

## Liaison Officer Updates AGM 2022

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### Auckland : Rachel Butler

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Year 2021 has not been as straightforward as one would have hoped for Auckland members of Canine Friends. Our region was hit quite hard with multiple lockdowns which meant that we pretty much ground to a halt. However, with the advent of majority population vaccinations and variations to the Covid virus, we are very much looking forward to getting our volunteers started again in 2022 and hoping by year's end, it will be back to normal for our Canine Friends volunteers.

Once again, I am very grateful for the assistance of my co-workers, Kim Greubner for Placements and Julie Warder for events, without whom Canine Friends could not function in Auckland.

Onward and upward for 2022.

### Christchurch : Debbie Rule

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Hi all.

In all probability Christchurch/Canterbury region is like the rest of New Zealand, which is in a state I like to call "Whatever happens next is anyone's guess"!! Our everyday routines are not stable, and planning is a bit of 'hit and miss'. However, it is good to see that we are getting a few more freedoms and visiting, and new interest, in Canine Friends is picking up.

We had our Founders Day on Sunday 1st May which was organised by Wanda (Events). It was a wonderful day! We had around 21 people attend with their canine buddies which was a great turnout. I didn't have my dog with me, but I didn't want for canine affection! Wanda provided tea, coffee, juice, biscuits, and snacks. It was a very informal and enjoyable get to know each other afternoon. I have included some photos below, and Carol has posted some other photos on our Christchurch Facebook page. The Zivi treats were very popular particularly with the border collies who were first in line. 😊

Certificates were handed out to members who attended. The bulk have been returned to Vicky for posting out.

Applications: We can accept applications currently as Carol (Placements) has advised that she is getting a lot of interest in resuming visiting and new facilities are coming on board. Carol has just been advised she can resume her Burwood Hospital visits so that is exciting news.

Prison Visiting: One of our members Zelda MacKenzie who transferred from Hawkes Bay has been doing some work behind the scenes to set up a visitation programme within the men's and women's prisons. Zelda and I met with Helen who is the volunteer co-ordinator for Christchurch Woman's Prison and who is very keen for us to be part of the visiting programme for the high-risk offenders. Both Zelda and I met with Helen on Friday to 'set the ball rolling' with the compliance, process, health and safety requirements. Currently there is no volunteer visiting at the prisons, but we are all

hopeful that it will be different in a few months. I am following up with the committee to seek approval for visits and everything that may entail.

In the long term, Zelda is keen to select and train very specific members and their dogs for prison visits. It won't be suitable for everyone, and the members who are keen will be fully trained and supported by Zelda. Not everyone who is keen will be selected as it will take a specific type of person and dog to visit these high dependency offenders.

We are hoping that once these visits are operational, it will lead to other prisons coming on board.

## **Kapiti : Lynley Evans**

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While 2020 visiting was severely interrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic, we had hoped that 2021 would be better. Consequently, we commenced the year with most of our visitors covering most rest homes in Kapiti. Unfortunately, this changed from August leading to a return to increased restrictions, first with the arrival of the Delta variant and now Omicron.

One overall effect was that we lost several members (we are now a small group of 16). Some of this loss was because of disagreements with the restrictions; others did not want to put themselves at risk of infection; the rest was natural attrition. At the same time, we were not able to take on new members.

Our rest homes went in and out of lockdown; sometimes several times or have been closed to visitors since August. Those that remained open often had complicated procedures or rules before entry. This continues today. Although the situation is beginning to calm down, visiting conditions continue to be difficult.

For example, I visited a rest home with a member the other day and before entry we had to do a RAT test, put on a new very tight mask, followed by a visor and then a plastic suit over our clothing, have our temperature taken and fill in a reasonably detailed survey asking where we had been and who with. These procedures must be repeated for every entry. Luckily the very chilled dog took it all in her stride and was happy to greet and entertain residents leaving or other visitors going through the same procedures as we were.

