

Therapy Dog Awareness Month

We all know that the bond that forms between a human and an animal can be life-changing.

For over 30 years, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT has proudly offered a community service called the **Pets As Therapy** (PAT) program.

The program places carefully selected dogs with people who may be disadvantaged due to age, illness, disability or isolation and who may benefit from the companionship that is provided by a loving canine companion. Like all of Guide Dogs' services, PAT dogs are provided at no cost to the person.

As September is National Therapy Dog Awareness Month, **OSCAR Hospitality** would like to take this opportunity to recognise [Guide Dogs NSW/ACT](#) and all the life-changing services their Therapy Dogs have been able to provide to people in difficult, stressful or traumatic situations.

What do Therapy Dogs do?

Therapy Dogs are different from Guide Dogs in the way that they are trained to interact with humans. Therapy Dogs provide comfort and companionship animal-assisted therapy through engaging with people, responding to their needs and providing companionship and comfort with lots of pats and cuddles included.



Benefits of a Therapy Dog

PAT Dogs are able to improve quality of life by creating a sense of community and well-being, encouraging routine and commitment, and of course providing non-judgemental and unwavering friendship which can provide the following benefits:

Improvements in mood

Reduce feelings of stress and anxiety

Reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation

Reduce feelings of sadness and depression

Increase mental stimulation and reduce feelings of boredom

Increase self-esteem

Increase willingness to participate in interactions and activities

Shifting a client's focus and improving their outlook on life

It is evident that Pet Therapy can lead to happier, healthier lives and it's time to celebrate the great job that our PAT Dogs do!

Individual PAT Program

The primary role of a PAT Dog for individuals is to provide companionship and emotional support to those whom might benefit. Current and past applicants have included children and adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Sensory Processing Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, San Filippo Syndrome, Global Developmental Delay, epilepsy, anxiety, depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder, early onset dementia, vision impairment, hearing impairment, stroke, cancer, Multiple Sclerosis and acquired brain injury to name a few.



Residential PAT Program

The primary role of a PAT Dog for a residential facility is to provide companionship and emotional support on a broader scale to appropriate facilities such as schools, nursing homes, psychologists, counsellors and rehabilitation clinics. PAT Dogs placed in residential programs have also been assessed as suitable to be in and around busy environments and are matched with their specific role in mind.



For further information:

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[News:](#) Dentist's therapy dog helping young patients cope with the stress

A therapy dog is being used to take the bite out of a trip to the dentist, in what is believed to be an Australian first.

Paediatric dentist Dr Dan Ford has trained his three-year-old labradoodle 'Comet' to act as a therapy dog in his Brisbane practice, easing the stress and anxiety of dental procedures for young patients.



[Here is the story](#) from ABC News