

# Community Engagement Newsletter

Faculty of Veterinary Science

Spring 2014



## Dawn to dusk outreach at Rust de Winter

Nyeleti Manganyi (BVSc III Old)

For veterinary nursing and veterinary science students of Onderstepoort, 24 May 2014 was an exciting day. The students took a break from the stressful tests and practical sessions, and helped with an outreach initiative at Rust de Winter.

Many students' passion for working with the communities was fulfilled. Students were treated like professionals, and the farmers kept referring to them as "nurses" and "doctors". For the first time, their ability to apply what they had learned from their studies was valued.

The students gathered at the student parking in the morning and were greeted by busses filled with equipment, warmth, excitement and enthusiasm. Students had undergone training by Dr Nenene Qekwana beforehand, so they felt prepared and confident. They were also provided with breakfast and lunch on the day.

They arrived at Rust de Winter where the host drove them to three production animal farms, where they worked together passionately and as a team. The main focus of the outreach

was on production animals mainly cattle, sheep and goats. The significance of animal welfare, primary healthcare, zoonosis, vaccinations, dipping and deworming – and when and how often one should do it – was explained to the farmers and farm workers.



The animals were vaccinated against black quarter, botulism and anthrax. Animals with abscesses were also treated. We also clipped the hooves of sheep and goats and used FAffa MAlan CHArt (FAMACHA) as a guideline for deworming and farmers were given advice accordingly. There was, for example, a bilaterally blind goat with a granulomatous lesion on the left eye. The farmer was shown how the goat was suffering and students explained why the goat was no longer productive. It was hard for the goat to locate feed



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and water, and, since all age groups were kept in one pen, it was likely that the victim was bullied. To avoid further suffering, the farmer was advised to cull the animal.

Some calves were incorrectly ear-tagged, which caused maggots to infest the whole ear. Both the farmer and the fellow farm workers were shown how ear tags should be applied. They were also advised to make smaller holes on the ears.

Packing the cattle, positioning poles behind them, doing physical examinations, tinting loose cervical skins and administering the vaccine was the best feeling the students had ever experienced. They actually did the work that veterinarians and veterinary para-professionals do in the field. They were animal handlers, animal technicians, veterinary nurses and veterinarians for the first time. The

farmers were very appreciative of what the students did for them. They described how some of their animals were suffering and how much they believed in the students' work. If it was not for the Veterinary Public Health Department and the Gauteng Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (GDARD), this would not have been possible.



# Mamelodi outreach a two-way learning experience

Melissa Sussens, Francoisné Nortjé, Jason Meyer, Linka van Heerden, Siposethu Siyotula (BVSc III)

On 10 May 2014, veterinary students joined Veterinary Student Community Outreach (VETSCO) and vets involved in the Mamelodi Community Veterinary Clinic in a day of vaccinating, deworming and dipping at Jaffa Mahlangu Secondary School in Mamelodi.



Their main aim of the day was to help educate the community on basic animal healthcare and prophylaxis, such as vaccinating, deworming and dipping dogs and cats. Students also told community members about the Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic (MAHC) at the University of Pretoria's Mamelodi Campus, and that this service is available to them if their animals are sick at times when the students (the outreach) are not available.

Students interacted with both high school learners and younger children, answering their questions on animal healthcare and encouraging them to get their animals vaccinated. They also put on a puppet show that outlined the importance of vaccination in a simple and entertaining way that the children could understand. Aside from personal interactions, students also handed out flyers to all the community members who brought their animals for vaccinations. The flyer has information in both English and Setswana to make it more understandable. The VETSCO group expressed an interest in using it as a template to hand out at future outreach initiatives.

Students found the day to be very valuable to them personally. They enjoyed working in the field and feeling like they were making a practical difference. It was inspiring to see how much people cared about their pets, many seeing their pets as members of the family. It was also good to see the children getting involved in caring for their pets.

Overall, it was a very successful day that made students keen to get more involved in future community engagement projects.





# Community outreach in Elandspoor

Abigail Ngoepe (Postgraduate student)



Elandspoor is a very small residential area, situated in the western part of Pretoria, where poverty is rife.

Bettie, affectionately known as *Tannie Bettie* in the community, has devoted her life to the betterment of those in her small community. Twelve years ago, Bettie started a feeding scheme from her own home. Initially, she only catered for disabled children in the community, and as the years went by, she extended her care to the community as a whole. Her feeding scheme is kept alive by food donations from shops and restaurants in her area and she

manages to feed just over 100 people every second day. On 8 June 2014, the Onderstepoort postgraduate students visited this small community to hand out food parcels to the needy.

A big thanks to the students who donated both their time and resources to feed the less fortunate. The day was a great success.

**DONATIONS:** All donations received will be used for community engagement purposes, particularly in less-resourced communities. Please contact one of the following people if you would like to donate money, dog food, collars, leashes, blankets or your time:

**Dr Rebone Moerane**

012 529 8464

rebone.moerane@up.ac.za

**Sr Sarah Johnson**

012 529 8387

sarah.johnson@up.ac.za

**Mr Eugene Machimana**

012 529 8100

eugene.machimana@up.ac.za

## Community kids learn about conservation issues in a fun and informative manner

Sean Hensman (Adventure with Elephants: Manager)

Photos by Kashmika Gurunand, Bernadien Malan and Theuns Laubscher (BVSc III)

Veterinary Science students from the University of Pretoria's Onderstepoort campus, in collaboration with Adventures with Elephants, organised and hosted a fantastic community engagement activity for 25 learners from Jinnah Park Primary in Bela Bela.

A number of conservationists were invited to speak to the group of learners. The aim was to raise awareness about nature conservation and the challenges and difficulties facing conservationists and wildlife in an ever-changing Africa.