Giving us cautious optimism, we have gained a new member as well as one from another area. Some members are wanting to visit again. We hope that circumstances will continue to normalise throughout this year with increased membership and rest homes enjoying seeing friendly dogs again.

We had a request from a mental health worker for a home visit to an elderly person. I am covering these visits which are very satisfying because the person is a dog lover (even rearranged her room so that there is more room for the dog). The mental health worker has noted how the visits make her work much easier as the dog has such a calming influence. Unfortunately, visits are a little sporadic because of the person's poor health and the availability of the worker.

Kapiti has continued to have dog walks and get togethers throughout the year – we have a regular group who come to these. We have started to include coffee at the end of our walks so that those who do not enjoy walking or who have older dogs can join in. We were invited to join with the Wellington and Mana on their Founders Day events. It is special to have contact with those in bigger areas and these invitations are much appreciated.

A big thank you to the committee and members who work hard to make our dogs available to those who are no longer able to have their own pets and get comfort from ours.

## **Manawatu : Ann Evans & Kaye Harkness**

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At the beginning of this year, we were all hoping for a brighter fuller year of visiting our beloved facilities but once again it has been a very disruptive year with more Covid restrictions in the hope of keeping our kiwis safe and healthy. It seems just as Kaye, and I get our visiting going forward another lockdown comes in and the doors are once again closed to our visits. It has thus been a revolving circle of doing our utmost to provide pet therapy to those who love and look forward so much to our visits.

All our members are fully vaccinated except one. Several of our members have pulled out of visiting. Some in the older variety are very unsure of visiting in case they may come in contact with Covid. Some work in the health sector so deal with clients who may test positive so don't want to risk visits to a rest home. Some have also resigned due to the lack of visiting although we all know that is out of our control but feel, and this is mainly our younger members, we have taken their money for nothing. It has been a tricky time for us trying to keep new members on board and as a result have not continued with the journey, other priorities have taken our place.

We had one new rest home Bupa Riverstone open and were very keen for us to visit. Our rest homes have of course been very conscious of the wellbeing of their residents which we do appreciate and shut their doors but with the last closures some are feeling that they cannot do anymore for their residents and have opened their doors to more regularity like entertainment and van outings. Everyone is fully vaccinated plus bolstered, both residents, staff, and visitors. Many rest homes are now requiring the RATS Test to be done just before our visit and some allow us to photograph the test done at home before going on a visit. It still of course is not 100% and some do close wings if a positive case appears but unlikely to close the whole facility.

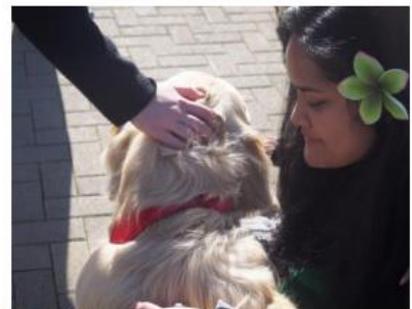
At the Palmerston North Hospital Wednesday and Thursdays are "doggy days" of which we managed to visit for some of the year. In the good times we visited 6 plus wards plus ICU and the building housing the main office staff and Rescue Helicopter staff. The diabetes unit was added this year. We are hearing those in charge of the wards we visit are trying their utmost to get us back in there.

We are in continual contact with all our facilities and members. We both prefer the personal touch but during these times have had to resort to phone and emails which we find are okay but not as good as the real deal. As is always the case, we unfortunately farewelled Daisy and Tess across the Rainbow Bridge for a forever life. We appreciate all the smiles and cuddles they gave to many.

