

Community Engagement Newsletter

Faculty of Veterinary Science

Autumn 2014



Cosmo City community engagement

Justina Allison (BVSc IV)

Upon deciding to complete a project in Cosmo City, Johannesburg, we were unsure of the specific needs of animals and current level of understanding about animals and their care. On the day, we were accompanied by Klarika Nettleton, who is extensively involved in animal-based charity work within the community. We set off with a car filled with cat and dog food, blankets, beds, water bowls and several other items.

After speaking to people about how one should care for animals, it became clear that they did not have a good understanding or experience of taking care of pets, or they took care of them in a way that they believed to be correct, but that had certain flaws. The children of the community expressed a desire to learn more about animals as animal care had not formed part of their syllabus at school. Another issue that we noticed was the poor welfare of many of the chickens that often went without food or water.

Based on these observations, a project was developed that consisted of two components. Firstly, we visited Cosmo City

Primary School, as it is vital to educate and involve younger generations while they are still open to new ideas. Pupils who had dogs or cats at home were taught how to take care of a pet and to address the basic needs of all animals. Pupils were also taught the proper way to approach a dog and what to do in the event of a suspected rabies case. We introduced the pupils to careers in veterinary science as the school had expressed an interest in this regard.

The importance and purpose of the vaccination of pets was emphasised, as well as where this could be done, which includes the Community Veterinary Clinic (CVC) that often visits Cosmo City. Pupils were informed about the CVC's purpose, location and other relevant information. They listened attentively and asked several important questions, after which they had a short break and were given lunch.

Tobeka Mconi from Animals in Distress also delivered a presentation to the pupils, reinforcing the key points and the need for sterilisation. She also demonstrated the concept of positive reinforcement with the help of her dog, by the name of Happy.



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At the end of the day, the children participated in a fun quiz and were given prizes as an incentive for having listened and understood the information presented to them during the course of the morning. They were also given a checklist for the daily needs of their pets and pamphlets containing information on the Cosmo City CVC and the dates that it would be visiting their community.

The second phase to this project involved individual interaction with members of the community. We visited community members at their homes to inform them about animal care and provided them with the opportunity to put forward any questions that they might have. Blankets and other donations were made where necessary.

Water feeders, constructed from recycled materials, were installed so that the chickens would have a constant source of water, while minimising the work of the owners. Finally, an informal talk was held in one of the parks in Cosmo City to provide people with the opportunity to ask any further questions and to create a greater awareness of the CVC and its function.



There's no business like monkey business:

Working together towards environmental enrichment for brown capuchins

Michelle Westhof and Natasja Burger (BVSc IV)

No longer the "first years" at the University of Pretoria, as BVSc III students, we were given the task of conducting a community engagement project for the Veterinary Professional Life 300 (VPL 300) module.

Our group consisted of five girls, Natasja Burger, Carmen Cook, Rozanne Cotton, Michelle Westhof and Rudel Zowitsky, and five engineering students from the University of Pretoria.

As a community, we must strive to actively contribute to preserving and sustaining the splendour of nature. Our aim was simple... to build a better life for a furry community!

International Primate Rescue (IPR) is a non-profit organisation based at Kromdraai, about 30 km north of Onderstepoort. IPR is a sanctuary for various primates from former pet marmosets to tamarinds, capuchins, squirrel monkeys and macaques with vague histories – some with evidence of having been neglected, treated cruelly

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
Mr Jacques van Rooyen 012 529 8339
Mr Eugene Machimana 012 529 8100

sarah.johnson@up.ac.za
 jacques.vanrooyen@up.ac.za
 eugene.machimana@up.ac.za

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We also made environmental enrichment toys to encourage the monkeys to exhibit natural behaviour. With pipe-fashioned puzzles, the monkeys' foraging skills were put to the ultimate test. After multiple hours of hard work, we were privileged to see the capuchins swinging happily in their new space, curiously absorbed in figuring out (and attempting to destroy) the enrichment toys.

and even subjected to scientific experiments. The sole purpose of IPR is to be a refuge for animals that cannot be rehabilitated and sent back to the wild due to the physical, psychological and emotional trauma that has been inflicted on them, rendering them unequipped to survive outside the perimeters of an enclosure. This is proof as to why monkeys and other non-human primates should not be kept as pets.

Together with Sue Mousley (the founder of the IPR), the engineering students and H Kampman cc (our sponsor for materials and building equipment), we set out to improve the quality of life of four capuchins. Over several Saturdays, we constructed an enclosure that is linked to their original enclosure by a tunnel. This serves as extra terrain for them to roam in, as well as to simplify maintenance, cleaning procedures and the introduction of new capuchins to the existing family.

The value of good project management and teamwork was highlighted through the course of our project, but what made the greatest impact of all was that we, as students, gained much more from the experience than we could have imagined. We learned many new skills, got introduced to the world of monkey business and made memories that will last a lifetime.

Our project might have been on a small scale, but as sure as bananas are yellow, it was big at heart!

MEETING

Community Engagement Committee meeting will be held on Monday, 12 May 2014 @ 13:30.

