



Nicks Eagles and her otter hound, Mac.

Lend a paw!

by Charlotte Cox

IT CAN be a dog's life – so one warm-hearted Maxonian is sharing her best friend with those most in need of canine company.

Nicks Eagles, of Swallow Close, is the only person in the town who works for the charity Pets As Therapy (PAT) taking her otter hound, Mac of Macclesfield, around nursing homes to lend a paw.

Nicks, 40, who works at AstraZeneca, said: "I just fancied doing something with the dogs and for the community.

"Mac is just such a lovely dog, so nice-tempered, and I wanted to combine my love of animals with people to do something worthwhile. Everyone should put a bit back in."

She takes him for talkies to three properties involved with Macclesfield Prestige Care Homes – Sutton Oaks, The Woodland and The Romans.

It may sound like a barking mad idea, but Mac certainly creates a stir among the residents, many of whom know him well and look forward to his twice-weekly visits.

"They really do enjoy seeing Mac," Nicks said. "Everyone reacts differently, some just want to look at him and some want to give him a pat, but he definitely brings a smile to a lot of people's faces."

"I took him in to see a man connected

up to tubes and he really smiled. The nurse told me he used to keep dogs."

Sutton Oaks resident, Margaret Jackson, who is in her seventies, said: "It's lovely to see Mac, he's just such a good dog and really cheers us up."

Her pal, Shirley Woolrich, added: "What a nice dog, so well-behaved. I look forward to his visits."

At the age of just two, Mac is already used to being in the limelight after taking part in Crafts last year. Nicks has entered him again in this year's esteemed pooch parade.

The animal lover has one other otter hound – an old English breed renowned for their sense of smell and originally used for hunting otters.

They spend a lot of time in the water, assisted by their webbed feet and thick double water-resistant coat.

Nicks – who also owns a Beagle, two cats, a horse and two chickens – said: "I love doing this, but it would be nice if others got involved too."

If you and a furry friend would like to help out in the community, get in touch with PAT on 0870 9770003, or www.petsastherapy.org.uk, so they can assess your pooch.



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Macclesfield

Wednesday, March 8, 2006

45p

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MUM DIES IN HOLIDAY