We have continued receiving invitations to events of which we all love to attend. Everyone was getting excited and then found out the dreaded word CANCELLED would appear, but we did manage to make 4 visits to the UCOL students, 2 to Massey students and one to IPU. We had a lovely letter from a senior Massey tutor:

*To whom it may concern, I am a lecturer at Massey University with a focus on first year teaching. I would like to share my appreciation of the visits made to Massey by the dogs in your group. The visits from the dogs on campus are treasured by many students (and even staff). I observe first-hand the stress that many students are under, in particular the first-year students, who are away from home for the first time and experiencing the stress of tertiary study for the first time. The students are at the peak of their stress in the week leading up to exams and have been away from home for months and a cuddle or a pat of a friendly dog does wonders to relax/calm them and help them through this stressful time. I receive feedback from students that it was just such a blessing or relief to talk to, cuddle or pat the dogs. This is sometimes due to missing their own pets, or family but mostly is a stress release and a break from study. The students look forward to your visits way before they happen and continue talking long after you have left. Of all the "stress free" events that run on campus especially before exams, this is definitely the students' favourite. Thank you for the time you give to the students.*

*Nessha Wise Senior Tutor in Chemistry, Massey University*



Since coming back to orange we have had 4 invites to students so our group invites are looking good, and they do provide an opportunity for lunch together afterwards which of course is a meeting of dogs as well and lots of chatter. We are very lucky to have some very good dog friendly cafes who love to see us all. A bit different for us was an invite to the lawyer offices of Fitzherbert Rowe in both Palmerston North up on the seventh floor and in Feilding and the Law Office in Palmerston North.



In the rest home area, we made several more group visits. Due to Covid etc. we asked if any of the rest homes were interested in us joining them at celebrations or special days to help make their life easier which the response we got back was a resounding please yes. So, we visited in small groups usually including their normal Canine Friend visitor plus another couple of members. This went down well with the rest homes. These included a mid-winter Xmas at Aroha Rest home, the Mad Hatters Tea Party at Brightwater, and a concert at Ranfurly Residential Care Centre in Feilding where we doubled billed with Vicki Lee, an international entertainer in her own right to which she was only too happy with, just loved our dogs being part of her concert. Also, in the rest home world Ranfurly Residential Care Centre in Feilding asked Thumpa to appear with some residents in their new promotion booklet.



Mad Hatter  
Tea Party



Ranfurly RCC  
Concert



**Friendly & caring environment**

Ranfurly Manor like all the other care facilities activity encourages family/hānau, friends and community volunteers to be part of events and the lives of residents. We strive to create a quality and genuinely caring environment for residents, their family/hānau and friends.

Covid interrupted us again but at Christmas we managed to visit 5 different rest homes all dressed up for the occasion, Brightwater Rest home, Ultimate Care Aroha, Bupa Riverstone all in Palmerston North and Woodlands of Feilding and Enliven Coombræ in Feilding.



Over the last couple of months, we have dressed in green for St Patrick's Day to visit Bupa Riverstone and Ultimate Care Aroha And then came Easter, so the bunny-dogs visited Ultimate Care Aroha and Brightwater Rest home by Enliven and Willard by Enliven all in Palmerston North



St Patricks Day



Easter



We held a successful Founders Day on June 13 at the Feilding Dog Training Club grounds where we had games, a shared lunch, cake, certificates, and a walk around Timona Park. One of our members Marilyn Brackley achieved her 10-year appreciation award which however she could not attend the day, so I presented it to them at their next canine friend visit to Nelson Street Residential Care Centre in Feilding where the residents thought they were wonderful and really made her and Ruby's Day.



Not to forget our get togethers. Ashhurst “Backyard Café” was our venue on a Saturday in October which to mix things up we had a “wear a headpiece” competition which went down very well with nearly everyone sporting something and of course the dogs as well. After lunch we headed to the Ashhurst Domain for a walk either just around the domain or down to the river.



Christmas Party-time was what we might say a bit of a washout. Our lovely farm garden venue was under water so resorted to “Viv’s Kitchen” in Sanson but even that proved difficult as our day turned out to be when the heavens poured down on us. We invited Horowhenua to join us so even with our dogs left in our vehicles we had a lovely luncheon and a few games adapted to humans instead of dogs and the Xmas parcel for the dogs ended up by choosing a number and gaining that parcel. Maybe next year!!!



