Helping the pets of those experiencing homelessness

Every month, a wonderful charity called “Pet’s in the Park” brings together vets, nurses and social workers who volunteer their time and skills to helping the animals of people who are experiencing homelessness.

For all of these people experiencing hardship, their pets are their lifeline. They provide them with companionship, emotional support and security, increasing their mental, emotional and physical well-being. They value their dogs and cats so highly that they often forgo meals and medical care themselves, to be able to buy food and medications for their pets but accessing veterinary care can be an unattainable luxury.

Once a month, they can come to Pets in the Park where we treat all of their animals for free, providing vaccinations, parasite preventatives and basic medications.

We treat all things from ear infections, itchy skin, arthritic pain, gastroenteritis and behavioural concerns. We are limited in not being able to perform bloodwork, pathology, ultrasounds, X-rays or use the best drugs on the market but we are certainly able to help their dogs and cats live happier, more comfortable and healthier lives.

The medications are donated by drug companies and vet clinics. There is also a table filled with dog food, mostly donated by pet food companies but some donated by the public as

well as dog jumpers, blankets, collars and leads. What always blows me away is how nobody takes more than they need so that they leave enough for everyone.

Recently I had the misfortune of having to diagnose a very much loved support dog with Lymphoma. It was absolutely heartbreaking watching the strong and resilient owner just burst into tears, unable to contain his devastation at the thought of losing his best mate who has carried him and given him unconditional love and support through the darkest stages of his life. At least I could give the dog some medication to make his last months of life more comfortable, and hope that his adoring owner has time to come to terms with yet another blow to life.

It's eye opening to hear the stories of the people who come through. Some living it tough now because of family circumstances, health problems, covid job loses or genuinely struggling to keep up with the rising cost of living. However, all of them have something in common; they have an animal family who they love and care for as if they are their children and would do anything to help them. And all of these animals who provide so much emotional support to their owners deserve to be free of itchy skin, fleas and arthritic pain to name a few, which is why Pets in the Park is such an essential service in Australia.

Pets in the Park rely on volunteerism, public donations, and corporate support to deliver its programs. If you have any great condition beds, dog jumpers, unopened bags/cans of food or medications to donate please let us know. Or you can donate at: https://www.petsinthepark.org.au/how-to-help-us/donate-now

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