

# Daphne walks again

By Monique Freer

When nine-year-old Maltese Shih Tzu Daphne walked in the doors of Dogs for Life last week, there was not a single person without a smile on their face.

As the small grey and white dog trotted into the Benalla facility the smiles were accompanied by looks of shock, pride and amazement.

Less than one month ago, Daphne could not walk.

On August 23 owners Julie Folan and Ian Arendhorst woke up to find their beloved dog could not use her back legs. Two days later she was unable to use her front legs.

"There was no warning, no signs," Ms Folan said.

"One minute she was happily walking, running around the lake each morning, to absolutely no feeling in any legs at all."

Ms Folan and Mr Arendhorst took Daphne to Benalla Veterinary Clinic, from where she was sent to a clinic in Moorabbin for tests, scans and X-rays.

When the results did not show any anything they went to a neurologist at the University of Melbourne for further tests, but still to no avail.

Doctors believed Daphne had a form of motor neurone or immune disease, but with no diagnosis there was nothing they could do.

"We were told there was nothing more that could be done and to bring Daph home with no treatment other than supportive care," Ms Folan said.

"There was still no change in Daph's condition and she struggled along on her torso, which was heartbreaking and so hard to watch."

But upon their return Benalla Veterinary Clinic owner Stephan Mischel phoned the distressed owners and recommended they tried hydrotherapy at local business Dogs for Life.

"From the moment we carried Daph in the front door they embraced her and her situation and were all on a mission to help Daph to one day walk again," Ms Folan said.

Dogs for Life had only recently started doing hydrotherapy and it was the first time the staff had worked with a dog that was paralysed.

Under the guidance of international expert Yariv Ben Yosef, Daphne was given hydrotherapy twice per week and slowly began to gain strength in her legs.

"We did exercises with her muscles and kept repeating that," Dogs for Life trainer Jordan McNamara said.

"Every session she'd gain strength and more strength."



**Star team:** Dogs for Life administrator Jae Tait, trainer Steven Cavicchiolo, trainer Jordan McNamara, supervisor Tracey Adams, (front) owners Julie Folan and Ian Arendhorst with Daphne.

"She started off in a dog life jacket because she was rolling in the water," Dogs for Life administrator Jae Tait said.

"We then took it off her and she was held in the water, and then she progressed from there."

Ms Folan and Mr Arendhorst also took Daphne to see specialist Rob Willis in Wangaratta, who began administering acupuncture and herbal remedies.

"Rob was so passionate about helping Daphne and all along when things didn't look good and not a lot of changes were taking place, Rob continued to encourage us and urged us to just keep believing in Daphne," Ms Folan said.

After more than two months of hard work Daphne took her first steps on November 1.

"You can't put it on paper the feeling," Mr Arendhorst said.

"Before she walked she tried to use her back leg to scratch her ear," Ms Folan said.

"We knew a few weeks before she walked that something was happening."

Daphne has gone from a dog who did not like the water to a confident swimmer, and the staff at Dogs for Life staff are naturally very proud.

"To see her do things on her own, without support, in and out of the pool, it's like she's a new dog," trainer Steven Cavicchiolo said.

Daphne's movement has progressed well since she took her first steps and she now enjoys short walks as she regains her strength.

"You would not know that three weeks ago she was totally unable to use her legs to support herself to stand," Ms Folan said.

"Other passionate pet owners need to know that there is always hope, and we should never give up trying."

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### WHAT'S HAPPENING:

- 19-27 November Yr 11 Exams
- 27 November Yr 2 Sleepover at Avon and Waller Campus  
Kokoda Sponsors Thank You Night BBQ - 6.00pm - Barkly St
- 28 November "Opposite Day" - wear odd shoe/socks - Fundraiser for Salvation Army run by Junior School Council
- 1-5 December Canberra Excursion - Yrs 5 & 6
- 1-12 December Headstart for students commencing Yrs 8-12 in 2015
- 4 December Avon St Campus Production - BPACC - 6.30pm-7.30pm
- 5 December "Opposite Day" - Avon Campus run by the Junior School Council

### MUSIC END OF YEAR CONCERT

BPACC filled to the sounds of 70 instrumental music students recently presenting the four main bands, annual awards and farewelling Year 12 performers. Each of the bands from years 7 to 12, presented four or more pieces of music faultlessly. Movie themes were very popular. As a final encore, all the students from each band came on stage to lift the roof with a performance of the popular song from Despicable Me 2, Happy.



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