

Happy Paws Happy Hearts

Providing positive social interactions for isolated Australians
and rescue animals



happy paws
happy hearts



Happy Paws Happy Hearts

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Happy Paws Happy Hearts operates from the Brisbane RSPCA Head Office in Wacol, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) over 48 weeks per year. Our facilities are air-conditioned and wheelchair accessible. Participants and guests can take advantage of our on-site café or walk through our adoptions area to see other pets waiting to be adopted.





The Challenge.

Find ways to enable our aging population to remain engaged and socially active for as long as possible.

Australia is facing unprecedented growth of its aging population and a rapidly increasing demand for aged care related services. By 2050, it is estimated that over 3.5 million Australians will need aged care, with around 80% of these services expected to be delivered to the home or local community.

Older people are more likely to experience loneliness as a result of living alone and losing loved ones around them due to age. The consequences of this have been found to have enduring effects on an older person's health; psychological, emotional and physiological.

There is a global need for solutions to this problem, focused on creating elderly-friendly communities and reducing the requirements on existing health and aged-care systems moving forward.

Our Solution.

Happy Paws Happy Hearts delivers animal-assisted therapy in group environments at both the RSPCA Qld Animal Care Campus and external aged care facilities..

1/ Group visits to the RSPCA QLD Animal Care Campus

Older people living at home or in aged care facilities can visit the RSPCA campus on a fortnightly basis to participate in Happy Paws Happy Hearts animal therapy service.

2/ Animal therapy visits to aged care facilities

Happy Paws Happy Hearts takes RSPCA shelter animals out to aged care facilities, enabling older people who are unable to leave the facility to attend the campus sessions to access animal therapy.

The benefits of human-animal companionship are:

- Improved physical health
- Improved mental, emotional and psychological health
- Less visits to medical practitioners
- More frequent and more meaningful social interactions
- Happier feelings

For older Australians our program offers a unique and innovative way of bringing people together in a social and engaging manner that leaves lasting impressions.

Our aim is to help our participants strengthen existing and create new connections, lessen the occurrence or risk of social isolation and increase knowledge of animal care and welfare.

Foremost, participants will be given the opportunity to add positivity to their community by sharing their love for animals in need.

Our service aims to achieve for older persons:

- diverse ways to connect our rescue animals with an older person's life or lifestyle
- a sense of purpose for older persons, to strengthen psychological and emotional health and in some cases result in fewer visits to medical practitioners
- a service that enables regular social interactions for older persons that deliver measurable and immeasurable health related and social benefits

Our Service in 2016.

As Happy Paws Happy Hearts grows, we are focused on evolving and improving to ensure we can continue to provide our services with the same attention we always have. Part of this evolution is the need to achieve sustainability for new and existing groups. As a result of this, the program is moving to a fee-for-service model in 2016.

Service providers are now able to secure fortnightly access to group support visits at the RSPCA Qld campus or group and personal visits to residential facilities. These support services can be purchased quarterly or annually.

Your visits and contributions will support Happy Paws Happy Hearts sessions and the ongoing caring and nurturing of animals at the RSPCA shelter..



2016 Fee Structure

PROGRAM	BENEFITS	FEES
Group visits to the RSPCA Animal Care Campus	<p>Quarterly support fees:</p> <p>Qtr. 1 Jan - Mar \$600</p> <p>Qtr. 2 Apr - Jun \$600</p> <p>Qtr. 3 Jul - Sep \$600</p> <p>Qtr. 4 Oct - Dec \$600</p> <p>Equates to less than \$10 per person per session.</p>	<p>Up to 12 participants at a time, visit the RSPCA Animal Care Campus per fortnight for three hours with morning or afternoon tea provided.</p> <p>During sessions, groups will have the opportunity to spend time cuddling, interacting and supporting puppies, dogs, kittens and visits from our wildlife area.</p>
Animal therapy visits to aged care facilities	<p>Quarterly support fees:</p> <p>Qtr. 1 Jan - Mar \$900</p> <p>Qtr. 2 Apr - Jun \$900</p> <p>Qtr. 3 Jul - Sep \$900</p> <p>Qtr. 4 Oct - Dec \$820</p> <p>Once off visits can be purchased at \$150 per session.</p>	<p>Secure fortnightly visits to aged care facilities or community halls for two to three hours.</p> <p>Residents will have the opportunity to spend time with animals, chat to our animal care representative and spend time enjoying cuddles and paw shakes.</p>

The Benefits.

