

Therapy Dog of the Week

Lucy

“One of Lucy’s all-time favourites would hide a biscuit under her blanket ready for Lucy.”



Name: Susan Stephens & Lucy

Type of dog: Border Collie, 5 years old

Location: New South Wales

Visits: Aged care

Volunteering: 3.5 years

Why: I thoroughly enjoy my volunteer work as it brings so much joy to the residents and their families, and it is also excellent training for my dog.

Enjoys most:

- Seeing the joy on the faces of the residents each and every week
- Knowing that I am making a huge difference to peoples’ lives
- Using the visit to show off my perfectly behaved dog

Dog enjoys: The food – the people – the attention – everything! Lucy cries with joy in the car on the way to the facility each week. She knows the routine of which rooms and the order to visit. Sometimes I feel that I am just the driver and the person who can reach the keypad.

Reaction: The biggest smiles – from the residents, their families and the staff.



Experiences: On Anzac Day this year I took Lucy draped in an Australian Flag into the room to see a survivor of the original Kokoda trail march – one of only 200 survivors of 2,000 who started the march in WW2. I took his hand and thanked him for everything he did, and then placed his hand on Lucy’s head. He gave me the biggest smile he could manage, which will forever stay in my mind as he has since passed away.

Taking Lucy in to say goodbye to one of her all-time favourites -who loved Lucy and saw her every week for 3 years. She often would hide a biscuit under her blanket ready for Lucy. I could see that she was failing and on the day she passed away Lucy did ‘paws up’ on her bed and gave her a little lick on her hand. I knew that Gladdie knew Lucy and I were there, and she peacefully passed away a couple of hours after we said goodbye. We still miss her dreadfully.

One of the residents we visit each week is a Vietnam Veteran who through exposure to agent orange is suffering from skin cancers all over his legs and feet. He finds normal socks very tight but if he does not wear socks his feet are so cold. I decided to knit him a pair of socks with enough room to accommodate his condition and we arrived one day with the socks as a gift from Lucy and I. He was quite taken aback and said “you have no idea what this means to me”. He was delighted. A couple of weeks later he told me that he has not taken the socks off for the whole 2 weeks – not even when he went to the specialist. He shows the off to everyone he can. I am now busy

knitting him a second pair – at least he will be able to wear one and have the second pair in the wash.

Sometimes I think that I could write a book about my experiences. Maybe one day I will.



Delta Society
AUSTRALIA is proud of all our Therapy Dogs. If you and your dog would like to become a Pet Partner visiting team, please visit http://www.deltasocietyaustralia.com.au/pet_partners.htm or to read more about the wonderful work we do visit <http://deltapetpartners.wordpress.com/>.