

# Community Engagement Newsletter

Faculty of Veterinary Science  
Spring 2011



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT AT VULPRO

Cassie van der Walt, Jeanine Gautschi, Werner Wentzel, Luzanne Lourens, Reinach Erasmus & Natalie Braysher (BVSc I)

***“We aim to be the leading vulture conservation programme for advancing knowledge, awareness and innovation in the conservation of the African vulture populations for the benefit and wellbeing of society.”*** Mission statement - VulPro

*VulPro* is one of the leaders in vulture conservation and rehabilitation. They are innovative in advancing knowledge and awareness in the conservation of various birds of prey. The general population is not aware of the role that vultures play in the ecosystem. Organisations such as *VulPro* depend on the community and business corporations to function as a successful entity. We as veterinary students play a pivotal role in community engagement and training. The community was involved by inviting a small group of children from a children's home, the President Kruger Kinderhuis. These children would not have had the opportunity to be exposed to these birds if it was not for *VulPro*.

The aim of *VulPro* is to release the birds back into the wild that are able to fly and which is fit and healthy. The birds that fail to meet these expectations are kept on a permanent basis and are used for research programmes, breeding or educational purposes.

I learnt how the caging facilities of birds of prey should be made. I also learnt a lot of people skills and how to work with children. The biggest lesson I learned was to appreciate the fact that I was brought up in a home with loving parents, who introduced me to, and gave me the opportunity to get exposed to in the environment and taught me to respect it.

**Cassie van der Walt**

I really enjoyed working with the children and it was wonderful for me to think that we had given them a chance to see such amazing animals and teach them something that we had been taught. Knowledge that we gained was passed on to the children, which is an important part of the process to ensure better future outcomes for the vultures. The children seemed interested in the birds and in what their roles in the environment are.

**Jeanine Gautschi**

At *VulPro* I learned the difference between vulture species. I also came to realise in what situation the vultures find themselves as some species are extinct completely from certain areas. People need to be informed more about vultures and their role in nature in order for people to appreciate them more.

**Werner Wentzel**

This project was really a highlight in my year so far because it was just good to get away from the books and have an opportunity to apply what we learn every day. It was interesting to apply the things we learned in the dog practical on a vulture and see that it actually worked, because sometimes you have to be a bit firm with the animals to ensure your own safety.

**Luzanne Lourens**



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I must admit that working with the vultures was at the beginning very intimidating and all of us working with them were very cautious. We all knew that these are wild animals and they are not used to human contact on a continuous basis. We were asked to do a demonstration for a group of children that were burn victims. I saw this as a great opportunity to see the actual progress that we made with Cody. The children were ecstatic to see a vulture, something they would never have seen if a centre like VulPro did not exist.

**Reinach Erasmus**

This project gave me the opportunity to apply positive reinforcement training to a vulture which is a very unique experience. We then also used Cody to display the ability of training these birds to the children of the children's. During one of the training sessions with Cody, there were children at the centre that were burn victims. We were asked if we could do a display with Cody as we had been working with him. It was a great opportunity to interact with the children. It was educational not only for the children but for me as well and an experience to be able to see their reaction to the vulture.

**Natalie Braysher**

## **MAMELODI ANIMAL HEALTH CLINIC (MAHC) MOVING FORWARD**

**Dr Cherrie Liebenberg (Vet)**

The Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic has now been in operation for six months. The last six months have been filled with many wonderful events, pets and happy stories. The clinic has been received by the community with such positivism and surprise. Many of the clients that arrive for the first time are taken aback by the clinic's wonderful facilities and service excellence. I believe that the community has an image of what they expect a community clinic to be, and the Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic delivers so much more than their expectations. This clinic has Prof. Swan and Dr. Henry Annandale to thank for its inception. Not to mention everyone who was involved in the beginning phases.

The change in the community has been tangible. Dogs that initially arrived at the clinic with barbed-wire chains, covered in ticks and fleas and grossly underweight, have returned a month or so later for follow up vaccinations with gleaming coats. The joy expressed in the dog's eyes and the pride oozing from the owners is amazing. The old saying of "*You can't teach an old dog new tricks*" does not seem to be the case in Mamelodi. A few members of the community have simply gone above and beyond the call of duty, spending their time promoting the clinic and physically bringing new clients to the clinic.

story with a very happy ending has been "Bullwyn" Hlope, a six month old Rottweiler puppy that was infected with Babesiosis and Ehrlichia.

