# Interview 6 Transcript

Speaker 1

OK, so my first question is, can you tell me about how you became involved in the animal therapy space?

Speaker 2

Well, this is my first dog. Yeah, I've ever had in. My life., so there. I was with a new. Dog and I started to visit Mum here with him as my new pet. He had started to get, you know, a. Lot more outgoing and. He was doing a really good job with mum and he'd occasionally. See other residents and they all. Loved him and a lady was here called Diane. Moved to Tassie. And she had a Cocker spaniel and he was doing the rounds and she said, I think a dog like yours would be really good at pet therapy. So she encouraged me to join up and train. And I made some enquiries and then. He had to be assessed. And then it took a bit longer. Than normal because of COVID, so we. Had to. Delay things. But eventually we were both passed, and then I started coming back here where Mum is and Anthem nursing home.

Speaker 2

Yeah, and. The cancer centre and then I've done the HSC students. So yeah, there's a few possibilities in this area to do. And yeah, he seems to really enjoy it, he. Gets pretty tired when we get home. But that's how I. Got into it.

Speaker 1

Yeah. How long have you been doing it for then?

Speaker 2

So look, about COVID. Was training during. COVID so 20, so 21 This would be into our third year.

Speaker 1

And can you tell me I kind of have seen a bit more today but can you tell me about your role at Paul's Paws therapy?

Speaker 2

In here, just about Bowral House? Or in general? I mean, I say in summary, it's to bring joy to people and relaxation and you see it really clearly in the cancer ward cause the nurses tell you the patients are hooked up, their blood pressures being taken as soon as they have a dog on their lap, their blood pressure drops, so there's instant feedback.

Speaker 1

Yeah. Wow. That would be incredible.

Speaker 2

In a nursing home, even people who aren't speaking very well and still, by their eyes, you know and their and their general demeanour, they'll show you that they're really happy to have the dog in their life and for. Many of them.

\*Dog gets onto resident’s walker\*

Speaker 2

Funny thing is when you. Got a laugh, my dear husband has just been diagnosed with Parkinson's. Ohh, he now has to get a Walker.

Speaker 1

So sorry to hear. Yeah. OK. But.

Speaker 2

Mike loves to yeah, around the house.

Speaker

OK.

Speaker 1

Does he just jump on it?

Speaker 2

Yes, yes.

Speaker 1

Yeah, that's really cute.

Speaker 2

No at first. I was. Thinking ohh is it he's gonna trip her, I said. I know hell be good and he was and now there's no question. You know, the director said. Look, I'm really glad to do this for …. It’s the highlight of her week.

Speaker 1

Yeah. Yeah, that's actually so beautiful.

Speaker 2

Umm, so yeah, I forgot what the question was.

Speaker 1

Ohh, that's OK you've answered it quite well. I just tell me, I said tell me about your role at paws pet therapy.

Speaker 2

Bringing jjoy and relaxation and you know other people use other lovely words like tonic we heard today and comfort. Yeah, well, often described in different ways, but I think. Might have been Nell, he said today. You know, they don't get animals in their life, and particularly during COVID, a lot of people had nothing to cuddle, nothing to hold. They didn't have it from humans. They had nothing else. Staff aren't really meant to. So yeah, you know, bringing in this animal and this joy to them that they weren't getting. Yeah, it's as important as food.

Speaker 1

Yeah. OK. So my next question is again, we've kind of I've seen this today. So what would a normal day look like for you in this role, starting from the beginning?

Speaker 2

Well, here it's an hour and a half. I'm rostered on. So that's. Volunteering every Thursday, the Cancer ward’s about an hour there. Yeah, they don't tend to have as. Many people there, of course. So yeah, different times for different jobs and. Yeah, usually he needs a bit of a break in it and when we get home, he's he's usually pretty tired because he's been giving a lot and not sleeping fully while hes here. And yeah, he he'll often crash straight away in the. Car. When I drive home.

Speaker 1

Yeah. OK.

Speaker 2

Because he's been working hard, he's been working. Hmm.

