

Community Engagement Newsletter

Faculty of Veterinary Science
Winter 2012



Mangaung community receives support from Onderstepoort

**Willem Engelbrecht, Helzna Krikke, Ingrid Metz
Janine Lombard, Marelize Greyling and Willem
Janson (BVSc I)**

We, as a group of Onderstepoort students who were planning our community engagement project, were quite keen to help a community outside the regularly serviced Gauteng area. The aim of our project was to provide the community with basic education on care and the importance of sterilising their dogs. We also wanted to provide basic healthcare to the community, such as inoculations, deworming, tick and flea treatments, and in so doing promote the veterinary profession.

We decided to collaborate with the Bloemfontein SPCA and the veterinarians of the Fichardtspark Animal Clinic to provide medical care and other necessities for canine wellbeing and care in the community residing in the residential area of Heidedal, Bloemfontein. Many companies were eager and willing to assist us with this great endeavour. After weeks of planning, preparation and phone calls, we were ready to go to Bloemfontein. We finished our preparation the day before our project, 31 March 2012, which entailed packing dog food, medications, supplies, etc, and most importantly, we received a tutorial from the veterinarians of the Fichardtspark Animal Clinic. The tutorial included information on basic handling, especially of aggressive dogs, calculation of body weight, administration of deworming medications and injecting dogs.

The whole project came together on 1 April 2012. Early that morning, our cars fully loaded, we set out for the Olympia Primary School. We arrived at 07:30, after which we quickly set up the tables, posters, banners and stations with help from the SPCA staff,



namely Sebenzile Pop, Steven Chucchoo and Reinet Meyer.

Students paired up in teams and two veterinarians, Dr Gilfillan and Dr Meiring, supervised with a watchful eye, making sure we were doing everything correctly tending to the sick dogs at our stations. We vaccinated the dogs, dewormed them, dipped them for ticks and fleas, and handed out a bag of dog food, a feed bowl and shampoo to each of the owners.

Inoculation cards were provided for each dog and we also distributed educational pamphlets to the owners with information on basic animal care, talked to them about what we were doing and why, and encouraged them to take better care of their animals. We also spoke to them about the procedures being performed on their animals, and when to go for their animals' follow-up consultations at the SPCA. We also distributed University of Pretoria booklets to promote the veterinary profession in the community.

The children attending the event were also educated about basic animal care and received a colouring package with crayons, balloons, sweets, and pictures promoting the care of dogs. They were also kept busy with fun activities. The children's educational station was supervised by the Department of Education and students from the University of the Free State. All in all the day was a huge success. We were able to treat and provide goods for 500 dogs and the veterinarians tended to 50 sick animals. This project would not have been possible without our sponsors. Along with the Bloemfontein SPCA we would like to



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Faculty of Veterinary Science

thank Merial, Novartis, Royal Canin, Kyron, Ciplavet, Virbac, IAMS, MSD, Hills, Fichardtpark Animal Clinic and Ms Maria Lombard.

Meeting

The Community Engagement Committee Meeting will be held on Tuesday, Tuesday, 14 August

Winterveld Dog Show 2012

The Winterveld Dog Show will be held on Saturday, 25 August

Venue: Winterveld Multipurpose Centre

Time: 10:00–16:00

For further information on the SAVA CVC, please visit www.communityvet.co.za/new

or contact Sr Debbie Pleaner, CVC Coordinator, Gauteng.

Email: debbie@cvet.co.za

Tel: 012 346 1150 ext 210 or 073 195 1607

Fighting animal abuse one school at a time

Ruche Harmse, Taryn Light, Ansu Visser, Este van Coetzen, Megan Naude, Nadia Strydom and Tess Tjasink (UP Drama students)

The week of 14–19 March was a life-changing week for the drama students of the University of Pretoria. As part of our curriculum, we were sent into Mamelodi to perform a show promoting animal welfare in the township. And during that week, our eyes were opened and our hearts were elevated to a state of passion and compassion for the people and the animals.

The Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic (MAHC) was our base, and each morning we saw kittens and puppies, skeleton-like dogs who were suffering from tick bite fever, and puppies that were dying from unhygienic conditions. It was heartbreaking and caused many tears to flow, but at the same time it inspired us to go out into Mamelodi to change the hearts and minds of the people. We were taken to schools all over the area, ranging from rather difficult high school learners to sympathetic junior primary learners. Within a week, we reached out to 1 863 learners in

the nine schools we visited. Our research and performances were about numerous types of animal abuse, ranging from neglect to veterinary care, and from dog fighting to cruel farming practices. Our research informed us of some scary statistics, and we realised just how much was desperately needed to bring about change.

