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supplied by Vicky Graham, President

Around the regions — Waikato

The Waikato region stretches over a large area (around 25,000 square kms). Currently our figures for volunteers are 67 visiting, six non-visiting, four to be assessed, four to be placed, and seven on hold. There were over 45 new volunteer dogs assessed in the Waikato last year.

Our volunteers visit over 75 facilities located across Cambridge, Hamilton, Matamata, Morrinsville, Ohaupo, Otorohanga, Paeroa, Putaruru, Raglan, Tauramarunui, Te Aroha, Te Awamtu, Te Kauwhata, Te Kuiti, Thames, Tokoroa, Waihi, Whangamata and Whitianga.

I have been the Liaison Officer for around two years now. I am grateful to Liz Scott, who looks after the many local assessments, and Christine Neilson, who takes assessments for those to the east of the region. Christine Johnson accompanies any new volunteer wanting support during their first visit.

There are currently over 75 facilities in our area with ever more mushrooming and at present, we have volunteers visiting in all but two of those facilities located in Hamilton. We also have three volunteers who make monthly visits to Waikeria Prison (in rotation). We have volunteers going into seven wards at Waikato Hospital plus all hospitals in smaller towns now also have furry friend visits. Three of our volunteers work as Reading Buddies under the Hamilton City Council initiative in addition to their regular visiting. Our most requested placement by new volunteers is a hospital, the least requested, dementia units which I have found, often require an exceptional volunteer.

When people ask me what makes a good Canine Friends dog, I can only say it is something special beyond any specific breed and to prove the point, as you can see from the list below, we have a huge variety of dogs working in the region:

Last year our group activities included an invitation to attend an Animal Blessing at Scots Church on St Francis's Day — our furry friends were keen to get inside for their blessing (and maybe to see the real live calf on the altar), with most refusing to cooperate by posing for a group photo!

Our volunteers had a successful and rewarding visit with students (around 12 in wheelchairs) on our annual group visit to the Inclusive Unit at Hillcrest High School. Students made two kinds of special 'healthy' dog treats for their furry visitors.

The re-establishment of a Waikato Facebook page has been a great success in helping us feel more of a community and I hope this will continue to grow and that everyone will use and enjoy this resource. We now have 78 registered Facebook members and it's wonderful to be able to introduce new volunteers, share news and get to know one another in such an easy way. Scrolling through the many posts and photos, I am filled with admiration for our generous, selfless, committed volunteers and how they give up their time, sometimes travelling some distance just to share the pleasure that their furry friends bring. It's great to be part of such a wonderful organisation. 🐾

Yvette Shore

Liaison Officer, Waikato

Akita Spoodle	German Shepherd	Labrador x2	Staffy
Australian Kelpie Cross	Golden Retriever x3	Labrador/Retriever	Staffy/Bull Terrier
Beagle	Greyhound	Leonberger x2	Spoodle
Bearded Collie x2	Havanese	Long Haired Shepherd	Standard Sheepdog
Border Collie/Labrador	Heeler/Staffy	Maltese/Foxy	Tibetan Spaniel
Bernese Mountain dog x2	Highland Terrier	Maltese/Sydney Silky	Tibetan Terrier
Border Collie x4	Hungarian Vizsla	Mini Schnauzer x2	Weimaraner
Boxer x3	Huntaway	Poodle x2	Welsh Corgi
Cavoodle	Huntaway/Smithfield Collie	Schnoodle	Westie
Cavoodle/Bichon	Husky/Border Collie	Shitzu/Cavoodle	White Shepherd
Chihuahau	Jack Russell	Shitzu/Poodle	
Collie Cross x2	Japanese Spitz	SilkyTerrier/Toy Poodle	
English Springer Spaniel	Labradoodle	Skye/Poodle	

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

**Founder's Day Celebrations 2021,
Taitua Arboretum**

So that as many as possible could attend, we had two get-togethers to celebrate our Founder's Day: Saturday 8 May and Sunday 16 May. Both were wonderful afternoons. The weather was perfect for walking and the company amazing. Although there were not many of us, this worked well. It gave us all a chance to really talk and get to know everyone else - and even to remember everyone's names as we wandered through the arboretum which looked absolutely stunning dressed in its autumn colours.

