whilst emails and phone calls are an effective means to communicate, there is nothing better than meeting in person which we were able to do in March, thanks to Dogs NZ. Your feedback was encouraging and will help us work towards making the next event even better.



Without your commitment Canine Friends couldn't function.

Our Founder:

At the grand age of 95, Eileen understandably isn't a fan of Zoom meetings but is very pleased with the attendance tonight and sends her best wishes and thanks to you all and to say she thoroughly enjoyed being part of our Liaison Officer Day in March.

I wish to acknowledge her work and the legacy she has given not only to us but the thousands of people who have been visited by our members and their dogs over the last 31 years.

Finally – a quote from the great late Helen Keller

“The unselfish effort to bring cheer to others will be the beginning of a happier life for ourselves.”

I ask that this report be accepted.

Vicky Graham

President