Many of the audiences were tough and were unaffected by what we were trying to promote. However, out of every audience a few learners



came to ask questions and collect pamphlets. We kept reminding ourselves that if we could change some people's hearts, we would be saving some animals.

We will never forget what happened at Boikantsho Primary School. We first gave a performance to the preschoolers, and afterwards another performance at the same school for the Grade Fours and Fives. We performed in the courtyard where they had brought their chairs outside to watch our show. One of the songs we sang in our show was "Who let the dogs out?" As we walked to the car, after our performance, a sea of school children carrying their chairs above their heads were walking around singing, "Who let the dogs out? Who? Who? Who, who, who?" We heard more singing as we walked past the playground and past the car park. All around the school the children were singing this song and we realised that even if they just remember that song, every time they hear it they will remember the message we conveyed to them. It was a heart-warming experience!

This was a tremendous opportunity for us and was so fulfilling. We learnt so much, not just as actors, but as human beings and it is an experience

DONATIONS

Please contact one of the following people if you would like to donate money, dog food, collars, leashes, blankets or your time:

Sr Sarah Johnson 012 529 8387 / 079 183 1878 sarah.johnson@up.ac.za

Mr Jacques van Rooyen 012 529 8339 / 083 289 1312 jacques.vanrooyen@up.ac.za

Mr Eugene Machimana 012 529 8100 / 083 687 0181 eugene.machimana@up.ac.za

that we will hold in our hearts forever. We are very thankful to Eugene Machimana, Dr Cherrie Liebenberg and Lesego Teffu for all they did for us in this process.

Veterinary education and “Vets for the kids”

Patrick Ntsibande, Nyeleti Manganyi, Noluthando Ndashe, Thapelo Makae, Khulekani Lukhele and Sabelo Magagula

The project was divided into two parts that ultimately achieved the same purpose. The aim was to provide community service by promoting awareness of veterinary service (veterinary education) and identifying an organisation with specific needs (an orphanage, ‘Vets for the kids’) and assisting with this.

The first part of the project was veterinary education. Our project commenced at Mamelodi High School where we targeted Grade 11 Mathematics and Physical Science scholars. The idea was to deliver a presentation about veterinary science and on what it entails at a personal level. Our approach was not conventional. It was strictly interactive and demonstrative, with pictures we had brought along from the Faculty of Veterinary Science student practical sessions, and we showed them a video clip, summarising the course as a whole, for example highlighting career opportunities.

We were dressed in various career outfits worn within the veterinary profession, for example in the fields of public health, wildlife, small animals, research, production animals and academia (lecturing). The presentation took about 60 minutes, including time



to interact with the learners, asking questions and handing out prizes to those who answered correctly. This gave them a clear view of what veterinary science is all about – its diversity and offerings. Moreover, the beauty of what the course entails and what you can become in this wonderful nation were well illustrated.

The second part of the session was called “Vets for the kids”. An orphanage was identified, and their needs were our first priority. The Phehella Children’s Home is the name of the orphanage located in Nagtegaal Street, Silverton. Trevor Maloka and Martha Maloka are the two candidates who manage the home housing 13 children ranging from Grade 1 to Grade 8. We came to realise that they do not get to go on many trips or social outings due to budget constraints and we decided to take them to the Pretoria Zoo, with financial assistance from Ms Robyn Ingle Muller and Ms Jessica Hayward. Ms Jessica Hayward took the children on a guided tour around the Zoo. We soon realised that the orphanage

struggles with basic needs such as sufficient food and toiletries. Terrence Thovhakale, a House committee member of House Onderstepoort, and his colleagues were very helpful in sponsoring the whole tour with food packages. It was wonderful to see the children enjoying themselves. Many of them had never seen real wild animals before, especially not the Big Five.

We would like to thank the following people who have been helpful in the planning and success of our project: Mr Eugene Machimana (Community Engagement Coordinator), Ms Lesego Teffu (Public Relations Practitioner), Ms Jessica Hayward (Tour Guide from the Pretoria National Zoological Gardens), the two veterinary students, Kabelo Mohlabe and Dzunisani Ngobeni, and most importantly our Onderstepoort House Committee (for sponsorship).

soVETo k9 Mobile clinic outreach

Daleen Bester, Gideon Stemmet, Ian Gibson, Kobus Rabe, Louw Grobler and Rhynard de Ridder

When one considers community engagement, several ideas come to mind. Firstly, as veterinary students our focus when reaching out has always been primarily on animals, and that is why we are studying to become vets – right? But we are living in South Africa, winter is here and it is evident that not only animals are in need, but also many poor pet owners. With this in mind, Louw Grobler, Daleen Bester, Rhynard de Ridder, Ian Gibson, Kobus Rabe and Gideon Stemmet initiated the project named SoVETo Mobile K9 Clinic.

