Interview 3 Transcript 06.07.2023

Speaker 1

Okay, so we're recording. So I just wanted to say, while we've got it recording, are you okay with me? Do you consent to me recording this interview today?

Speaker 2

Yes

Speaker 1

Great. And what is your dog's name as well?

Speaker 2

Leona

Speaker 1

What is it?

Speaker 2

Leona

Speaker 1

Leona? And can you tell me what breed and age. Leona is.

Speaker 2

Yes, she is a Labrador, and she is 7 years old. Yellow. Would you like to meet her?

Speaker 1

I would love to meet her. Yes, please, always.

Speaker 2

Yeah. She's always yeah, Lele. You call her Lele. Lele. I'm just gonna move my screen

Speaker 1

Oh, hello beautiful!

Speaker 2

She says I wanna go to sleep! Let me go to sleep. Go to sleep, darling,

Speaker 1

I have 2 dogs myself. I have a husky and a Kelpie, and they are bit more crazy than her.

Speaker 2

Now, she wants to go to sleep. Off you go.

Speaker 1

So okay, I'll get started with the question. So first question is, can you tell me about how you became involved in the animal therapy space, please?

Speaker 2

Yes, so Leona is a was raised by Guide Dogs New South Wales. She was one of their breeding dogs, and she gave them 18 puppies in 2 litters. So guide dogs have a policy that if they, if they use the dog, if they use the dog for breeding purposes, a female, they can't actually use them as an assistance dog, because people they have enough trouble with, you know, with people trying to distract the dogs wanting to pat them when they're working. But if the dog is showing teats and all that sort of thing. It would make it even more difficult, because they wanna know how many puppy she had and all that sort of thing. So after after they've used the dog for breeding purposes, the dog is um either sold as a pet or is given away as a therapy dog. So Leona is my therapy dog.

Speaker 1

Wow! And you bought her as a pet or as a therapy dog. Or both?

Speaker 2

I they gave her to me as a therapy dog. Because I I've known her since she was 10 weeks old. Her puppy raiser and I became good friends and she couldn't manage her anymore. So I just said, Well, I'll take her. So

Speaker 1

and how old was she then?

Speaker 2

I think she was on about 2 or 3. Yeah, no, maybe 2, because She had her first. She had her litters very close together, and I think it was it within the first 2 years of her life. So she had them very close together. Very, guide dogs do that.

Speaker 1

Yeah, wow, that's that's a very interesting story. Thank you so much. You you received her from your friend. And then did you go through a training process for her to become a therapy dog? Or was that already something that she had done?

Speaker 2

No, and no, I, my husband and I and son. We are temp carers for guide dogs, and that's how I looked after lee, because my friend wanted to go overseas, so I the guide dogs, asked me if I would look after Leona for 2 months while she was a puppy. and I and I did, and and we just became good friends, and consequently, whenever they had to go out, whenever the puppy raiser had to go overseas. She just give me a call and say, Can you look after Leona for me while I'm gone? So yeah, of course, she had family overseas, and sometimes she had to go fairly quickly. So because I'm registered with Guide Dogs Association, they would just ring me and say, Are you free? Can you take Leona for a couple of weeks, or you know whatever. And say, Yeah, of course. So that's how we got to got to know her.

Speaker 1

Yeah. And and with Paws Pet Therapy, with them. how long have you been volunteering for them?

Speaker 2

Yeah, I think I've been with them since maybe 2018. I'm not a hundred percent sure of the day of the year. Yeah, that's yeah. I think it was about a year before. Covid.

Speaker 1

Okay, that would have been interesting.

Speaker 2

So when I when I went out to pick up Leona, because guide dogs are at up near Windsor. And when I went up to pick her up and bring her home. Like as my therapy dog.

I asked the trainer up there if she knew of any therapy associations that you know that I could work with her and with Leona and She didn't know of any other therapy like pet therapy associations. So I I just Googled, and I came up with Paw's pet therapy, and I thought, well, that's only at Thirlemere. So I rang them, and interestingly, Sharon is

was very good friends with my with a family member, one of my family members. through her work in the equestrian arena. So yeah, we had a good chat. Yeah, I I just I love it. And so. You just do all the theory and and then go and do the the training weekend with the dog. And then, yeah, it. It's been good. I've really enjoyed my time working with them. Yeah,

Speaker 1

That's amazing. And how do you see your future in this area?

