

North Island Field Officer Report AGM 2017

It is with much pleasure that I present this report as your Field Officer for the North Island.

At present in the North Island we have 15 current LO's plus several assessors/administrators.

During the year we welcomed aboard Victoria Daniel for Northland and Janie Worthington for South Taranaki and also Judy McRae stepping back into Waikato from South Waikato.

Patricia Martin in New Plymouth sadly passed away during the year but although not officially LO due to her ill health she helped Mary Fox who took over from her. She helped start up our team in the Taranaki. Unfortunately Mary Fox has now indicated she would like to step down as she is elderly and now finds it difficult to do the job but will remain assessing while needed and a replacement found.

Annie Dunlop has retired to a retirement village after many years as a LO and visitor so her area was split between Lower Hutt and Porirua /Mana (now officially called Whitby to Johnsonville)

Christine Aitchison resigned from Wellington as found her work commitments had grown too much for her to do this job. Victoria in Lower Hutt picked up Wellington in the meantime.

Marg Marshall in Wanganui resigned but wished to still assess when needed and to continue her visiting.

Barbara Laing retired after many years looking after our Wairarapa area.

Paul Alcott our Upper Hutt LO for many years has resigned as they have moved over to Masterton and is visiting there but doesn't want the responsibilities of Liaison Officer.

Pam Allen recently resigned after huge contribution in the Palmerston North area due to her failing health but is still visiting but shed the responsibility and work of the LO duties.

I thank all these Liaison Officers for all the time and effect that they have put into their areas.

All Liaison Officers are doing a great job and we are venturing into many new places every day. Some have huge areas to cover, some have huge populations but all are working really well to get our teams into rest homes, hospices and hospitals for what we originally set up to do through Eileen's vision. Some can be more persistent than others when they see the need but come across red tape and the dreaded paperwork and of course when it comes to fruition they wished our teams had been there years ago. So congratulations to all who have been persistent and some would say stubborn for the cause. Just keeping communication up towards their members, the rest homes etc they visit and themselves is not always an easy task and is at times frustrating as unfortunately not all members let us know of change of contact or circumstances but we get there in the end. The fact that we are now being contacted by rest homes etc who want us to visit is a definite sign we are recognised for what we do and not so much us turning up with a dog and telling them why we would be of benefit to them.



Communication is slowly but steadily moving forward. Every month I send an email to all North Island LO's before our meetings and a report to the committee is then is tabled. I also email out the pages from NZKC Dogworld Publications of our monthly series that Carolyn writes with our members help. We were also prominent in the Canine Heroes Awards run by NZKC where our stories featured in their national magazine over several months.

Our Canine Friends Facebook page is also very much watched and liked with contributions from members. Several newspapers have published stories about us and we have appeared on TV. Is it any wonder that our applications for membership are continually rising?

We are receiving more invitations to events to attend all the time like The Special Childrens' Christmas Party originally organised by our late Patron Liz which is always a favourite but in our LO's own areas we are attending Universities, School occasions, Community Fun Days, Open Days, Festivals, Camp Quality for children recovering from cancer plus. These occasions are also a great way for our members to meet one another and our dogs as well so has a twofold benefit. We are being asked to speak to different organisations so we are definitely out there to be seen. These occasions are also a great meet for members to get to know others all sharing our motto "dogs helping people"

We also had a fantastic Liaison Officers Day in Wellington last August thanks to the NZKC where LOs from all over the country flew/drove to Wellington for the day. The feedback has been tremendous and most are saying when is the next one!. When asked what they enjoyed the most and it has to be the meeting and chatting to other LOs and interacting with those they had never met before. Our venue was fabulous, great food for the day to keep everyone vitalised and it all just went to plan. The fact that Leanne could put out her Wild Apricot Software was also perfect. The only disruption could have been the weather with some flights delayed and others having a bumpy landing into the capital but it all pulled together perfectly.

Moving forward as our membership increases our LO's must also realise that they do not need to be a one man band as previously and have been very successful at that but now need to look at involving suitable people to help whether it is in the assessing or the administration side or going on a first visit with a new team. These of course need to be approved by committee but we don't want our hard working LOs to have burn-out. In some areas we do have people who would like to help but maybe don't have a dog and these if suitable could be used in other ways of promoting us or first visits to Homes so should not be discarded as always a thought to bear in mind.

As you can see we have several vacancies for Liaison Officers in Wairarapa, Upper Hutt, Lower Hutt, Wellington, North Taranaki and Whanganui although these last two I do have interested parties. Without a working Liaison Officer in these areas it is very hard to manage and unfortunately Upper Hutt is one badly affected by this.

Thanks to our LO's Day I have now met all North Island Liaison Officers and Assessors and they know me as well, so I truly thank them for all their work over the year and are extremely proud of what they are achieving. I do hope this will continue and when in an area I do try to make a connection to meet with them. There is always the emails/calls that do keep coming in which I always love to hear from them and if a problem exists we work through it. Just the fact all is okay is



all I need sometimes but hope I have proved a help when a second opinion on something or just how to go about something. I am always there to help and if I don't know I will certainly find out.

Without good LOs, Canine Friends Pet Therapy just wouldn't work so you all are appreciated very much in that you willingly give your precious time to this wonderful cause and of course are all great ambassadors for Canine Friends Pet Therapy.

Thank you
Ann Evans