



Kirsten Pearson with Monty who is wearing his medal.

www.communitypix.com.au d307113

A medal for Monty

BEING involved with animal-assisted therapies program Animal Companions was no walk in the park for Kirsten Pearson's shetland sheepdog Monty.

As a long-serving member of the Pets Providing Therapy program, Monty has visited school-children, sick people and the elderly across Perth since Kristen teamed up with nine other dog-lovers to form the volunteer organisation in 2002.

The now retired 11-year-old hound was awarded for his contribution and dedication to the program at a ceremony on March 22 at Banks Reserve in Maylands, where he was presented with the first Animal Companions Long-Service Medal.

Kristen said Monty's visits to people who felt isolated encouraged them to engage with others and reconnect with their environment.

"Where other attempts had failed, often Monty could get responses from residents in aged facilities who felt lonely and sometimes even withdrawn in their new environment," she said.

"They delighted in calling him to them and stroking and patting him. He greeted each resident with tremendous friendliness and patience."

Monty also contributed to the Animal Companion's Paws for Safety program by visiting schools to teach children how to interact safely with dogs.