Speaker 2

Well, Leona is 7 at the moment we attend we go. We have a weekly visit at a school, and she she likes that, she enjoys that, and we also do the nursing home, and the and the odd one off visit. Which is fine, it works for us, and as you know, you can spend as much time or as little time as you want doing Paws work and I yeah. So I'll just I'll just see how she goes. I mean. You know, if she starts to get a little bit cranky, you know, with the kids, because they like her to do all her tricks and all that sort of thing, and you know, sometimes I look at her face as if to say “I don’t to want to do any tricks. Today I just want to sit down”

Speaker 1

That was what I was gonna ask about how you said she likes it like, how do you could you give me an example of like how, you know like, do you know if she likes it or dislikes it?

Speaker 2

So, in the classroom, when the kids squeal and laugh that gets her going, she And then her little tail goes between her legs and she shoots off. She does zoomies around the classroom, and, all right. I've just come back to doing it today. Great, we've been at Wollongong hospital today.

Speaker 1

Oh, I work at the hospital. I'm in Wollongong. I work at Port Kembla Hospital.

Speaker 2

Oh, okay. yeah. All right. yes. So we are at Wollongong emergency department today

Speaker 1

for the staff?

Speaker 2

Yes. yeah, yeah. Yeah. So so that was some that was good. yeah. So how do I know that she's enjoying it? she sometimes will. She'll do tricks, cause, and then she knows that she's going to get a a treat because she's a Labrador, and she certainly loves her food. and yeah, and the kids to just love her. And you know, as soon as we get out of the car in the car park they scream “Leelee’s here!”. She's a rock star, and then I have to. I have to walk very, very fast to the office so that we don't get mogged on the way

Speaker 1

I can imagine. I can imagine.

Speaker 2

That is, it's nice, you know, and She's not I, I will admit she's not a cuddly type, Labrador. No, some dogs will put their head on your shoulder, if your sad.

Speaker 2

Yeah, well, I wish she would. She doesn't. She goes and gets a toy, and she squeaks it and tries to make you laugh, anyway. But sure she she's all right. She's good.

Speaker 1

Okay. So my second question for you is, could you tell me about your role at paws pet therapy any challenges or surprises that you might have had.

Speaker 2

I don't have any challenges there. I enjoy working with them. Enjoy working with Leona. surprises? No, no. Sorry.

Speaker 1

That's fine. No problem at all. Okay. So what would a normal day look like for you in this role. which you've kind of talked about already. But

Speaker 2

no, that's fine. So all right, do, you want me to do the nursing home, or the school?

Speaker 1

Whichever you prefer

Speaker 2

All right, the school kids. in the morning I just get her prepped, Prepare Leona. Just give her a brush and check her teeth and all that sort of thing. Yeah, just make sure that she looks pretty, and then we just load up into the car. So our time at Broughton starts at 8 o'clock in the morning. It's an early start and off we go to the school. we finish there at about 9 o'clock. So were there from 8 to 9, and a visit can be anything from a program called Mate at the gate, which is where we meet, We usually do in first term, mate at the gate, so that the kids get used to seeing a dog at the premises, and they get to know her. And yeah. And then they get familiar with her. Then we will, so we'll spend about half an hour doing that while the buses are arriving and all that sort of thing, and you know parents are dropping off their children. and then from there we'll go and do a couple of classrooms where you know she'll go into a classroom and she'll do a couple of tricks, and she'll just go around and she'll greet all the kids, and they give her a good scratch and or pat and all that sort of stuff.

And then if there's a child, that, or student that is struggling or sad, or you know things are just not going right for them. We'll spend, you know, a few minutes with that student. We also will spend a few minutes with a teacher if they, if you know, because teachers are really having a hard time at the moment as well. So you know, there's been a couple of moments where we've just gone and sat with a teacher, and they've just given them given her a pat and . It takes their mind off, I mean, she's not as I said, she's not particularly cuddly, but it just gives them something else to do. And you know it's something. So someone else different to talk to and ask questions and takes their mind off What's going on, you know why they’re upset. So that's that's that's at the school.

And at the Nursing home. That's an afternoon visit. So same thing I prep her at home, and then when we get to the nursing home, we have to do the the rat. I have to do the rat test. I have to wear a mask and They bring all the the residents who are interested in seeing Leona. They come to a big communal area. and then I spend maybe 40 min with them, and I just take her around to everybody and she's happy with that that, that one. I have to be a little bit more careful with because of the you know, there might be drips, and you know. and other sort of equipment., and then I I just asked the the wellness coordinator. I don't know what she's called the divisional therapist, I think. on the Is there anybody in particular that she'd like me to see? So last week or last time I spent about 15 min with a lady on the when I was on the way out, so I saw she saw me on the way in, and she gave me a wave, and I just said, I'll see you on the way out. So I just spent about 15 min with her on the way out

And last month, when I went to the nursing home, and I only go there once a month, there was another lady who had only been in the nursing home for about 3 days. so she was still getting used to things and and she had to leave her dog at home. So she was. She was very sad, but she spent some time with Leona to. I said, you know. you know, 5 to 10 min with her and she she cheered up a little bit.

