



caninefriends
pet therapy
Dogs helping people



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supplied by Vicky Graham, President

Around the regions — Canterbury

Canine Friends Pet Therapy is very active in the Canterbury region. We have a total of 121 members, with 108 actively visiting our many retirement villages, rest homes, hospices and dementia units. We also visit Canterbury University when we are required to assist with students' mental health.

We have a great team of four volunteers who assess new dogs and have recently introduced a 'buddy' system which helps new members settle into visiting: An experienced member accompanies a new member on their first visit, or more if required. We also have a Group Visit coordinator who arranges the visits to Canterbury University.

Canine Friends Pet Therapy started 31 years ago with Eileen Curry and her Golden Retrievers. Eileen regularly visited a friend who was admitted to a nursing home. Eileen decided her dog should go along to cheer up her friend and that philosophy continues to this day. There are now over 700 members around New Zealand all doing amazing work to support our community.

Here are a couple of Canine Friends, including my Border Collie Jess, who are Canterbury Characters and make life better for our community. 🐾

*Carol Millican,
Liaison Officer, Canterbury*



Here is a group of Canine friends volunteers celebrating Founders Day in Rolleston.



In 2018, I was looking for something to keep my young Border Collie, Jess occupied. I found the Canine Friends website, thought it looked fun and very soon we were visiting the elderly at Burwood Hospital. I was really surprised how quickly Jess adapted to visiting. Now it is an essential part of our lives. Jess cannot speak but I know she loves all the attention she receives not only from the patients, their families, all the hospital staff but also from the many hospital visitors.

Jess's special talent is seeking out those patients who are feeling low in mood. Jess is especially good with the elderly and those who can't speak. Her usual habit is just to go and sit by someone and although she may not look at the person her body language conveys she is saying "I'm here for you and I don't want anything from you". It can take a while but the person she has chosen will nearly always reach out to give her a pat or stroke her ears. It's great to see Jess at work and being involved in helping others.

When we are not visiting, Jess and I enjoy beach and forest walks and meeting other Canine Friends members with their dogs at social events.



Blake the beautiful Leonburger is named after Sir Peter Blake and like Sir Peter is quite a celebrity around town. With his owner Sarah Chisnall, Blake has been a Canine Friend for about four years. Blake enjoys his visits to Essie Summers Retirement Village in Beckenham. He is gentle and polite and is always well groomed. He is a large dog but an expert at negotiating around residents with walking frames and wheelchairs. The residents look forward to his weekly visits as it brightens their day.



Jethro, a five-year-old American Bulldog/Mastiff cross, is a big boy with a huge personality and a love of being photographed. With such a very placid nature Jethro makes a great Canine Friend Pet Therapy dog. Jethro was rescued as a pup by his best mate, Chris Riley, and has been giving back ever since.

Jethro lives in Rolleston with a younger dog and five feline friends, so he is very tolerant!

Chris and Jethro are Canine Friends at Darfield Hospital and St Allisa Lifecare in Sockburn. Jethro is appreciated by all the residents since he is always keen to meet new people. Jethro's biggest fan at the rest home is a lady called Nyla, who waits for him to visit each week.

If you and your dog would like to join us, please visit: www.caninefriends.org.nz