



caninefriends
pet therapy
Dogs helping people



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Around the regions — Taupo

Supplied by Vicky Graham, President

My move to Taupo in 2008 meant reduced work hours so it was a good time to establish Canine Friends Pet Therapy here. Having been a member since the late 1990s, I felt I had the experience and knowledge to form a team of volunteers to visit the five aged care facilities, hospital and hospice.

Two newspaper articles generated a lot of interest and we quickly had member/dog teams visiting each rest home. One article featured a photo of my father with my Golden Retriever Moss. Dad was a resident in a facility in Te Puke for eight years and loved seeing my dogs.

A memory of one visit holds a special place in my heart: another resident just along the hall from Dad's room had a visit from her two daughters who asked me to bring Moss to her bedside. She touched Moss's ear and smiled. Her daughters became emotional, this was the first time she had smiled in five years. It is these moments which make it all worthwhile.

Here in Taupo and 14 years later we have a team of 19 volunteers with a lovely variety of dogs from small to large. Two members have received a certificate of appreciation for 10 years service, which is wonderful.

We have made two group visits at exam time to one of Taupo's colleges — Taupo-nui-a-Tia College co-educational high school — and the polytech. Just having the dogs there provides a sense of calm and a kind distraction from the stress of exams.

Being a provincial town, and with our members' mutual love of dogs, it has been easy to form friendships, both human and canine!

As Liaison Officer for Taupo I am forever grateful for our members' commitment and support of our organisation. 🐾

Vicky Graham
Liaison Officer, Taupo



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