Speaker 1

So very, a little bit different. But also, yeah, it's nice to know that you. It's interesting that you go and spend special time with with special people. I like that. Okay, so my next question, so culture can be defined as the beliefs, values and social behaviors of a group of people. So I'm trying to learn a bit more about the culture within paws pet therapy. Could you give me any a bit of an overview of the culture. Or are you working by yourself?

Speaker 2

I work by myself most of the time when I have worked with other people It's been fine. I've not had any problems. you know, it's usually, if there's some a a dog, another dog, I mean I I have had that instance where another dog took a dislike to Leona. So we just have to separate that dog from her. Yes, but on the whole it's a great place to work. I I really, you know, I'm a volunteer. I don't have to stay there if I don't want to. Try and make Sharon's job as easy as we can.

Speaker 1

Yeah, she's a busy lady. Almost done, the next 2 questions about Leona as well about your perception. So what is your perception of Leona’s experience like within, like her experience as an animal therapy dog?

Speaker 2

I know she gets tired like. So I usually usually about an hour. That that's enough. That's long enough. And there's some mornings where I can tell that she's tired So I mean. I've mentioned to you earlier that she's 7 years old. She's nearly 8, so if she doesn't sleep well the night before, I can tell.

Speaker 1

Oh, really! How can you tell?

Speaker 2

She’s got her head down and she’s like ‘oh really’. But morning visits are definitely better for her than afternoon visits. But She's just snoring in the background. From the big big trip to Wollongong. Yeah. yeah, I think she enjoys it. I I took the nursing home job because we've only done schools up until now. but you know we had the break during covid and stuff. when she was, the first school that we went to. that was a school for children from traumatized families and well, kids with autism and stuff like that. So and they absolutely adored her. She she was much younger then, and a lot more sprightly and and she used to enjoy that visit because she would just yeah, she could run and and jump and all that sort of stuff. But now. yeah, now she likes to sit.

Speaker 1

Yeah, okay. So you moved her onto a more age appropriate age group for her

Speaker 2

She likes to sit now or lie down. And you know. Feed me, please.

Speaker 1

So that's beautiful. okay, and then you kind of answer some of the other things that I was gonna ask. But like, could you tell me something like do you feel like she's different on like a non-therapy day than a therapy day like her behaviours.

Speaker 2

No, yeah, okay, it doesn't. She doesn't seem to change at all. She enjoys going out for a walk. She loves going. She loves going in the car. She's yeah. She's know that I think she's got to, and I think she's got to know

now that after a paw's visit, when she comes home I give her a tin of sardines. No, she goes. I open the garage. I'm in the car and I open the garage door. she goes. And she sits at the cupboard that's got the sardines in it. Super food ,motivated. Yeah, she knows. I mean, she gets treats while we're out. yeah and but then, so she probably thinks, Oh, great! Today's a paws pet therapy day. I'm gonna get lots of food that's like it hilarious. Yeah. So she has a sardines or tuna or something special,.

Speaker 1

Yeah. Okay. So do you think that she has like a good life balance that like work last balance. I guess you could say then

Speaker 2

I think so. I mean, I have. I work on a Monday and a Tuesday. So I do NDIS support work. right? So she's by herself on those 2 days, and I think she's actually quite bored on those 2 days. Yeah. I'd love to take her with me, and the person that I look after.

She loves dogs, too, but she has her own dog and her own dog is quite aggressive to other dogs. So she said, you know she has met Leona, you know, she said. Oh, I wish my dog would play with, or, you know, was, you know better, with more sociable? And she said, I would. I allow you to bring Leona. But she said, I just can't. No, so no. Well, that's fine, you know. No problem at all. So I think she's a little bit bored on those days, even though I walk it when you know before I go, and when I come home. But yeah. I think they're all the same. They they like the their humans to be around.

Speaker 1

Oh, yes, That's why I got another dog for my dog, because he didn't want to be alone any more.

Speaker 2

So so what have you got?

Speaker 1

I have a husky. He's 6, and I have a kelpie, that's one. So I got the kelpy for the husky. And it was a very good decision

Speaker 2

Yeah, yeah, okay. Leona's best friend is a is a husky

Speaker 1

Oh, really, I love that they are very weird.

