

# caninefriends pet therapy

Dogs helping people



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## Meet Queenstown's Canine Friends Team

The members of our multi-talented team from down south are sharing their wonderful dogs with people at all ages and stages of life. *Beryle Ravenwood*, our liaison officer in the area, introduces the people and dogs spreading some joy in Queenstown and Cromwell.

### Beautiful send off for Agnes

It was a very special day for our amazing Canine Friends on Thursday 7 March. We (see pic to right) were invited — Pam with Moose, June with Rufus and Seraph, Del with Bismarck and Beryle with Lexi and Willow — to attend the funeral of Agnes, one of the beloved residents of Lake Wakatipu Care Home.

This was a first for us and indeed a first for St Margaret's Church. We all sat peacefully through one and a half hours of lovely tributes to an incredible and much-loved lady in her 94th year.

Agnes loved our visits and always greeted us with: "my doggies — here are my beautiful doggies", so it was only fitting that Agnes's doggies were there to see her off on her final journey.

As the service progressed, Moose joined in the singing and Willow began to snore. Reverend Ian commented that this was just like Church on Sundays! Bismarck took all the proceedings in his stride lying very relaxed in the aisle, oblivious to the goings on around him, Rufus was content on the floor and Seraph sat on June's knee while Lexi was ever so quietly searching for any morsels that may have escaped the cleaners.

We then proceeded outside and formed a guard of honour for Agnes. Her two sons were thrilled that our amazing and very well-behaved canine friends that had been so very special to their mum had come to see her off.

### Beryle says thanks

My sincere and very grateful thanks to our fabulous team of: Angela, Bev, Claire, Del, Di, June, Jan, Jennifer, Ken, Lisa, Linda, Marilyn, Pam, Suzie and our newbies Merran with Benson and Wendy (vet nurse for Remarkable Vets) with Marlow the Great Dane.

Also our helpers Jilly, Fran and Sally, whose fur babies have passed on, willingly jump into the breach for special occasions such as our annual Christmas Party for our special residents



Our team at Ripponburn Aged Care and Hospital with resident lab Bella at front.

### Reading in schools programme: Kids benefit from canine company

Canine Friends in Queenstown has been steadily growing in size, enabling us to spread our paws! For two years, we have been working every Monday morning at Remarkables Primary School reading programme.

We have a fabulous team of 11 volunteers including Remarkables Primary School caretaker Ken and his dog Dexter.



This is a unique situation for Canine Friends. Our national committee is currently developing policy on visits to schools. We definitely have an “experienced dogs and owners only” rule and our visits are only ever an hour or less, once a week, specifically for reading period.

It’s a win-win for us: we are able to create a beautiful connection with children who may have had no interaction with dogs. It is marvellous to see them go from fearful and fretful to giving gentle strokes, and then that moment of connection — we have achieved our goal!



Agnes, late resident of Lake Wakatipu Care Home, with some of her beautiful doggies.



### Aged care facilities having some doggy fun

We have only one aged care facility in Queenstown, which has had the pleasure of our canine friends for nearly 12 years.

Recently we have started also visiting in Cromwell at Ripponburn Hospital and Home with Lisa and Claire, boosted by Pam and Beryle. And special thanks to their resident yellow Labrador Bella who has become an ‘honorary’ member of our team