

# Community Engagement Newsletter



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

**Faculty of Veterinary Science**  
Summer: February 2019



## A FRUITFUL EXPERIENCE

Byron Gopper, Kira-Lee Manne & Dr Ester Botha

The veterinary nursing students decided to support the local Onderstepoort Primary School for their community engagement project.

The principal was very accommodating and after an initial visit to the school to establish what their potential needs were, it was determined that the school would benefit from some trees, as the area outside the classrooms was rather bare. It was decided that we would purchase some fruit trees, as this would provide both shade and delicious treats for the learners in future. Two orange trees were bought from funds previously raised by the class. According to *Tree Symbolism: the Legend and Lore of Trees Vol. 2*, orange trees are a symbol of generosity and welcome innovation.

The representative group of nurses that volunteered to partake in the execution of the project, congregated at the school to plant the two trees. The nurses donned their greens and gumboots and



*The veterinary nursing students supported Onderstepoort Primary School during their community engagement project.*



*The students planted two trees and installed simple water-wise systems to help the learners to water their new trees easily with the minimum water.*

with some assistance from the learners got to work. They dug and picked two holes in rather hard soil. Before the trees were planted, the holes were nourished

with bone meal and compost and a piece of plastic pipe was placed in each hole, laying from the soil surface to the roots. A plastic two-litre coke bottle was then

attached to the surface end to allow effective water-wise watering to the tree's roots. The learners were taught how to fill and replace the bottles so they could carry on this important task for the years to come. It was clear that the learners enjoyed being involved.

After planting the two orange trees, the nurses went to each of the classes to engage with the learners and some sweets as treats were handed out. Learning English work books were handed to Mr J. Nyathi, the principal, for use as part of the school curriculum.

Overall, our community engagement project was a success and we are grateful for the opportunity to interact with the local learners. We would like to thank the principal, teachers and learners of Onderstepoort Primary School for their participation in this initiative.

We wish them all the success and enjoyment and sense of achievement they will get from the fruit of the trees in the near future.

## INSIGHT TO PREVENT A BITE: MMAMMUDU PRIMARY SCHOOL

Marco Wasserman, Bronwen van Tonder, Frederik Loggenberg, Bethany Damonse & Elana Smit (BVSc III)

On Friday, 13 July 2018, our group visited Mmamudu Primary school in the Makapanstad district of the North West province.

This was as part of a community engagement project at the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Pretoria. This community project aims to improve the partnership between Onderstepoort Campus and the surrounding communities, as well as educating the communities on animal health and welfare.

For our visit, we had the privilege of sharing our knowledge of the rabies virus with a class of 28 Grade 4 learners. Our aim was to not only educate them on rabies but more importantly to teach the learners about animal welfare. Moreover, how to best interact with especially dogs in their community.

In the aspect of rabies education, we based our presentation on educating the learners about dog bite prevention and basic treatment of dog bite wounds so as to prevent them from becoming victim to this virus. The main focus of our presentation, however, was to help the children become

more responsible pet owners and educate them on especially dog behaviour and reading the animals body language as well as basic animal welfare. Fortunately for us this coincided very well with the lesson on dog bite prevention.

Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) was kind enough to provide us with fun and educational booklets (n = 40) for the learners to learn from and take home so that they too can share the message of responsible pet ownership as well as dog bite prevention. These booklets were very well received by the learners and definitely aided us tremendously in sharing our message for the day.

A special thanks must also be given to Bethal Dierkliniek for donating very cute animal themed pencils to each of the learners. They also provided us with dog treats to give the learners so that they could spoil their pets at home, and in so doing create an atmosphere of love between the community and its animals.



*The learners thoroughly enjoyed the veterinary students' visit.*

As a group we really enjoyed this experience and the privilege of sharing our knowledge with the learners of this community. It really was a special feeling to be able to add joy to the lives of so many learners. Hopefully in the process bring happiness and a better future to the animals in the community.

A special thank you must also be said to Mr Letjae Moloto (the principal), Mrs Difiedile Mahuma (teacher) and pupils at Mmammundu Primary School for their help, participation and time. Once again we would like to thank GARC for providing us with these wonderful rabies booklets for the learners and for the work they are doing for rabies awareness.



*A special thanks to the Global Alliance for Rabies (GARC) for providing educational booklets. The learners were very impressed.*



**DONATIONS:** All donations received will be used for community engagement purposes, specifically in less fortunate communities. 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

Small Animal Section Head & Referrals Co-ordinator sarah.johnson@up.ac.za

## MAVERIC- THE INITIATIVE CONTINUES

Nabeelah Rajah (BVSc III)

On Saturday morning, 28 March, students from the University of Pretoria gathered at the Itireleng grounds for their second MAVERIC outreach for the 2018 year.