Speaker 1

Yeah, of course. And how do you know that he's tired?

Speaker 2

Sometimes I can see it as we go around to people. He just becomes. More clingy to me. Yeah, it's. Like trying to tell me. I think I've had enough.

Speaker 1

I've actually noticed that more as the day's gone by. Even this afternoon. Yeah, a bit more.

Speaker 2

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So yeah, I think. That's you can usually read your own dogs pretty well, yeah.

Speaker 1

Yeah. OK, I'll ask you. The next question is culture can be defined as the beliefs, values and social behaviours of a group of people. I'm trying to learn more about the culture of paws pet therapy and about how the animals fit into it? Can you give me? An overview. Of that?

Speaker 2

Hmm, that’s probable something Sharon would be better answering. I mean, I've got brochures and. She might have given you things to of what it was all about. UM. You know, it's been going. On for a while, this idea of pet and. Dog therapy. I think they've been. Using them in for war victims. As a way to. Help people who lost. Limbs and their voice and things like that. So. I think. It's got quite a history. And I think Sharon got into it cause she was a nurse and she could say there are other ways to assist people that aren't about pharmaceuticals. It's a way to care. For people so. It's offering a culture that's just beyond medicine. It's offering more.

Speaker 1

Yeah, I love that. That's nice. That's a nice way to think about. You're getting through these really fast. OK. My next question is, what's your perception of the experience of the animal.

Speaker 2

I've gotta say he enjoys it as. I say with him to. Grandmas. That's the word. That gets his head's. Up out the window as soon as we. Pull up outside. He knows we're at Bowral house and comes. He always knows Mum's room pulls into there. And now as we go around, he knows a lot. Of the regulars quite well. So he's yeah, he's a working dog. He's keen to be. Working. That's how I see it. He seems to really enjoy it. Stimulates him because he's a terrier. You know, and terriers. They like being busy.

Speaker 1

What's his exact breed?

Speaker 2

Silky terrier, the blonde bit, and Scottish Cairn terrier, curly at the back, which was the same dog as Judy Garland had in Wizard of Oz. Little Toto.

Speaker 1

Ohh cool.

Speaker 2

OK, she was so small that it went into her basket.

Speaker 1

Yeah, I remember. Yeah. Yeah, how lovely.

Speaker 2

And Terriers, you know, they like working. They like being busy. They're trained to, like, chase rats and things like that.

Speaker 1

Yeah, right. OK. Yeah. So your perception of him..

Speaker 2

Is he looks forward to it, He gets something out of it cause if he's at home all day he's bored. He's bored. He wants a walk. Or he wants an adventure. Yeah, of some sort, so yeah, bring him here gives him a lot of things it gives him stimulation, lots to sniff, lots of people to interact with. And yeah, that seems to be a good. Thing for him

Speaker 1

Yeah, that's good. That's nice to hear. I'm glad. And then so how do you ensure, like, safe and inclusive practises for him?

Speaker 2

Well, I wash him. Before we come, I mean, Sharon always encourages that because she wants him safe for the residents. But are you thinking more of how I keep him safe?

Speaker 1

Yeah, about him and you, everybody. But mainly him. Yeah.

Speaker 2

Well, he's on a lead. So he doesn’t just race off. If he did race off, you know what he’d run into mum? You know that big cat? You know that big cat that's down at reception. it's big. Fluffy with it, but. It it, it offers nothing to the residents, it just stays under the desk.

Speaker 1

What, that's so random.

Speaker

It is, it’s very pretty.

Speaker 1

I guess that you don't like it.

Speaker 2

I don't, I can't see the point of it. If there was a dog there, it would be much more useful.

Speaker 1

Yeah. OK, that's funny. Does it just live here, always?

Speaker 2

Yeah, it's been here since the previous director of nursing and stayed on. Yeah, it doesn't offer any comfort for anybody. And when if Ewen Finds that he's every antenner stands out and. He goes Ahh, I wanna get. This, but he's never got close, so I gotta keep him away from that cat cause the cat's a lot bigger than him.

