



caninefriends
pet therapy
Dogs helping people



Proudly supported by Dogs New Zealand

Supplied by Vicky Graham, President

Around the regions — Manawatu



We have 55 members and 65 dogs with our main breeds being Golden Retrievers and Greyhounds but we have a wide range from our cute Miniature Dachshunds to our lovable Russian Terrier. We are extremely fortunate to have support members who are not currently visiting but wish to remain involved. As you will see, we have had a busy twelve months despite COVID-19.

Our members visit 22 rest homes, with larger facilities welcoming more than one member/dog team. Wednesdays and Thursdays are very much 'Dog Days' at Palmerston North Hospital where we visit Rehab, Children's, Elderly, Mental Health, the Diabetic Day Centre, ICU,



Mad Hatters Tea Party at Brightwater.

and the office block including the Rescue Helicopter Base.

The St John volunteer ladies always love a chat and to fuss our dogs as we arrive, as do others along the hallways. The Arohanui Hospice is a favourite visit, with the day stay patients, and we also visit various IDEA Services homes in the community, including the Marion Kennedy Centre.

Through invitational talks to Rebus and other groups focusing on living with disabilities, we enjoy spreading the Canine Friends word. We have also attended a meeting

of occupational therapists to explain the benefits of pet therapy.

We are regularly invited to special occasions at several rest homes and for many years visited as a group for Christmas with the dogs dressed up, which is a huge favourite. In 2020 we managed a Christmas visit to nine different rest homes and Palmerston North Hospital. This last Christmas we visited five but with just a small group due to COVID-19 regulations. We have enjoyed a Mad Hatters Tea Party at Brightwater Rest home, a Party Time Concert with international entertainer Vicki Lee at Ranfurly Residential Care Centre, a Daffodil Day visit, and there are birthdays to celebrate too.

We have been incredibly lucky to have such a great rapport with our visiting facilities. This is due to our Liaison Officers always being available and often popping in including personally delivering a Christmas card featuring a photo collage of our dogs. Since lockdown, the majority of our members have been communicating with their assigned facilities by sending in letters, photos or videos of their dogs playing or doing sometimes crazy things. We are told this has been greatly appreciated: the diversional therapists are always looking for ways to entertain and occupy their residents. Just to talk about our Canine Friends visits has been great — not as good as the real deal but really helpful.

We always have a lovely Founder's Day event celebrating Eileen Curry and her wisdom in the foundation of Canine Friends Pet Therapy, for which we are forever grateful. Last year we enjoyed a shared lunch, a

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



Thumpa hanging out with students.

few games, cake, the presentation of several certificates, and a lovely stroll out in the park at Feilding Dog Training Club. We have now had five recipients of the '10 years or more' appreciation certificate, with some close behind.

Although COVID-19 has curtailed our visiting, we are a busy group and very much involved with the community around us. We have been regular visitors to the students at Massey University for many years now with usually three or four visits a year at Study Week and, more recently, Orientation Week. During the end of one COVID-19 outbreak we were invited to visit a limited number of students with the event being livestreamed to all the students. Our dogs always brighten their day and help reduce stress at exam time. The students at the International Pacific College also enjoy our visits, which are held in the library complex or on the sprawling lawn under the trees.

We have attended an Open Day at UCOL, visited the students for their study and orientation weeks and visits to Freyberg High School are always on the agenda. Palmerston North Public Library invites us into the children's section during their school holiday programme: the children sit and read stories to the dogs. We also attended one after school programme focused on dogs where there were stories and activities specifically about us. Arlo, our lovely Dalmatian was very popular!

We have also been part of corporate life with three visits to legal firms, and not a lot of work was done while we were there! After the majority of our visits, we go for coffee and/or lunch at a local dog-friendly café. During visits we focus on our dogs and those chatting with us or patting our dogs so going to a café afterwards gives us a chance to talk to one another and our dogs to relax. The cafes have got to know us, and the staff all fight over who can bring out the water bowls, but all seem to manage a pat anyway.



Christmas group photo at Nelson Street.



Izzy visiting Woodlands, Palmerston North.

Among the many community events we participate in is the animal blessing service at St Peters Church where our dogs are blessed and given a treat bag. For the last two years we have been at the New Zealand Rural Games held in the centre of Palmerston North where we mingle with the public during the two days. We are certainly popular and have loads of photos taken of our dogs and appeared in a book dedicated to the history of the Rural Games. You will also find us at the A&P shows, garden weekend fairs, Christmas parades, and doggy days out. If we are invited, we will be there, sometimes just relaxing or walking around but getting lots of lovely comments on our dogs' behaviour and thanking us for what we do.

On our 'Just Us' days, we meet at a café to enjoy each other's company, both two- and four-legged, and then maybe go to Foxton Beach for a swim or Ashhurst for a walk down to the river or around the Domain.

We are extremely lucky to have a supportive group in the Manawatu, very keen, caring and passionate in what they do and eager to resume regular visits, subject to COVID-19 protocols.

Kaye and I are forever fielding "When can we visit?" questions. Fortunately, some rest homes have welcomed us back already and we hope to return to our full visiting regime as soon as possible. 🐾

*Ann Evans & Kaye Harkness
Liaison Officers, Manawatu*



Riding a train.