MAVERIC is the Medical and Veterinary Rural Integrated Community outreach, a collaborative effort between the faculties of Veterinary Science and Health Sciences. From the Faculty of Veterinary Science, students came not just as members of the faculty, but as representatives of the various clubs and societies they are part of, including the Onderstepoort Para-veterinary and Veterinary Students Committee (OPVSC), Veterinary Students Community outreach (VetSCO), International Veterinary Students South Africa (IVSA) and Vet Books for Africa.

Veterinarians from Community Veterinary Services South Africa (CVSSA) and Themba clinic also joined the initiative. At each initiative, over 30 animals were vaccinated



*Animals were vaccinated and sterilised during the outreach.*

and given basic physical examinations by students and qualified professionals, while medical students see to their owners.

This past weekend, veterinarians and students introduced sterilisations, as the veterinarians from Themba clinic arrived with a mobile sterilisation truck, providing this service free of charge to patients of the community. The One Health concept is a multi-disciplinary approach to long-term community development, involving traditionally, the medical and veterinary professionals. However, true improvement cannot be possible without other disciplines that can contribute to holistic development.

The plan is, over time, to involve a multitude of professionals, who are able to see to



humans, animals and the environment, in order to develop an area so that they may receive the care they need, as well as education.

Members from the Pretoria Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) also attended the last outreach initiative, as an attempt to provide education on basic animal welfare and handling. The idea is to

keep this initiative running over as many years as possible, to make sure that animals receive the attention they deserve, and that their owners receive adequate education on how to care for their furry friends.

A huge thank you goes out to not just the students and professionals that take time to give back, but also to the members of Itireleng, for caring for their pets!

*The outreach was a collaborative effort between the faculties of Health Sciences and Veterinary Science. Involving multiple disciplines in crucial for healthy community development.*

## VET BOOKS FOR AFRICA: CROSSING BORDERS ONE BOOK AT A TIME

Cormé Randlehoff (BVSc III, Vet Books for Africa - Charities and Media)

In the 1800s, South Africa was in dire need of more veterinarians.

Rinderpest and multiple other diseases were striking terror throughout South Africa and desperate measures had to be taken. Not only was it a necessity to save our cattle, but also to save our economy and people, who relied on the health of their cattle as a source of food and income. The importance of veterinarians in South Africa was realised and in combination with different factors, Onderstepoort Campus was born. Veterinary science is still very important in the livestock sector, but also in the companion animal, conservation of wildlife and many different aspects of animal health. For this reason, education of Veterinarians and everyone working in the animal health field is of the utmost importance.

Vet Books for Africa is a charity, but also a Veterinary Student Society at Onderstepoort Veterinary campus. In 1993, the first groundbreaking team set off on an epic journey through Southern and Central Africa. Since then the charity has gone from strength to strength and multiple lives have been changed through this great initiative. We strive to aid with the education of Veterinary students and have the amazing opportunity to reach out to different universities throughout multiple African countries.

Vet Books for Africa consists of eight members in a biennial committee. After two years of dedicated fundraising and planning we traveled to Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya. Along the way, we supply the veterinary faculties in each of these countries with educational material and equipment, to aid not only the students, but also the lecturers in educating the best possible professionals in the animal health field. During this trip, Vet Books for Africa does not only plan to visit universities, but also multiple charities along the way. Following are a few examples of charities we visited: Painted Dog Conservation, Wildlife Action Group (WAG), Animal and Wildlife Area Research and Rehabilitation (AWARE) and Gorilla Doctors. We supplied a number of schools along the way. We would like to supply them with enough equipment and resources in order to continue the great work they are doing.



*Vet Books for Africa would like to supply veterinary students in Southern and Central Africa with enough equipment and resources.*

We have been fortunate enough to be involved in multiple initiatives in South Africa. In this we support the Maveric Outreach, the Owl Rescue Centre and Onderstepoort Primary School. We believe it is important to help charities and individuals in our own country as well. Last year, Vet Books for Africa completed the Telkom 94.7 Cycle challenge as a registered charity. The support received was amazing. Together with our fellow veterinary students at Onderstepoort, we host fundraising and book collection events throughout the year. All the proceeds and books go towards the universities, international charities and national charities we support. It is great to see multiple students coming together for a greater cause and being united towards a common goal. We hosted a dodgeball event this year and are planning to be involved with multiple other events that create a comradeship between our society members.