In April Kaye and I held a promotional hour in Feilding at “the Rosebowl” and then an hour in the afternoon at “Coffee on the Terrace” in Palmerston North. Earlier Kaye had placed our Recruitment Poster on the community Facebook pages and had a lot of questions etc., so we decided to meet anyone interested in person and maybe gain more members which we did. It was people who did not know about us and were interested, some with a young dog who wanted to know what they needed to do, others with experience but wanting to help more. At present we have 50 members but think that will fall back quite a bit. We are lucky to have several new applicants so I guess it will sort itself out. We are expecting rest homes and the hospital to freely open their doors to our visits shortly with some rest homes already welcoming us. I think the major factor in our area is that we have a great group of members, all loving their visiting especially as they can share their great mate with others and if we can get things all going it will be great. By organizing small group visits we are also gradually bringing new members liking the idea as doing this as well as their solo visit and in doing so meeting other members. A lot of time has gone into communicating with our facilities and members, touching base and being there. Our Diversional Therapists have had a hard road with all the lockdowns and if we can support them a little more that is great for all.

## Nelson : Margaret Scaife

2022 has not seen many of us able to visit in our area because of the ongoing COVID restrictions. It was also sad that the Liaison Officers meeting this year could not take place. Our number of members has decreased because of people leaving the area, or for a range of other reasons. However, we have 17 current members (including 2 couples).

Our newest member is Remi, with her fox terrier Rocko;

We also have a new prospective member to be assessed as soon as he has the time, and we can get together.

It was lovely that 6 of us were able to meet for a Founder's Day celebration, but so sad that Eileen's death preceded this by just a few days. We had a table booked at "the Grape Escape" where we were very well looked after, and our pet therapists seemed to have fine time too. It appears from the hastily arranged photo shoot that they were enjoying themselves too much to all be settled at once!



We presented a special award to our Judy Petrie with her Maisie. They have continued to visit at the hospice throughout Covid times, because of its special nature. Judy and Maisie have been going there ever since their assessment some 4 years ago:

Very special thanks to our administrative team who has kept working very hard throughout the pandemic.

## Northland : Samantha Waiomio

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14 members

2 non-visiting members

I would like to say a big thank you to all the Northland members, your work doesn't go unnoticed. It continues to prove to be a challenging year due to covid with rest homes in and out of lockdown. Members are becoming frustrated and some losing interest when it comes to visiting the rest homes. I am finding it difficult to place a new member due to unpredictable lockdowns.

Hani is back at Onerahi Primary School again this term for the 'Reading to Dogs Program' which will run from week 2 until the end of week 9. Great that Lynda and David are back at Mangakahia Area School also doing the 'Reading to Dogs Program' this term. Hani and I were lucky enough to be part of the Whangarei Hospital Well-Being Week, where we spent time with the staff in Accident & Emergency on Wednesday afternoon.

I look forward to hosting 'Founders Day' on the 28th of May for our Northland group. Once again, I would like to acknowledge all our members and their patience during these challenging times.

## Queenstown : Beryle Ravenwood

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I am thrilled to say that our members have remained steady with a very challenging year yet again.

Our Aged Care Facilities have been a case of "go with the flow" from month to month. Currently two of our facilities are closed to us and one open. We are making the most of our visits to Golden View in Cromwell while Ripponburn and Lake Wakatipu homes are closed at present. Swings and roundabouts for sure.

The positive is that our "Reading in School" programme is up and running as of the beginning of the second term, almost a year to the week since we were last able to visit. Happy kids, happy dogs and happy reading ensues. We have 2 new additions to our school team and 2 new additions for our home visits in our Cromwell Aged Care facilities which is fantastic.



My sincere thanks go to an incredible team, their amazing Canine Friends, and the ability to hang in there. We look forward to a brighter future where our regular visits are once again able to be achieved and enjoyed by all. Wishing you a very successful AGM and an exciting year ahead sharing our Founder Eileen's vision throughout New Zealand.