Creating positive outcomes for your clients

Happy Paws Happy Hearts is a unique outcomes based program that incorporates animal assisted therapy with achievable therapeutic goals.

At each visit, suitable rescue animals are selected for the interactions and we design, with your group, a clear therapeutic program. During the sessions, our representatives measure progress and evaluate the progress of therapy.

Group settings are a cost effective means of intervention and improve relationships between participants... More importantly, the benefits for older people participating in the Happy Paws Happy Hearts program contribute to enhancing the quality of your service and help to improve the overall ethos and culture of your organisation.

We are excited to continue to see Happy Paws Happy Hearts generate a sense of happiness that filters through all levels of organisations we work with.

Benefits of the group sessions

This service has proven to be highly effective in restoring self-confidence and fostering friendships between participants whilst delivering vitally important socialisation time for animals waiting to be adopted.

The noticeable differences of participants who regularly attend the program include:

- more smiles after each session
- appear less tense and confused during and after the session
- increased confidence to chat with group facilitators about their pets
- increased enthusiasm, interest and inspiration

Unlike other programs, participants in the Happy Paws Happy Hearts are encouraged, with the help of our HPHH representatives, to keep contributing to their community by learning animal training methods that they can practice with the therapy animals.

Groups are also given the opportunity to make items between sessions that the RSPCA regularly uses such as; wildlife pouches, coats for dogs, toys for cats and dogs, and crate covers and mats.

Participants attending Happy Paws Happy Hearts report that since coming to the program they feel much happier and connected with other group members.

Benefits to older people in residential facilities

This is a hands on service where we bring a suitable animals to your facility. We have found this to be particularly important for those people who can't make the journey to the RSPCA shelter.

The Benefits cont'd.

Each participant is encouraged to participate in non-strenuous physical and mental activity by playing with, cuddling and training the animals. They are encouraged to discuss their feelings, thoughts and learnings and there is very often and obvious improvement in mood, emotion and psychological constitution of participants.

Typically, a group of residents will meet in a common area to spend time with the animals. Our Happy Paws Happy Hearts representative will walk the animal to visit residents with high needs that are unable to leave their room.

Residential care staff and our representatives report that when the animal arrives at the facility the atmosphere immediately improves. The residents are excited and happy to spend time having cuddles, pats and talking to the animals. Some residents that normally stay in their rooms are encouraged to come out and interact in the group.

Residential care staff report changes in reaction and emotion of people with dementia, appearing less withdrawn and a willing to leave their rooms.

Benefits to your community

By participating in the Happy Paws Happy Hearts program, you are contributing to a happy, vibrant and healthy community. Pets are an integral part of the community with around 63% of Australians owning a pet. Pets have a vital role in building a strong sense of community and developing active social participation.

Pets are recognised as ‘ice-breakers’ and act as conduits of communication between people, creating potential for growth in trust and confidence within a local community.

Furthermore, income generated from this program is put towards the compassionate care of pets in need.

Evaluation & Review

Our commitment is to regularly monitor and assess the outcomes of our program to ensure that our animal therapy intervention is effective, responsive, dynamic and developmental. This is achieved through ongoing research coupled with participant evaluation and feedback.

Frameworks underpinning this program are:

- Human Services Quality Framework
- Person-centered practice
- Family centered practice
- Strengths based approach
- Developmental approach

*We look forward to
seeing you in 2016!*