Back to basics at the Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic (MAHC)

Dr Jeanne Rudman (Vet)

Accepting the position at Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic was a new adventure for me. The only thing I knew was that filling Dr Cherri Liebenberg's shoes would be tough, and it was indeed evident in those first few months that Dr Cherri's bubbly, energetic and friendly persona was missed by the community. However, it was not long (thanks to the welcoming attitude of the clients) before I too gained the trust and respect of the community, and so the MAHC has continued to go from strength to strength.

Our priority throughout 2013 was to educate the community on basic animal healthcare and disease prevention. To this end, the MAHC implemented 5 simple rules in an attempt to improve animal healthcare:

1. Vaccinate and deworm all animals especially moms and their puppies.
2. Encourage owners to feed animals an affordable, well-balanced diet.
3. Dip all dogs once a week against ticks and fleas.
4. Encourage owners to provide their animals with secure shelter.
5. Sterilise as many animals as possible (Be wise and sterilise)

All clients entering the MAHC receive a leaflet on primary healthcare for their pet as well as information on what services the clinic offers. Every owner is shown how to dip their dog and is advised to do so every week. Regular dipping is proving to play a vital role in disease prevention.

The impact of the MAHC on the community is phenomenal with the clinic seeing on average 15 to 20 new clients every week. Since May 2013 we have vaccinated 1200 animals, dipped 3000, sterilised 34 animals (this number will grow as clients become better informed), and treated an average of 350 sick patients.

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Our most recent success story was 2 year old cross-breed Puffy. He was cruelly treated by neighbours who maliciously threw boiling hot water on him. He arrived at the MAHC in a wheelbarrow pushed by his anxious and upset owner. He was in such pain that sedation was needed in order to examine him fully. The treatment plan consisted of daily cleaning, debridement, dressing and bandaging of the large,

painful wounds. Thanks to the commitment and dedication of his owner Mirriam, who took the long walk to the MAHC every day, Puffy is recovering better than expected.

Our main goal for 2014 is to increase the number of sterilisations and so continue to promote our motto: Be wise and sterilise. Working at MAHC thus far has been rewarding and humbling, and I have realised that client-doctor communication is of vital importance. 'If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in HIS language that goes to his heart'. This quote by Nelson Mandela has challenged me to further my knowledge of Northern Sotho in the hope that I can provide an even better service to the community in 2014.

Veterinary Student Community Outreach

Khomotso Patrick Ntsibande (BVSc V)

Veterinary Student Community Outreach (VETSCO) is an outreach programme organised by a group of veterinary students at Onderstepoort, with the sole purpose of creating awareness about community veterinary clinics in townships.

The outreach assists students with their experiential learning by providing them with the opportunity to practice basic veterinary healthcare and sterilisation in indigent communities and promoting responsible pet care through education.

VETSCO's first outreach took place on 31 August 2013 from 09:00 to 14:00 in Mamelodi East. A group of 29 undergraduate veterinary nurses and veterinary students were accompanied by Dr Nanene Qekwana, Sr Debbie Pleaner and Dr Kate May from the South African Veterinary Association (SAVA), who supervised the students where necessary. What made the event so successful was the training that was provided by the final-year students who took them through some clinical examination protocols prior to the event.

The students performed full clinical examinations, vaccinations, dewormings and dippings that cost clients R30 per dog or cat. Hill's sponsored 60 kg of dog food that was divided into smaller bags to be offered to the community for free. The Veterinary Black Forum sponsored the transport, making it possible for more students to participate.



Once the VETSCO group is registered, monitored and supported by the Faculty, it will make a great difference in the lives of many students lives in their clinical year. "Only from the heart can you touch the sky", and this is an opportunity for students to reach for the horizon.

Community Engagement Project at the Pretoria National Zoological Gardens

Rozanne Buitendach (BVSc IV)

Veterinary students Grace Justin Frederick, Pamela Steyn, Rozanne Buitendach and San-Mari Badenhorst set off for the National Zoological Gardens for their community engagement project. The motivation behind this project was to educate young individuals with autism about veterinary science and to give them the opportunity to have a close-up experience with nature.

The aim of this project was to enrich the lives of these individuals by giving them the chance to experience something out of the ordinary. The experience was fun and educational, with an introduction to the basics of veterinary science and animal health.

The children arrived at the Pretoria Zoo and the activities for the day commenced. The first activity took place at the seals' enclosure where work charts were used to illustrate what seals eat, how they swim and how they are treated in the case of an oil spill. A special seal show was organised where the children could interact with the animals and even receive a kiss.

The next stop was the monkey enclosures where the zoo staff demonstrated how and what they feed the monkeys.



The children were taken up the mountain in the cable cars to see the lions and tigers. The instinctive behaviour of these cats was illustrated with a work chart. They also learned the function of their teeth and how veterinarians go about extracting a broken tooth.

The last stop was an environmental enrichment event for the goats, where the children dipped carrots and apples into jam and peanut butter and then added some macaroni. The idea was for the children to have the opportunity to feed the goats, and in doing so, make physical contact with the animals.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Event	Venue	Date
Production Animal Outreach Clinic	Makapanstad and Ratjjean Project	Wednesdays
Mamelodi Animal Health Care (MAHC)	Mamelodi Campus	Mondays to Fridays
Loate Community Veterinary Clinic	Winterveldt	Bimonthly 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 2014). The community engagement article should not be more than one page in length. Contact person: Eugene Machimana Tel: 012 529 8100 (w)
Email: eugene.machimana@up.ac.za

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