## Rotorua : Julie Cowell

Visiting Members	15
Non-visiting Members	2

Nearly all our rest homes are closed to visitors at the moment. We have one handler and dog visiting but all the others are eagerly waiting to start again. We will be having our Founder's Day on Saturday 21st May. It is being held at Hannahs Bay which is a dog walking area on and off lead and also borders Lake Rotorua, so dogs and humans (if they are brave) can go for a swim. I have asked everyone to dress up their dog and I will give a prize for the best dressed. Will send photos after the event.

## Tauranga : Anna Briffa & Kayla Troon

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Most of our members are wishing to be non-visiting at this time. Many because of Covid, but some have work/ personal reasons. I have four members volunteering at the moment.

I only have four rest homes open. Having said that Cedar Manor closed again in April and has yet to reopen. A youth respite centre inquired about our services, and we placed two volunteers at the site while they wait for their local rest homes to reopen. The feedback from the youth workers was that they have enjoyed the dog visits so far and that they look forward to them.

Covid continues to affect visiting options and participation in our area.

One volunteer recently expressed disappointment at not being included in an internal rest home newsletter and asked if we had procedures around that. The incident involved a write up about a dog and their owner who had only been visiting for 4-6 weeks, whereas the other volunteer had been going for years. I resolved the issue by explaining that managers and staff can change and sometimes the list of our volunteers can be lost in the process and that I would ensure up to date records are sent if I am aware of management changes.

I contacted the rest home and they have offered her a space in the next newsletter to profile her visits with her dog. I have yet to find out if this is enough to help her get past her disappointment. Having said all this I also think that volunteers have a responsibility to make themselves known to the new manager or coordinator if there are any change to roles.

## Wellington : Helen Moriarty

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Wellington membership is currently sitting at 39, having hovered between 40 and 45 for several years. We are still seeing new applicants, despite the on-and-off nature of community volunteering in the past two years, driven by waves of Covid infections. Most of the aged care facilities in our region are currently experiencing omicron infections amongst residents, and many are operating under self-imposed lock-down conditions. Under such circumstances community volunteering has either halted or is very restricted.

Wellington is experiencing institutional changes within local aged care facilities. Some church or trust-run care homes are now being managed by larger corporate entities. Some rest homes have closed permanently in the face of compliance costs of maintaining buildings and quality of care, both of which have been exacerbated by covid restrictions. More recently one residential facility closed citing staff shortages. Many aged care facilities rely on migrant staff, the supply of which has been severely impacted by border closures over the past two years.

Despite these problems, Wellington members are welcoming staged invitations to return to visiting at some of our care facilities and at the Universities. Members recently attended Victoria University for term 2 orientation week, and Massey University for a welcome-back to face-to-face study on-campus.



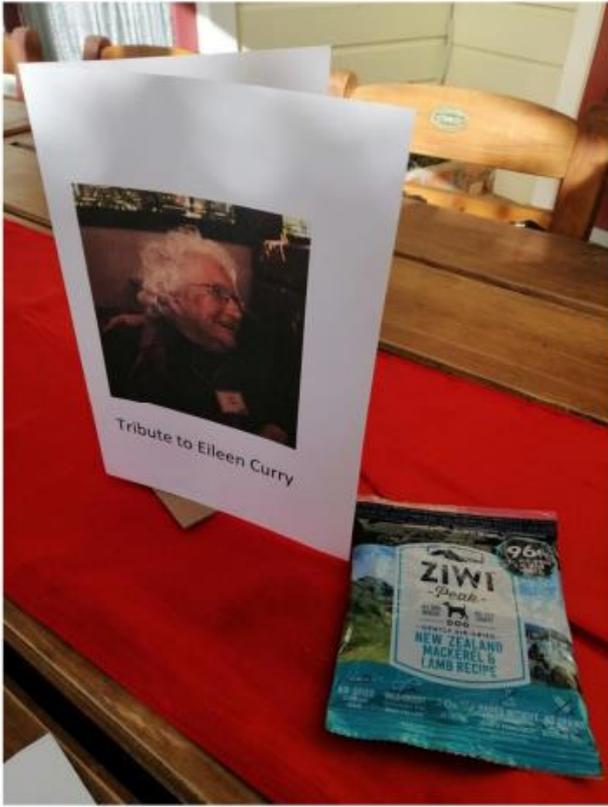
This year we especially wish to thank Annette Flynn who steps up into the role of regional assessor, and Marjory Embleton who has stepped down after nearly three years in the role.

