

Molly a 'motivating factor' for Extendicare residents

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Hay tried putting Molly in a crate, but that didn't work either. So she decided to take her to work and leave her in her truck, where she was quite content to be sleeping until it was time for a walk at break times. But Hay realized this was only going to be a temporary solution.

So she decided to brainstorm about other possibilities that would work for Molly who had a great temperament, loved people and as long as she was not alone, was fine.

Having been a former therapy dog at Extendicare, Hay thought a possible solution for Molly might be for her to stay there during the day.

So she called the recreation office to inquire if the home might be interested in dog-sitting Molly during regular business hours. They agreed to take her on a trial basis.

"Molly remarkably developed an instant bond with the residents and their family members (including grandchildren), staff of all departments (especially Mary Hitchcock from Dietary) and the rest is history," said Carm Cimarrusti, Extendicare Program Manager,

Molly arrives about 9:15 a.m. and works until mid-afternoon Monday to Friday.

"Molly does take the odd spa day away from work, we all deserve a day off to pamper ourselves after all," said Cimarrusti.

When Molly arrives she eagerly greets the recreation staff.

"She nudges the office door open with her nose to let herself in," said Cimarrusti.

She loves to keep recreation assistant Umber Jiwan or Cimarrusti company while doing paperwork.

"At 11 a.m. Molly joins in with the exercise group. Sometimes she parks herself right in the middle of the exercise floor. In the afternoons she especially enjoys rolling in the snow. The residents get a kick out of her child-like excitement as they watch through the window," said Cimarrusti.

She added, in the summer Molly loves basking in the sun after accepting food from residents who enjoy feeding her during their monthly barbecues.

Cimarrusti said Molly knows all the residents, staff and visitors who have treats for her and is the perfect height for residents in wheelchairs. She doesn't seem to mind when they dress her up for special occasions.

"Molly is a motivational factor for residents to join the morning exercise class. One resident in Wildwood House hears the sound of Molly's collar and knows it's class time," said Cimarrusti.

She said Molly creates "instant smiles on the faces of dog lovers," like residents Linda Deasley and Ivy Jones.

"Everybody loves Molly," said Deasley. "She's company, she's nice to see," said Jones.

Cimarrusti calls Molly Extendicare's "most reputable volunteer" and she mingles well with the facility's live-in pets—two cats, three rabbits and two birds.

"Molly has added much life and love to our home. We are grateful to have her in our lives," said Cimarrusti.

Hay said she can't say enough about Extendicare staff and residents who have welcomed Molly.

"They've been absolutely amazing," she said.

Molly loves going there each day.

"She runs to the door and sometimes I have to encourage her to come home," said Hay.

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