



MEDIA RELEASE

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Volunteer BIO:

YVONNE CODY - Coordinator and Founder of PETS FOR THERAPY

Three times a week for the past 20 years, Yvonne Cody, the Co-ordinator and Founder of Pets for Therapy (PFT) has brought, Joy, Laughter and Love to residents in aged care facilities and respite centres throughout the Gold Coast, as well as visiting the blind and visually impaired, and mental health facilities. "Initially I provided this service with my little snow white poodle Jo Jo for 16 years and for the last 7 years my silver poodle Misty has become much loved at the facilities we visit" says Yvonne.

"Due to increasing demand for our service, I have recruited & utilised the assistance of volunteers and their obedience trained dogs"

Yvonne and the volunteers perform in many different shows themed according to the time of year, with dogs dressed in the appropriate costumes. "One year we celebrated the Olympics with dogs jumping over a high jump, broad jump, balancing on a beam, and retrieving a discus. The sprint was most popular!" says Yvonne.

Yvonne's dedication is immediately apparent – not only has she spent many thousand of hours presenting her Pets for Therapy shows three times a week but she also spends hours training the dogs, and making costumes for them, and regularly personally visits many of her patients who have now become long-time friends.

"The fact that Pets for Therapy is fully booked in advance each year visiting some 68 nursing, respite and aged care facilities throughout the Gold Coast speaks for itself. There are still many on the waiting list of homes eager to fill any cancellation, which rarely occurs!"

Yvonne has been asked to visit sick children and has been requested to attend funerals of a deceased member of a family she has made an impact on.

"It has been estimated that well over 50,000 people have seen our shows – a truly amazing achievement!"

The Diversional Therapists in the homes recognise the importance of her work and are responsible for booking her to present shows not only throughout the current year, but also year on year thereafter.

"Our visits are planned around stimulating physical actions, mental activity, conversation and social activity" says Yvonne. "The number one reason for PFT is the therapeutic aspect." "It is hard to explain the amazing therapy that hand & arm exercise from patting a dog gives a stroke victim"

"Or the non threatening social interaction we provide for a victim of Alzheimers Disease; or the people who have not spoken for some time whisper "GOOD DOG" to one of our dogs."

Without doubt, this access through Yvonne and her Pets for Therapy team makes an important contribution to the overall wellbeing of not only the older people but also the many youngsters and others who may be overcoming differing challenges in life.

~ ENDS ~

Media Contact

Chantel Charchalis
Marketing and Public Relations Officer

Volunteering Gold Coast
Ph. 5526 2811 or Email chantelc@vgcvs.org.au
www.volunteeringgc.com.au