We look forward to meeting our members at our upcoming Founders Day event which will be, once again, a social gathering combined with Whitby-Johnsonville and Kapiti members at the Titahi Bay Canine Obedience Club.

### **Whanganui : Hannah Li**

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Hi everyone, as New Zealand has now turned to the Orange Traffic light status, we are more active with new arrangements within our community. First, we are very pleased to have our Founders Day Event in May; we were very worried with the weather as it had been pouring for the whole week. Just one hour before our event, the sky cleared up, it was sunny. We had an amazing time to honour our Founder Eileen and her son David who came with his partner Beth. It was a lovely afternoon. Thank you, Eileen for starting Canine Friends, we all are very proud to be part of it.



Words from President Vicky



Words from David Curry



A moment of Silent



Certificate reward to Toni & Dexter

Certificate reward to Julie & Tintin

Certificate reward to Doreen & Toby



Tintin



Happy Group Photo Whanganui

During our meeting we also reviewed what our team has achieved this year.

- Newspaper promotion in local weekly newspaper
- Jane Winstone rest home presentation for the individual residents' village.
- Hospital visit for social workers, doctor, nurses' group visit and presentation.
- Rotary event gave a \$500 donation to Canine Friends (to appreciate our local service)

- Christmas gathering
- Easter hunt gathering
- Evelyn and Ann from Brain Injury Whanganui

### Cancelled due to Covid

- Training for you teachers visit
- 2nd social worker lunch gathering
- Kowhainui Christmas parade
- Rivermarket site promotion

### Goal for this year

- Rebook Hospital Social worker visits
- Training for you Tertiary School Group Visit
- Brain injury Whanganui team visit
- Saturday Market Oct
- Christmas event with one of our local rest home

Thanks for reading. – Team Whanganui

## Whitby-Johnsonville : Jan McKenzie

This past year has been very quiet in the Whitby to Johnsonville region as a result of problems and issues caused by Covid in its various iterations.

Visiting was put on hold for a large amount of last year although a very small amount of visiting did go ahead with the agreement of both the facility and the visitor and under strict rules. However, this was the exception, not the norm.

We did, however, manage to hold our Founder's Day get together in early May and hold another one prior to Christmas. Both events included the Wellington, Kapiti and Hutt regions and it was great to catch up with everybody.





We tried to get visiting going again just before Christmas, beginning with rest homes. My feeling is, that in our region, there were mixed results. It was clear that a lot of facilities were not able to have visitors. However, in my recent contacts with many of them, they have all told me that Canine Friends' visits have been really missed. On the plus side, some of our members have also joined the Wellington Region for their one-off University visits etc.

Over recent days (during May 22) I have been getting messages from some facilities that they are either wanting to have visitors again or are moving towards that. Some, however, are still waiting for Omicron to reduce and one, which was open all the way through, has just closed off for a time!

Probably because the situation over the last 2 years has caused people to rethink their priorities or to make life changes, we have lost a few visitors but, on the other hand there are more in the pipeline who have applied and are waiting for opening dates. Our membership is hovering around 27 now.

Unfortunately, Harbour View Rest home closed at the end of March/early April. It will not be re-opened and most have gone the new Crofton Downs facility in the Wellington Region. The Activities Co-ordinator, at Harbourview, said that they have really appreciated CFPT visits and asked me to pass on their thanks to everyone.

We don't know exactly what the next year is going to bring but we are happy to say that we are beginning on a nice note by having our Founder's Day get together this Saturday, 14 May, together with Wellington and Kapiti; and will be remembering Eileen Curry and her wonderful contribution since she founded Canine Friends Pet Therapy all those years ago.