Speaker 1

Yeah, I was thinking that. If it's a big white fluffy one it probably would.

Speaker 2

And the other thing too I've had. Some dementia patients who get a bit. Too much hands on. Yeah. Quite aggressive. And towards the end, I've I've said to Diane, there's some that. I wouldn't put. Him on their lap anymore. I'd have him on the bed, OK, because they get him and. Squash him and hold him tight and say “I love you, I. Love you, but love you so much” that they want to almost injure him.

Speaker 1

So I noticed today the placement. Yeah. Where? Where you were putting them on was different depending on the residents. So is that just from your experience?

Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 1

It was actually really. It was really nice day. It was good to watch. Good. Well, that's actually most of my questions, but I do wanna ask, do you think that he's different on a non therapy day to a therapy day?

Speaker 2

Yeah. I mean, he's a different dog at home because at home he just follows me around like a liittle shadow. Yeah, he wants to be on my lap and wants to know where I am. So if I go out in the garden my husband has to bring him out. He like wants to be with mum like a little like a little young child, you know? But when he's here, he's Mr Independent. Yeah. He's off on the Walker. And he's it's almost. Like he stepped up, he steps up to the role.

Speaker 1

Yeah, OK. Yeah. OK. That's interesting. I like that.

Speaker 2

That's interesting, isn't it?

Speaker 1

And my last question. Was I gonna ask you? Ohh yes, what like what's in it for you?

Speaker 2

Well, for me it's really rewarding. Yeah, cause I mean, I've taught for years. And you often even don't. You've got no idea. What you give in to the kids and then sometimes it's not till like 10 years later, a student. Will tell you oh. That was really great. I had you as a teacher. Of course. Da da, da, da, da they. Don't finish a lesson telling you.

Speaker 1

Yeah, of course. You always remember your teachers? Yeah.

Speaker 2

And the odd kid might say, oh, that was really interesting, but most of them just live in the present, so. Yeah, their not going to hang around and give you a review.

Speaker 2

I mean, teenagers aren't like that are they. Yeah, it's mostly teenagers are taught. But little-eys will give you a hug. And a cuddle if they really fond of you. And I have had. I have had even teenagers give me a hug. And a cuddle. But yeah, it's it's long term feedback. You often can tell if you're getting through. But when you here, you walk in the room. And it doesn't take long to know how much joy you're bringing.

Speaker 2

Yeah, pretty quick. So that's a lovely thing for me to see. Yeah, that my little dog can do that, particularly for people who don't have visitors.

Speaker 1

And I think it's also not just him, but also you as well, I think.

Speaker 2

Yeah. Yeah, thank you. I I mean, you're off in conversation to them. And. Yeah. And the nurses. Don't often have time for that.

Speaker 1

But you obviously just from today. You know, you remember everyone's story. And you can. Yeah, I think it's, it's nice. It's nice to see I really enjoyed myself today so.

Speaker 2

Yeah. Good. Well, you end up having a relationship with them all cause. You know, I've known this place for so long now with mum. Being here for 10 years, Mum.

Speaker 1

10 years. Have you been here for 10 years? Wow. That's a long time. Have you got? Is there anyone else who's been here about that same time or longer?

Speaker 2

I could hardly believe it. Yeah, there's that …… Tell Laura how old she is.

Speaker 3 (Handler’s mother)

105.

\*\*Interruptions from other staff etc.

Speaker 1

Well, that was all of my questions. Anyway, Marianne, was there anything you wanted to add?

Speaker 2

To that, no, no, the the only thing I realised just talking to Robert then. It is a Damn shame you're not talking to people without mouths, I know you. I mean. You know especially that gentleman. Maybe that's. The other appeal of a dog they see the whole face. Yeah, you know, they see the. Whole face of the dog and all.

Speaker 1

Yeah, maybe that's actually really interesting.

Speaker 2

It's, you know you. “Oh they're all sad. He's yawning. Look at his. Yeah”

\*\*\*Conversation with others, end of transcript.