With our sole purpose being to have an impact on these people’s lives, we approached the well-known organisation Community-led Animal Welfare (CLAW). It is an organisation that strives to provide basic veterinary support to the lower-income community around the outskirts of Johannesburg. They also address issues such as HIV orphans and hungry children who depend on the dump sites for their daily food.

After discussions with CLAW about the needs in these communities, we discovered that there were a great number of dogs in these areas that have collars made of pieces of chain, wire and rope. This is a serious concern, as often the owners are uneducated in terms of looking after these animals and these collars end up injuring the animals. We decided, as part of our mobile clinic, to address this issue.

We approached Pfizer Pharmaceuticals to sponsor adjustable nylon dog collars and leads. They generously agreed to sponsor this part of our project, and Lisa Riback, also from Pfizer, furthermore donated 5-in-1 vaccines. Still, we could do more! We decided to expand our project using the funds provided by the University. CLAW functions as a “mash” unit and they provide services to animals in the greater Johannesburg area. We therefore bought rabies vaccinations and deworming medication and donated it to CLAW, along with the sponsored

vaccines from Pfizer. Furthermore, Dr Quixi Sonntag was approached and came on board with the project to be our appointed veterinarian and medical advisor. Dr Sonntag, who is also the OPVSC guardian and Gideon Stemmet (OPVSC member), were also approached, and generously donated 30 fleece blankets to CLAW.



On 14 May, we set out to Soweto with the CLAW team to become actively involved! Anxious and very excited, we were not entirely sure what to expect. After spending some time at the CLAW Hospital caring for some of the patients, we were briefed on what was to be done and expected of us in the township. We loaded our supplies, as well as our doctor, and went off on a life-changing expedition.

We covered a great distance and saw many animals that are in great need. One of the CLAW nurses spotted an elderly man with a puppy. This is where our mobile clinic took action. Within a few minutes a mobile practice was established from the back of a bakkie. One of the CLAW nurses approached the man and asked him about his dog. Soon people arrived from everywhere, bringing their dogs and cats along with them. Each animal underwent a basic clinical examination, after which they were vaccinated and dewormed. A new medical card was also opened for each dog, as CLAW returns to the same area every month to follow up and administer yearly boosters. We participated in these activities and felt like true veterinarians. We completed each animal's vet experience by replacing wire, chain and rope collars with our nylon collars. We also

distributed leaflets with information on basic animal care for dogs and cats. We advised owners on how to care for their animals. This is really difficult as animal food is quite expensive. How do you explain to someone who can barely feed themselves that their dog needs more nutritious food? This was just one of the challenges we faced during this experience.

During the last part of our project we concentrated on needy children on the Randfontein dumpsite. We held a brief inspection to find any sick or injured animals and then focused on the children. We handed out bread rolls and played with the little ones for a while.

CLAW had the following response:

“Just want to say that it was a great pleasure to have you guys (and Dalene) with us on Monday. We were really touched by the fact that you also took the trouble to bring blankets, bread, collars and leads. All this must have taken considerable time – not easy when you have a heavy study schedule. Your enthusiasm and kindness are an inspiration to us, and we would love to have you back any time!

Here's hoping that we will continue to benefit from your expertise when you are fully fledged vets, even if it's a couple of days per year!

Regards to the rest of the team,

Cora.”

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

1. Production Animal Outreach Clinic: Makapanstad & Ratjiepan Project: Wednesdays
2. Mamelodi Animal Health Care (MAHC): Mondays to Fridays
3. Loate CVC: Bi-monthly on Wednesdays



DO YOU HAVE A STORY TO PUBLISH?

The Community Engagement Committee invites you to submit short articles to be published in the next Newsletter (Winter 2012). The Community Engagement article should not be more than one page long. Contact person Mr Eugene Machimana Tel: (012) 529 8100 (w) Cell: 083 687 0181 Email: eugene.machimana@up.ac.za

Visit the UP Community Engagement website regularly for updates about projects and funding opportunities.