Without our generous sponsors and donations we would certainly not have been able to make this trip a reality. These include Ascendis Animal Health, Association of Mine Managers



*The biennial Vet Books for Africa committee consists of eight members.*

South Africa (AMMSA), Hills, Provest, Afgri, Tabbart and multiple individuals for financial, book and equipment sponsors.

Vet Books for Africa is a once in a lifetime opportunity to help our fellow students in the animal health field and make a difference in the care of multiple animals. We are extremely privileged to be part of this life changing experience, and will all remember this inspiring journey to improve education and conservation in Africa.

We believe the ideal is for each individual in the animal healthcare field to take up the reins and ensure the success and growth of Veterinary Science throughout Africa. This can only be achieved by working together and being committed to a single goal.

Vet Books for Africa is our global attempt to strengthen the relations between African universities and promote the profession we are all so passionate about.

Email: [info@vetbooksforafrica.org](mailto:info@vetbooksforafrica.org)

Webpage: <http://vetbooksforafrica.org>



Vet Books for Africa



vetbooksforafrica



VetBooks4Africa

# A DAY THAT CHANGED OUR LIVES

Johan Moolman, Kabelo Ramolotja, Kirsti Addison, Elanie van Wyk & Marné Oosthuysen (BVSc III)

**We met up as a bunch of strangers, forced into a group and asked to do a community engagement project in Hammanskraal.**

What would seem to look like a temper-clash waiting to explode, turned out to be one of the best experiences we have ever had.

We were welcomed with the warmest of hearts at Sekampaneng Primary school where we mingled with the learners, and immediately felt at home. Starting off with a few introduction questions, we got the learners excited and warmed up and from there the conversation led itself. It was extremely eye-opening to realise how some of these learners live and their exceptional relationships with their animals. What was sad to find out was

the fact that even though these learners wished to give the best to their animals, their unfortunate circumstances did not give them the opportunity to even transport their animals the 5 km to the nearest veterinarian.

We believe we truly made a huge difference in the lives of those learners as they made in our hearts, and we would like to thank the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC) for helping us achieve that by providing us with Rabies booklets (n = 25) to work through with the learners.

To see their sticker-filled faces sparkle with pride as they held their certificates, will stay with us forever. As we left the school that afternoon, the initial "group of strangers" sat in the car chatting like old friends about the newly lighted fire burning in our hearts. We would like to encourage every person reading this article, to take a step back and genuinely look around you; the rush you will feel from helping or just listening to someone you know nothing about is a feeling you need to feel to understand. Once you felt it, you would not be able to go without it!

# TAKING A STAND AGAINST RABIES

Philip van Tonder (BVSc III)

We as a group of third-year veterinary students from Onderstepoort Campus was tasked with an assignment. We had to implement a rabies information presentation to Pholokgolo Primary School.

We were allocated a group and we all knew each other, but little did we know we are about to learn a lot more about our “friends” we already know. We set out on this amazing journey, sceptical at first, but when we saw how little these learners had and how ungrateful we can sometimes be, we decided to try our best to change the lives of these young kids and leaders of the future.

As a group, we did our presentation and each member had a different topic on rabies they had to educate the learners on. We tried to emphasise the growing concern of this vicious and cruel virus. The learners each received rabies booklet (n = 50) from the Global Alliance of Rabies Control (GARC), which they could take home and educate others, with various pictures and stickers for them to enjoy.

I was astonished at the end of the day when the teacher asked me: “How can I prevent my dog from getting rabies?”, and I asked the class to help their teacher with this question, as one man they said the answer and helped him. At this stage a warm feeling of accomplishment shot through my body. These wonderful learners were starting to take a stand against rabies!

We as a group learned so much from each other in this assignment and enabled the Grade 7 class of Pholokgolo Primary School to educate others on how to prevent rabies from our communities.

*Our educational presentation equipped the learners to educate others about rabies and its prevention.*



*The booklets are great tools for educating learners about rabies.*



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Event	Venue	Date
Production Animal Outreach Clinic	Makapanstad and Ratjiepan Project	Tuesdays and Wednesdays
Mamelodi Animal Health Care (MAHC)	Mamelodi Campus	Mondays to Fridays
Mnisi Community Project	Hluvukani	Mondays to Fridays



Visit the University of Pretoria Community Engagement Management System (CEMS) for updates about community project opportunities.