He developed a rare complication in which a vasculitis/vacuulopathy caused a large portion of his face, including his nose to become necrotic. Dr Gerhard Steenkamp graciously offered his expertise to reconstruct his face and nose. His dramatic story was even featured in the Tshwane Beeld, and to everyone's delight, Bullwyn is recovering beautifully.

The Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic has been involved in three school talks in conjunction with students doing their practical assignments for the Companion Animal Ethology (CPE 400) course. The schools involved were Solomon Mahlangu Freedom High, Rebanelaka High and Boikgantsho Primary School. I was also given the opportunity to present a talk at the Mae Jemison Reading Room, at the Mamelodi campus. The talks revolved around topics including primary health care and animal welfare. The talks were aimed at installing new concepts into the learners regarding caring for your pet and Veterinary Science as a career. After each talk the response from the learners was very positive and some learners were enthralled with the idea of Veterinary Science as a career option.



The University of Pretoria's celebration of Mandela Day was hosted at the Mamelodi campus on 23 July 2011. The celebration included 67 minutes of community work involving the collection of rubbish around the Mamelodi community ending in a massive recycling drive. A career exhibition was also held in the main arena for the learners that attended. Prof Swan and Dr Annandale officially opened the clinic at this event. The learners partaking in Mandela Day were then treated to a special tour of the clinic. Sr. Johnson arranged the most memorable memorabilia, to mark the clinic's opening. All those attending the clinic's launch were spoilt with shortbread biscuits in the shape of a spaniel, pens embossed with the clinic's telephone number, and some received a beautiful note pad and pen. The opening day was a delightful success.

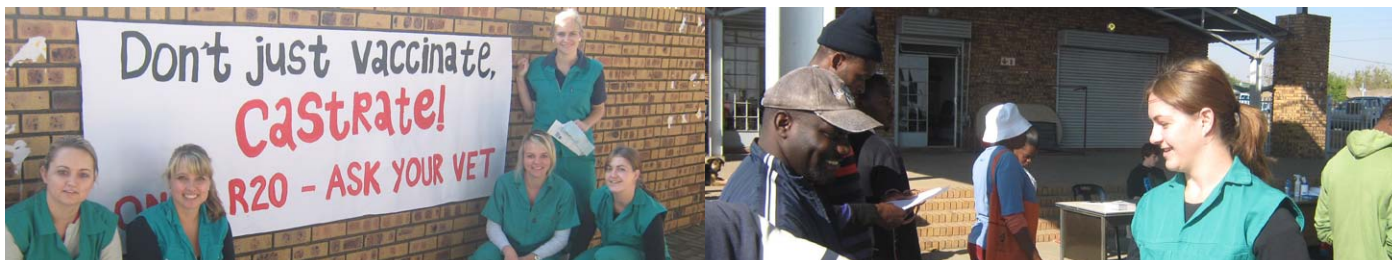
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## OP STUDENTS PROMOTING AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CASTRATION AT LOATE CVC

*Recently five 4<sup>th</sup> year veterinary students (Anya Kleinhans, Ronelle Classen, Ebeneze Ginsberg, Suenette Kotze and Tilana Botha) visited Loate Community Veterinary Clinic (CVC) to promote awareness of the importance of castration and the ease with which Loate CVC could facilitate this service for the Winterveldt community. Our mission for the day at Loate was to generate awareness about castration.*



On a final note the clinic has been visited by approximately 480 dogs and 4 cats. We hope that those numbers will grow in leaps and bounds. We are also planning to initiate a weekly dipping day at the clinic, where owners can bring their dogs to be dipped for free. We feel that this will give us a unique opportunity to monitor the community's dogs for any signs of illness, and thus be able to treat them at an earlier stage.

Please contact one of the following people if you would like to donate money, dog food, collars, leashes, baskets, or your time: As there were no pre-existing awareness projects for castration of male dogs, we were given free rein to do what we could to convey the message to the Winterveldt community. We decided our best course of action would be to create and handout fliers and speak to the people frequenting the clinic. The aim was to educate the community about the benefits of sterilisation. The benefits include diminished aggressiveness towards other dogs, reduced territorial marking behaviour and a reduction in the number of unwanted puppies in the community. We tried to convey in our flier and in speaking to the people that sterilised dogs are still great guard dogs and that castrated male dogs tend to roam less. We found that the best way to convey this message is to tell the people that for only R20 they can prevent further costs on puppies.

