

Getting out with your dog



On Sunday, 1 October 2023, I was lucky enough to be at the start/finish line of the 4 Paws Marathon. I have sponsored this event since its inception and watched it grow in popularity and reach despite two years when the event felt the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. This year, a record 521 humans and 379 dogs entered, choosing to either walk or run 2.4km, 5km, 10km, 16km, half marathon, 32.2km or the full marathon distance.

Organiser Dr John Molloy is an avid runner. He and his wife Courtney would often undertake training runs with the family's dogs and felt it was unfair that the dogs could not join in on race days. John, a sports medicine physician, created the event to celebrate 'exercise as medicine' which rewards participation, rather than winning times.

Each runner and dog receive a finisher's medal, colour-coded for the length of their walk/run:

- Orange: 2.4km
- Yellow: 5km
- Red: 10km
- Purple: 16km
- Blue: 21km
- Pink: 32.2km
- Green: 42km

This is easily my favourite event of the year: so many happy faces both human and canine pass through

our massage tent (see above). The weather, which was incredibly blustery in the days prior to the event, calmed to give us a sunny and warm spring day.

If you are not located in Christchurch, now is the perfect time to plan a visit for October 2024 so you can participate in the event's sixth year. Training plans for canines are published on the 4 Paws website, 4pawsmarathon.co.nz. 

See page *** for another report of this growing annual event.