The elephants were ambassadors to simply highlight that there is a lot more to wildlife than initially meets the eye.

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Topics included a presentation about wildlife conservation by Carolyn Bocian from Rainbow Farm and Training Centre, a non-profit organisation in South Africa. The staff of the Centre train underprivileged youth in English, Maths, IT, and environmental and wildlife care. Gaven Holden-Smith from Holden Smith Anti-poaching gave a wonderfully educational and informative demonstration on the care and performance of anti-poaching dogs.

The highlight of the day was to enable the learners to take part in a one-hour elephant interaction with five elephants at Adventures with Elephants. Bearing in mind that many of the learners had never seen a live elephant before, this opportunity was unique as it allowed the learners to learn about elephants in a fun and interactive way. Many of the learners, as is common in these communities, still live in fear of elephants and other wildlife, so it was great to see them having fun with the animals.

The learners left with a greater appreciation for wildlife and for the people who help to conserve it. We hope that this experience inspires learners to do more for wildlife in their own capacity, and perhaps even encourage them to seek future careers in nature conservation.

We would like to express our thanks and congratulations to the veterinary students who initiated and coordinated this community engagement project. We look forward to continuing this project in the years to come.



## MEETING

Community Engagement Committee meeting will be held on Monday, 20 October 2014 at 13:30.



# When **paws** meet **hands**

Fatima Moolla (BVSc III)

ROOOOAR!! The king of the grasslands' roar can be heard up to 8 km away, but the laughter of learners echoes in eternity.



Mr Daniel, the white lion, turned out to be very popular among the learners and received a unanimous vote for the favourite animal award. He was treated by all 10 learners bursting out into the well-known song *The lion sleeps tonight*.

At lunch, the learners were served Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), and were quizzed on the day's adventure. When asked what they learned, they stressed: "Rhino poaching must stop. Tiger poaching must stop. All poachers must be thrown into jail."



On 12 June 2014, a group of veterinary students had the opportunity to take Grade 4 learners from Ecaweni Primary School to Lory Park Zoo and Animal Sanctuary in Midrand. Ten smiling learners met the students in the morning, accompanied by their just as happy teacher.

The learners assured the veterinary students that they will take care of the environment, starting with their school and their pets, because animals and the environment are very important. They said: "People must be kind to animals and look after them."

The learners, some of whom had never been to a zoo, had the opportunity to engage with lions, leopards and serval cubs, see endangered species, learn about the importance of conservation and create enrichment toys for the animals. A tyre stuffed with hay made a very comfortable bed for the cubs and toilet paper rolls tied to a string entertained the cubs for hours on end.

To round off the day, drawings of the day's highlights and handprints garlanded a chart, artistically capturing the animal magic. The students sprinkled a little more fairy dust and created a wonderful hamper, which included items on the zoo's wishlist, coupled with the learners' magic scroll, and presented it to the zoo as a token of appreciation. The students would like to thank Lory Park Zoo and the sponsors, SK Trucking and Ganga Plumbers for making this day awesome. *"And above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you, because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who don't believe in magic will never find it"* (Roald Dahl).

## A unique zoo experience

Graeme Piketh (BVSc III)

This year, the third-year veterinary class from the University of Pretoria's Onderstepoort Campus were set the task of arranging and integrating a community engagement project. The class was divided into groups and applied for each of the opportunities that they felt would best suit their skills. They also suggested projects that would make the biggest impact on their own lives, as well as those of people around them.

In accordance with this, a group of five veterinary students set out to the National Zoological Gardens in Pretoria to conduct and complete the tasks set in the Veterinary Professional Life 300 (VPL) module. Here, they collaborated with the zoo and were joined by 17 learners from the UNICA School for Autism. Thanks to both these institutions and an extensive amount of research, planning and a little luck, the day was sure to be fun-filled and educational for all.

The early morning start at the zoo left no doubt in the students' minds that the zoo provided the perfect environment to provide the learners with an opportunity to get out of the classroom and develop their socialisation and interactive skills (both of which pose a particular challenge for learners suffering from autism).



The learners boasted a diverse array of cultures, personalities and perspectives, and were instrumental in conducting such an eye-opening experience. The learners had impeccable manners, coupled with an amazing sense of value for their fellow classmates.

Although some learners were nervous, they all seemed to imprint a long-lasting impression on the group, and they managed to creep into the students' hearts, leaving them feeling far more fulfilled and humbled than when they had started the expedition.

The unity that the learners displayed as a group, encouraging and helping each other to overcome their challenges, combined with the sheer joy and appreciation

they radiated at each new experience, was undoubtedly a defining life experience for the students. The students learned far more valuable lessons from these individuals than they could ever have hoped.

A particular highlight of the day was the time spent in the reptile exhibit. The learners were enthralled at these amazing creatures and appeared to hang onto every word the group uttered. Even the young man that the zoo had commissioned to photograph the event seemed far more interested in listening to the discussions on these creatures and interacting with the learners than actually capturing the moments on film, proving that a moment captured in the mind and heart is infinitely more valuable than something that will eventually be permanently and statically displayed on a computer screen or paper.

For the zoo, the day was the culmination of many of the main facets of its existence. Through the project, it was able to not only impart an appreciation for the living world, but also to educate the future generation about the plight and importance of each and every creature in existence.

The day ended far richer than it had began, with only a slight melancholy in the knowledge that it had to come to an end. It will undoubtedly be a day that each and every participant will look back on and smile.



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Event	Venue	Date
Production Animal Outreach Clinic	Makapanstad and Ratjjejan Project	Wednesdays
Mamelodi Animal Health Care (MAHC)	Mamelodi Campus	Mondays to Fridays
Loate Community Veterinary Clinic	Winterveldt	Once a month 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. 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](mailto:eugene.machimana@up.ac.za)

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