In preparation for the clinic, we consulted with Ms Daleen Grundingh of SAVA for more information concerning the services offered at Loate CVC, and received booklets telling us about SAVA's goal for animals in need, and posters to aid us in getting our message across to the community. We then set to work on compiling the fliers, gathering information as to the merits of sterilisation. We endeavoured to make the fliers as easily understandable as possible so as to overcome language and illiteracy barriers. We then made a large poster to capture their attention, painting it boldly in red and black for maximum impact. Mr Eugene Machimana, Community Engagement Coordinator at the Faculty, was a great help throughout our entire preparatory process, always there for us whenever we needed a helping hand. Dr Quixi Sonntag, our CPE 400 lecturer, was also a great help, helping us to improve the wording of our fliers to better convey our message.

We handed out fliers to everyone present, even the helpers, each time explaining the information presented in the flier and answering any queries the people may have had. In doing so we believe that we have not only educated but also built relationships of trust with the CVC clients, which might encourage them to refer their friends and family to the CVC and assisting us in our effort to make the communities a more pet friendly place. After speaking to each person present individually, Dr Nenene Qekwana, the clinic doctor administering vaccinations and urgent medical attention to the dogs, suggested we get involved in the administration of vaccinations to help him speed up the process and reduce the time people spent in the queue. We were very excited at the idea and split into two groups. The one group helped vaccinate and deworm the animals, while the other helped out with paper work, helping people fill out information cards on their dogs to keep track of vaccinations already administered/yet to be administered. It was a constant source of amusement to all present how clever dogs can be when it comes to deworming tablets and not swallowing them.





Many puppy litters came through the clinic, reminding us of the growing need for sterilisation education. While busy with the vaccinations and paper work, Mr Vhonani Manenzhe, a driver and helper from the SAVA, told us that, in an attempt to encourage castrations and discourage breeding, people were being charged R30 per puppy's vaccination if they refused to castrate the pups. Vaccination is normally free and sterilisation only R20, so this should help encourage more sterilisations.

After talking to all the people present we got some feedback from them in terms of what they think of sterilisation and whether they would consider doing it. Strangely enough it was mostly the owners of female dogs who were very eager to sterilise because they all knew about the cost and hard work involved in raising puppies. The owners of male dogs were generally less keen to castrate because they could see no direct implication to them.

The fact that castrated males are less likely to mark their territory with urine had them thinking and a few of the people with young male puppies changed their mind regarding castration at the end of the day. Quite a few people had plans to breed with their dogs. These were generally purebred dogs such as Rotweilers and Pitbulls. We asked them whether they are aware of the implications - and most of them were - of also having a safe area to keep the male dogs where they won't be able to escape and feeding the dogs proper food (Vets Choice/Montego). All in all we think that our project was successful and that we reached and educated



## SPANISH AND SOUTH AFRICAN VET STUDENTS VISIT THE LOATE CVC

*Stephanie Friedman (Student) & Daleen Grundlingh (SAVA CVC Coordinator)*

The much-anticipated IVSA Spain-South Africa vet student group exchange, also known as EspanJol 2011, kicked off on 19 April 2011. The major aim of the exchange was to promote and introduce all aspects of the veterinary profession and South African culture along with showing the Spanish everything our beautiful country has to offer.

The first activity, on 20 April, included a visit to the Loate Community Veterinary Clinic in Winterveldt. On arrival Dr Nenene Qekwana, a regular veterinarian at the clinic, gave an informative introduction on the main challenges regarding animal health and welfare seen in the community, along with an explanation on the services that the clinic has to offer. All the students got busy with helping to fill out paperwork, vaccinate, dip, deworm and provide primary health care. It was a fantastic learning experience, where all got to interact with the community members, witness the challenges that face animals and veterinary care in developing areas and realize that where certain facilities and equipment may be lacking, the use of your own initiative can go a long way to ensure affordable primary veterinary care. It was a great day that was both eye-opening and educational for our Spanish friends. A big thank-you must go to the SAVF for making this day possible and for the generous donation that went towards sponsoring a much-needed fridge for the CVC. Also to Dr Qekwana who was extremely helpful, patient and enthusiastic, helping to make the day a success. The CVC is a fantastic initiative that promotes and educates communities on health, care and safe treatment of their pets, that is accessible, affordable and inspiring to future developments in South African veterinary care.



