



**caninefriends**  
pet therapy  
Dogs helping people



Proudly supported by Dogs New Zealand



Canine Friends Pet Therapy founder Eileen Curry at Woburn Masonic Rest Home in February of this year, flanked by Rachel Davison, with her canine friend Holly, Haydn Jones of TVNZ's *Good Sorts* and committee member Sandy Fea.

## 30 Years of Canine Friends Pet Therapy - a look back

by Vicky Graham

Canine Friends Pet Therapy Inc is a national organisation of volunteers who share the company of their well-behaved dogs with patients in hospitals and hospices and residents in rest homes. Throughout 30 regions, our members visit 340 facilities.

Respected Lower Hutt dog breeder Eileen Curry started Canine Friends Pet Therapy with a group of like-minded friends in 1990.

She was working with the SPCA when she witnessed a distressing incident that was the catalyst for Canine Friends. An elderly woman going into care; she couldn't take her beloved dog with her, and had no family to take the dog.

Eileen was so moved at witnessing the owner's despair at parting with her dog that she offered to visit the woman with one of her own dogs.

She quickly realised this could be a service that would bring comfort to many people, especially the elderly and those who feel isolated, stressed and afraid.

Eileen has since been awarded a Hutt City Civic Award for her service to the community.

Canine Friends Pet Therapy is now a nationwide and respected charity with 714 members who are informed, caring dog owners.

Our members are volunteers who invest in animal welfare issues and Canine Friends' principal goal of sharing their well-behaved, cherished family pets with those who are unable to have a dog of their own. These volunteers understand the value of pet therapy and enjoy seeing the benefits to those they visit in rest homes, hospitals and hospices.

Naturally, the dogs are all shapes and sizes and can be pedigree and mixed breeds. Prior to acceptance, they are assessed by an experienced assessor.

Canine Friends Pet Therapy represents empathy, compassion, credibility, integrity and respect for people. Research shows that simply patting a dog can reduce stress levels, calm a racing heart and help lower blood pressure. Memories of loved pets and happier times return and the emphasis shifts from feeling unwell or lonely.

A dog creates friendships, breaks down barriers and provides a kind distraction during anxious moments helping people feel reconnected to the world.

We are extremely proud to have the Rt Honourable Dame Patsy Reddy as our Patron.

We have members visiting intensive care units in several hospitals; staff say they often see visible changes in a patient's mood which is very beneficial for their recovery. The visits are a huge morale boost and have a positive effect on both staff and patients.

Some members have been visiting universities and colleges for several years; we are experiencing an increasing number of invitations to attend these facilities, particularly at examination time, to help alleviate stress to students and examiners alike.

We also participate in reading programmes at libraries, where the calming influence of dogs see them act as 'reading buddies' for children with reading difficulties.

Corporates are realising the benefits to their staff that come from a Canine Friends visit: the dogs can be a welcome diversion in fast-paced, pressured working environments.

We greatly appreciate the partnership we are enjoying with Dogs New Zealand. It enables us to train our regional liaison officers and gives us access to New Zealand's dog community through monthly features in this magazine.

This regular exposure has, over time, raised the awareness of the value of pet therapy and has increased the number of applications from dog-savvy people who want to share their lovely dogs with others less fortunate.

We also receive support by way of a grant from Lotteries NZ, which meets technology-related expenses of our membership management platform, video conference committee meetings and email system.

To enable our organisation to extend our reach into communities, in April 2018 we entered into a sponsorship agreement with New Zealand owned premium pet food company Ziwi. We gave careful consideration to our choice of sponsorship partner, appointing Ziwi because our values align.

This sponsorship enables Canine Friends to enjoy unencumbered growth and to enhance our work by providing support and appreciation to our volunteers. We are now also able to send our quarterly newsletter to all facilities we visit.

We are really looking forward to resuming normal contact with everyone once the COVID-19 lockdown period is over.

We are proud to celebrate 30 years' experience; we have a strong vision and fantastic members.

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

## Calling all members and clubs



## Breed Features

*NZ Dog World* would love to run more breed features.

Over the years, the number of members and clubs with the time required to help co-ordinate breed features has declined. — busier lifestyles and so on.

We understand that.

With some of the smaller breeds, it has been too hard for them to secure the advertising required to allow a feature to proceed.

With this in mind *NZ Dog World* would like to re-instate the breed feature requirements as follows.

If you or your club can submit:

- 3-5 articles of interest about your breed (with permission for us to reprint if required)
- and up to 10 high-quality photos

That's it.

We will do the rest.

If you can secure any advertising to go with your feature, we appreciate it but it is not a requirement for publication.

*So come on all you breed fanciers: if your breed has never had its moment in the sun, this could be the time.*

**Call Derek Johnson on (04) 910-1527 if you have any queries, or receive our fact sheet by emailing [magazine@dogsnz.org.nz](mailto:magazine@dogsnz.org.nz)**

