

Agility

East Coast Agility Clubs Benefit Show

Supplied by Rosemarie Baker, rjb agility2020@gmail.com

When I was first asked to write an article about this benefit show, I was initially reluctant but on reconsideration, I thought it was a great opportunity to acknowledge and thank the entire Agility community, and associated others, whose support and generosity raised just over \$24,000 for four East Coast clubs. What an amazing demonstration of fellowship for the trauma they were experiencing and would continue to face for months to come.

The morning of 18 March, when Cyclone Gabriel was hammering the East Coast, Napier Dog Training Club decided to cancel their March show. No-one had had any contact with Gisborne, and we were concerned about the damage the cyclone was wreaking on homes, businesses, and Agility clubs. We all know how expensive Agility gear can be, so our first thoughts were to raise funds to help clubs to keep operating once this dreadful weather event subsided.

I initially reached out to Wayne Turner, Carl Ranford and Clint Banks, with the idea of running a benefit show on Napier's cancelled weekend and they were on board from the start. Within hours, Cherie Picking, Renee James, Sheryl Hutchinson, Libby Ellery, and Robyn Fargher had joined the team and a committee was formed.

Wayne, using his show-running knowledge and expertise, contacted the Agility Committee the same day and had applied for permissions by weekend's end with the initial advert ready by Monday. The AC generously waived their levies. Robyn was coping with the weather when she happily came on board as show secretary.

Thirteen judges were either contacted, or contacted us, offering their services, at no cost: Cam List, Paul Taylor, Keri Neilson, Dave Cook, Libby Ellery, Jinnie Ellery, Sharon Wagener, Carl Ranford, Kevin Burnette, Liz Barlow, Martin Bush, Lloyd Pallesen and Lyn Sayers.

Many non-competing volunteers also put their paws up and gave

up their entire weekends to volunteer for the important scrapping roles: Gee Brown, Barbara Ward, Kat Bayne, Nic Roxburgh, Charley Marsh, Tanya Richardson, Dan Mulholland and Cam List. Also on the weekend we had Keighley Calder with results, and Lachie Dassler was untiring and invaluable with prize giving.

Feilding Dog Training Club generously offered their grounds and gear, and we had used of gear hauled from Upper Hutt — thank you, Wayne and Erin Mulholland.

The committee met on Monday evening, and New Zealand's first 8x Jumpers Championship Show was organised. That presented some issues for our software: online entries and judges contract creation all had to be amended to enable an 8X Jumpers. Thank you to those experts that made the amendments, and so quickly.

By this stage we had contacted the four clubs, and knew that none had suffered actual loss or damage of gear, but we also knew that these people — our friends and associates — were suffering traumatic events, destruction, and sadness. It was still vitally important we carry on and raise funds for them to use in whatever way they pleased, as an act of support from us and the community as a whole.

I think it's an important point to reiterate here: there was no onus for the clubs to do anything heroic with these funds. This was about a gesture of goodwill that would make them feel valued and supported.

Everyone worked extremely hard to bring that show to life in just three weeks. The response from the Agility community was overwhelming: 2326 entries in just a few days. And not just entries: Agility people around the country, who knew they couldn't come, immediately started asking if they could make donations, and did.

Did You Know?
Subsidy forms are here:
www.dogagility.org.nz/cont/forms.html

A mega raffle was organised to run in the three weeks preceding the event with the flyer designed by Jo Allen. The response to that was also immense, and the Agility community nationwide supported this raffle so well. The contributors to that raffle didn't hesitate to be involved, with a mega dog hamper created with donations from Lead On, Your Whole Dog, Confident Canines, Patricia MC, Dogs Outside, Mud Creations, Lou's Tug Toys and Shine Canine.

Lyn and Sarah Sayers from Agility Stuff contributed second and third prizes with two more of their fabulous wing jumps, and Clint Banks offered more of his time and skill to make a further wing jump as fourth prize.

And fifth to 23rd prizes were generous talented artists who contributed either photography or drawing skills: Courtenay Moffat, Kylie Purgal, Sheryl Vincent, Up The Hill Creative, Gabriella Stuart, Matilda van Rijnbeck, Hiriwa Digital Art, Emily Taylor, In The Moment, Phodography by Lis, Krystal Merry, Floofy Photography, Simon Thomsett, Hipo Sports Photography, Brya Ingham, Hayle Rohde Photography, Catherine E Brennan, A Dogs Tale and Sit Stay Play.

And that wasn't all. Without being asked, a whole load of people from the Waikato/Bay of Plenty areas led by Michelle Burggraaf of Lead On contributed product to make up four amazing hampers to be raffled at the show itself. Along with raffles of beautiful handmade items from Judy Towers and Nicole Johnson (again unprompted), and food product from Purina. A big shout-out must also go to the people attending the show who reached deep into their pockets and bought tickets — lots of them! I think we raised over \$1800 from those show raffles.

As it was a benefit show we wanted every cent raised to go to the cause and after hot debate, we decided not to offer cash prizes. We did have prizes generously donated from food companies already stretched from supplying product into the East Coast affected areas; Purina, Chunky, Animals Like Us, Daisy's Discount Dog Supplies (who also bought \$500 of raffle tickets and made a \$1000 donation).

Several other generous companies also need to be recognised, including Roberts Embroidery who contributed gorgeous, embroidered caps with the show logo (thanks Carl) and awesome cooler bags; Admir Promotions bought and printed fabulous tote



Rumi modelling sponsors' product.

bags commemorating the show; Whittakers Chocolate supplied their delicious product; and Carousel Confectionary supplied a massive number of sweets to keep the workers going and reward the prize-winners too.

Quality Presentations discounted the beautiful multi-coloured ribbons substantially, and the Zone 3 clubs of Upper Hutt, Wairarapa, DAWG, Horowhenua, Whanganui, Hawera, New Plymouth picked up the cost balance.

Stall holders at the event — Oh My Fluffy Dog, Enriched Canines, Tuggalicious Toys, and Dianne Bowden — all donated a percentage of their sales, and Cherie Picking ran a stall with 100% of her proceeds being donated. Bridee Manning from Enriched Canines also had beautiful handmade soaps which she sold with 100% donation.

The Zone 3 clubs ran the show, expertly, happily, and efficiently. It was a great weekend. And a big thanks to Sandra and Clint Banks who organised the sponsor recognition boards and posters.

I know there will have been many more people that helped and contributed, so please forgive me if I haven't named you personally.

And last, but not least Merrell Shoes gave us a pair of MOAB Agility shoes as a post-show wrap-up raffle.

In the end, the generous NZ Agility community raised \$24,000. Thank you ... All of you.

Jude Taylor

From left to right: Central Hawkes Bay Dog Training Club, Hastings Dog Training Club and Napier Dog Training Club.