**IVSA Spain-South Africa vet student group**



**Students vaccinating a dog at Loate CVC**

The CVC would like to thank EspanJol 2011 for the fridge that they donated to the CVC. Our clinics expanded over the past year and we do not have enough space in our bar fridge to keep the vaccines for all the clinics. Our tight budget did not allow purchase of a bigger fridge, but now our problem has been solved by your generosity. Thank you for the donation and your assistance at Loate CVC. It is much appreciated.

## HEALTHY PEOPLE HEALTHY PETS PROMOTION 2011

The Winterveld "Healthy people healthy pets promotion" Family Dog Show 2011 will be held on Saturday 17 September:

Venue: Winterveld  
Multipurpose Centre.  
Time: 10h00-16h00

Volunteers are needed, please contact  
Mr Eugene Machimana

E-mail: [eugene.machimana@up.ac.za](mailto:eugene.machimana@up.ac.za)  
Tel: (012) 529 8100 (w) or  
Cell 083 687 0181

## PETS PICNIC IN THE PARK

*Lauren Dommert (DVN1 Representative 2011)*

On Sunday 17 April 2011 the first year Veterinary Nurses of 2011, hosted a charity event at Rietondale Park in Pretoria. It took form of a pet's picnic in the park and all donations went to the Joey Gracie Mc Connell Animal Foundation.  
([www.jgmanimalfoundation.org.za](http://www.jgmanimalfoundation.org.za)).



The purpose of the event was to raise awareness of animal health, grooming and behavioural care as well as let the families and pets have a fun filled day. The day began with performances from Canine Freestyle dancers which incorporated obedience and routines to music with owners and their pets. For most this was a highlight of the day. We also had various competitions, including a Talent Show, Look-a-Like and an 'All-sorts' category (including the waggiest tail, cutest dog, naughtiest dog etc.).

For those interested in a more educational experience, Q&A sessions conducted by a Veterinarian (Dr Kate May), a Groomer (Was 'n Woef) and a Behavioural Trainer (Dr. Quixi Sonntag). Sister Nicolien Fourie represented the Veterinary Nurses profession on the day. We had many stalls: with pet related products by Royal Canin; Animal Organisations by PAT; 'Doggy Wash' by Was 'n Woef; a DJ (Zane) and a Food stand by Queenswood SuperSpar.

Donations were collected in the form of cash, as well as old or new pet related products (i.e. blankets, food, collars, leads etc). In total donations to the value of over R20 000 were presented to the Joey Gracie McConnell Animal foundation. This included 450kg of dog food sponsored by Royal Canin. The donations and food were distributed by the organisation to many different organisations such as Husky Rescue and Kitten corner.



Three raffles were also held, with the winner of the grand prize winning a weekend away to Penwarn Trout and Equine Estate in Kwa-Zulu Natal ([www.penwarn.com](http://www.penwarn.com)) worth R5 000 {won by Mark Wolmer}. The three runners up each received a free wheel alignment from AutoWiel {won by Chris Bojara, Ian Kotze, and Ramona Allen}. The winners of the 2 smaller raffles received cat hampers worth R400 each, sponsored by the Mog-n-Mutt Petfood Shop at the Onderstepoort Veterinary Academic Hospital (OVAH) {won by Sister Ester Botha and Vivienne Taylor} and lastly to win a personally signed Parltones T-shirt {won by Emelia Loots}.

We, the students are very grateful to Penwarn Trout and Equine Estate, Royal Canin, Was 'n Woef, Queenswood SuperSpar, Cassendale Spar, Bayer, Virbac, AfriVet, Canine Connection, OVAH Mog-n-Mutt Petfood Shop, Shaun-Lee Photo, AutoWiel, VNASA and many others for their support and sponsorship. A big thank you also goes out to Sister Ester Botha for her assistance.

The feedback received was so positive that, we, the veterinary nursing students have been asked to do this event again next year. Our goal is to hopefully have the Pets Picnic in The Park as an annual event done by all the nursing students so that we can keep helping to *"Change the World One Paw at a Time"*!



The Community Engagement Committee invites you to submit short articles to be published in the next Newsletter (Summer 2011). The Community Engagement article should not be more than 1 page long. Contact person Mr Eugene Machimana Tel: (012) 529 8100 (w) Cell: 083 687 0181 Email: [eugene.machimana@up.ac.za](mailto:eugene.machimana@up.ac.za)