Speaker 2

Yeah. And her other friend is a kelpie cross. golden golden retriever. beautiful, beautiful dog! And fast, I mean, we watch her quite often. We'll take her, Leona, to the dog Park, and we'll meet up with the other The Kelpie Cross, and the owner throws the the ball, and that kelpie gets right down.

Speaker 1

it’s the Kelpie. It's crazy.

Speaker 2

Yeah, the fast twitch on that animal. It's amazing. She's more slow to which

she's what he's got more slow. Twitch muscles.

Speaker 1

Yeah, no the Kelpie is very fast, definitely loves the ball. The husky likes walks, and the the kelpie likes balls, so we have to incorporate both. okay. My last question is, so it's about how the organization or yourself ensure inclusive and safe practices for your dog. How do you make sure that your dog is safe, and other people around are safe? which you kind of already touched on a little bit.

Speaker 2

Well, I have to make sure that if I'm in a school environment. or even if I . What ever environment, I mean, I have to make sure I have a staff member with me at all times. I have to make sure that I'm seen by adult staff when I'm with children.Is that what you mean as well?

Speaker 1

So I'm trying to more understand Leo in his situation, like I just want, how do you make sure that she's happy, and and then she's safe. Kind of thing. When you're doing this, when you're going and doing your therapy sessions.If you can't answer that totally fine.

Speaker 2

Shes with me with me. I make sure that the lead is taught, or you know, if if she's I could tell if she's feeling a little bit nervous because she'll come, and she'll sit behind me.

So if when she does that, I, You know, I try and assess the situation. What's going on and try and fix it. you know there might be a a child who's screaming, or something like that. And she might not like that, so she'll come and sit behind me. Yeah,and I'll just let the Wellness officer at the school know, you know. Ask if we can step aside for a few moments. Just to let the student, you know, calm down. It's only ever happened to me once. And that wasn't at the school that I’m at . It was that the school with the the children on the on the spectrum and in that case. I actually that was quite a serious one. So we had they had to lock, Leona and I in staff room for half an hour, while the student calmed down and then escorted us back to the car. So that was it was quite serious. That one? yeah, but I'll just. I'll stand in front of her. you know. and just protect her or I'll put her especially. At mate at the gate, because the kids are so excited. What we do is the procedure that we follow is The kids line up in front of Leona. and we say, “squirt, pat, squirt” with the hand sanitizer. Then come up to Leona and say, Good morning, Leona. Well, it just slows them down because they they run. Yeah, they have to line up. So the wellness, the school wellness officer. So she goes along with the with the hand sanitizer, and then they kill the kids, come up to her and address the face to face and say, Good morning, Leona.vYeah, and then have a pat, and then I'll just say to them, Okay, well, off you go to school, enjoy your day. and they have to squirt, then they they go back to the Wellness officer. Have a squirt. So squirt, pat, squirt.

Speaker 1

I love it. I think the first person I spoken to that works with children. So it's good to see the differences.

Speaker 2

Yeah. And when we go to classrooms they because we're there early in the morning, the kids are usually having a fruit break. The Wellness officer, she lets them know. Let's the teacher know the day before, if we're coming to her class so that the kids can put away their fruit. While Leona’s there.

Speaker 1

Otherwise she will eat it?

Speaker 2

Yeah, she will. She knows this fruit around because she's sniffing yeah. So that's another thing. I guess. the squirt pet squirt and And then, when we finished in a classroom. I've taught Leona to wave. So she just does that with me, you know, and we say goodbye to the kids. And yeah, so that's it's it's good. I mean, I've learnt a lot. I've learned a lot about Lee Lee, and dealing with children and my sons. He's in 25 now. So it's been a while since I had a a young child that that it's been good, you know.

Speaker 1

So these are primary school children, or is it? What's age?

Speaker 2

I work with. Pre up to year. 6.

Speaker 1

Okay.

Speaker 2

But the school is actually prep to year 12. But we don't go to the senior school. We we did one session with the senior school when year 7 were having their vaccinations. Yeah. We just went and sat in this one of the rooms. So the kids went in, had their vaccination, and then they had to go to another room and sit there for 15 minutes.

Speaker 2

So we just went there and sat, and and she was there if They wanted to come and pat her They could. But you know they were all too grown up for for dogs.

Speaker 1

 I don’t think you ever get too grown up for dogs

Speaker 2

You know it's not cool.

Speaker 1

Well, that's that's the end of my my questions. I really just was wanting to, you know. Understand your experiences? And Leona’s experiences. Is there anything else that you want to add, or anything else that's important that you think I should know about your experiences, the both of you.

Speaker 2

So with the nursing home next week. Yes. next Wednesday. I've sent a message to Sharon. Does Sharon contact the nursing home?

