



Eukanuba Canine Heroes Award

Category: Service Dog of the Year

Dog's name: Dyson

Breed or crossbreed: Mastiff Cross

Dog's age and sex: 7 years old, dog

Dyson was the inspiration behind, and founding therapy dog of, BARK NZ (Building Awareness aRound K9's) and together with his owner, Heather, was presented with his Eukanuba Canine Heroes Award for the Service Dog of the Year category at the National Dog Show 2014 held in Auckland in October. This is Dyson's story as told by Heather.

After joining our family as a rescue dog in 2008 (at approximately 18 months old) Dyson always knew what children needed to soothe, calm, and entertain them. Dyson was the first BARK Buddy to visit preschools and primary schools with BARK's dog safety messages. His attendance began being requested by regular schools and when he was asked to work one-on-one with children with challenges he inspired the 'Tag the Tails' exercise programme, 'Tales with Tails' reading programme and 'Time with Tails' compassion programme. His popularity didn't stop there... although he is a large, brindle, mastiff cross, his gentle nature with children was sought after to

assist children through BLENZ (Blind and Low vision Education New Zealand), caregivers for children with Autism, parents of fearful children, group leaders of community youth groups, early childhood educators and many, many more.

Dyson is slowly easing into retirement now, but still has regular weekly visits, gets booked-out to visit school holiday programs and continues his work with his regular autistic and fearful children. He is also a mentor, father-figure and companion to the many foster/rescue dogs that pass through our home, especially to our newest BARK Buddy, Django.

Dyson will not be with us forever, but the legacy he leaves behind in BARK NZ and the thousands of lives he has touched, enriched and enhanced, make him worthy of winner of this year's 'Service Dog of the Year' category of Canine Heroes.



Dyson proudly wearing his BARK NZ uniform. Photo/Tall Tails

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