



**caninefriends**  
**pet therapy**  
Dogs helping people



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# Our valued liaison officers come together

by Vicky Graham , President

In March last year, we made the difficult decision to postpone our annual Liaison Officer Day due to COVID-19. Fast forward to March 2021 and we were thinking this could be déjà-vu all over again... but we made it.

We have 30 Liaison Officers and 10 Assessors around the country. To coin a phrase, 'they are the glue' which keeps Canine Friends together. Without their skill and commitment our organisation would not exist. Most of our Liaison Officers are also Assessors but in the larger regions we also have individual Assessors.

The role involves assessing a new applicant and, following a successful assessment, assigning the new member to a facility and providing ongoing support and guidance to that member. The Liaison Officers also maintains contact with facilities in relation to member's visits.

We love to bring our Liaison Officers together each year for a day of sharing ideas, introducing new initiatives and policies and, most importantly, meeting each other in person and expressing our appreciation of the work they do.

We were thrilled to have our founder Eileen Curry join us for the

group photo and lunch. Eileen never fails to amaze us with her spirit and determination. She has created a wonderful legacy in Canine Friends, not only to us but also to the thousands of people who have enjoyed visits from our members and their wonderful dogs over the last nearly 31 years.

Twenty years ago Eileen was quoted: "A week doesn't go by without new requests for visits, with up to three members deployed to some of the bigger facilities. This makes us feel that what we started in a small way will continue to grow and be accepted". How right she was!

We were also very fortunate to have Aditi Arora, Board Member of the NZ Society of Diversional and Recreational Therapists join us and talk through her power point presentation on the benefits of pet therapy. This was enlightening and certainly reinforced how our member/dog teams are appreciated not only by residents but also by the staff of facilities.

Last but by no means least, on behalf of our committee and members I wish to thank Dogs New Zealand for continuing to support us and seeing our organisation as part of the Dogs NZ family. 🐾



If you and your dog would like to join us, please visit: [www.caninefriends.org.nz](http://www.caninefriends.org.nz)