Speaker 1

So in the past what I was doing. It was quite difficult for me to find participants, and Sharon was doing the contacting of the nursing homes, all the settings that I was attending, and then obviously, it just got a bit much for her. So the last The last person who I saw at the beginning of this week I contacted the nursing home in an email with, CC’ed, in you, you, the handler and the and Sharon. And this gave the information, the participation, the participant form, and the consent form, and just said, Would you be happy to be involved in this? And Sharon was okay with that, just it takes a bit of stress of her. But obviously, we need we just need to double check with her. Would you be happy for me to do that?

Speaker 2

Well, Just before I spoke to you I sent her a text, but she's she. I spoke to her this afternoon. She's in the office by herself this week, so she said, I'm very, very busy. So I mean, I'm happy for you to to contact her as well. I'll leave it with you and I'll be out of. I'll be at the Queen Victoria Hospital in Picton. it's called the John Goodlet Manor. Where abouts are you?

Speaker 1

I'm from Bowral, and I live in Wollongong, so I'm in the middle. Well. So what I've done as well with the other participants was because I need to. So I am the student, and I've got 2 supervisors. And when I'm looking over my research for reliability. as you know, you've got a background in that kind of thing. I need to have more than one person looking at the dog's behaviors, so it would involve me filming the dog. even if it's just with one person for 5 min without their face in it. But I would like to film Leona, I and see her behavior. So then I can come back and tally her behaviour. So do you think that that obviously we have to get consent from a participant or participants, or the the residents of the nursing home. Do you think that that would be suitable. Or is that not really something that?

Speaker 2

They'd be fine. They might be a couple of ladies say, they would say, No. yeah. So you can only ask.

Speaker 1

Yeah, I know I wasn't sure, because some people might. You might say, Oh, it's not really the right setting. I don't know. These people haven't been there before. Yeah, so obviously I can ask. And if they say yes, then we can go ahead, and if not, then that's absolutely fine. So what I might do is email, Sharon and say, Are you okay with me? Contacting someone at the nursing home. And we can aim for me to go next Wednesday with you. If that's okay with you. and Leon, of course, And I would. Email, once Sharon is okay with it, I will email the nursing home with all of you in involved in the email. Get the consent, if that's what they are happy to do. And if everything's okay, then I would come along with you on Wednesday, and if not, then we just don't have to worry about it.

Speaker 2

Yeah, lovely. The lady's name at the Nursing home. I think it's Joe. I think her name is Joe Joe, Clancy. I think that's what her name is. I know it's Joe, anyway.

Speaker 1

Great. Thank you so much for that. And what time do you usually go there in the

Speaker 2

2 to 3

Speaker 1

Okay, great. So I'm I've got that day off, and I make sure I can be there. I know it is leaving it a bit late. So I'll email Sharon tonight and see if it's okay with her, but I think she would prefer me to organise it. So it's a bit of a bit of a extra work off her shoulders because she's already so much for me. So thank you so much for your time today. I really really appreciate it.

Speaker 2

Who else? What other companies are you working with? Are you a paws therapist?

Speaker 1

Oh, sorry. What do my own work? Is that what you mean you do you work with paws? No, no, no, sorry I'm I work at New South Wales health. I'm studying occupational therapy at Western Sydney University, and I'm doing my honours degree. So I'm doing research. But it's not a Ph d. It's like a small version. so. And I also do disability support like you.

Speaker 2

Oh, really, okay, in in this area or down. So I do some for a private company, and I do a little bit from Mable. Excuse me just because and then I work 3 days at Port Kembla Hospital as an occupational therapy assistant. As well.

Speaker 2

Yeah. I just want to show you something if you can see they are the best friends.

Speaker 1

Oh, how beautiful! What's the cats name?

Speaker 2

That's Winkle. and Leona! Look at Leona. Yeah, yeah, they just love each other. Here she goes, watch this.

Speaker 1

I've got this on film, too. I can watch it whenever I want. Oh, that's beautiful! She's very placid, isn't she?

Speaker 2

She always has been actually. even as a puppy. She was always,

Speaker 1

I mean, brought up you know she would have, because she was breeding dogs. They would have picked her as a specific dog to breed right? I’d love to meet her. If I get to, it'll be amazing. I don't know if you do.

Speaker 2

She's she's one of the kind.

Speaker 1

Oh, I'm going to love her so much. But I won't give her too many cuddles, because I know she doesn't like it.

Speaker 2

Just bring a treat. You'll be right.

Speaker 1

Okay. I'll fill my pocket. Thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate it, and I'll be in touch with you regarding next Wednesday.

Speaker 2

Perfect! Thank you. Bye, bye.