

# Community Engagement Newsletter

Faculty of Veterinary Science

Spring 2013



## Community Engagement Day for Public Health

Thandi Fourie (BVSc III)

Photos by: Nicole Epstein (BVSc III)

What is the point of community engagement? Sometimes we, as Vet students, get so absorbed in our little worlds of books, knowledge and complicated methods to do fancy operations that we forget that there is a simpler way of life on our doorsteps.

This Community Engagement Day was a day for us, the students, to serve the farmers. I had half expected to find gaunt animals in a poor condition but I have to say that I was impressed by the beautiful cattle, goats and sheep that we had to work with. The farmers had also done their best to provide handling facilities, although these sometimes failed, fell apart or the cattle simply walked away with parts of the crush hanging around their necks.

We worked with animal health technicians employed by the Gauteng State Veterinary Services. They were very helpful, as they knew the area and the farms. They also had much more practical experience than the majority of the students. We respected them as such and asked for their help and advice on certain matters.

They also acted as our translators to some of the farmers. Our group was joined by Dr Nenene Qekwana, who seemed in his element when cornering vicious pigs and capturing runaway sheep.

The farmers, if they wanted to receive our services, had to come and fetch us at a certain central location. They then piled us into bakkies and carted us off to their farms. What we found interesting was that some of the farmers never came. We asked the animal health technicians why this could be. The answer was that many of the farmers have been promised various services and facilities by government and other organisations, but have not received anything but disappointment. Another factor could be that they do not perceive the value of what we do. Do they understand that a preventative measure is more valuable than treatment? Unfortunately, we were somewhat pressed for time and I would have liked to ask the farmers how they feel and what they know. Could we help them to see what it is that we do?

At the farms, we herded the cattle into whatever form of a crush they had, then we administered a vaccine to them.



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA  
Faculty of Veterinary Science

continued from page 1



We then moved onto goats and/or sheep and administered ivermectin for parasite control. We had a team that caught the animals, a team that drew up the drugs and a team that administered the drugs subcutaneously. There was also someone who recorded the animals and the drugs



and dosages given. On the whole, I think we worked well together and every sweaty face came back with a smile on it. This experience was valuable to the Vet students and farmers alike. These undemanding farmers were a pleasure to serve and I would gladly do it again.

## Some TLC for our canine friends

Alison Cook, Bevin Meyer, Tessa Morris, Kelsey Skinner and Olivia McMurray (BVSc III)

As the need to educate people on proper pet care and treatment is such a vital component in promoting animal welfare, especially in township situations, the group of Vet students chose to join Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots South Africa.

In collaboration with Women And Men Against Child Abuse (WMACA) Kidz Clinics, Roots & Shoots runs the Care of Domestic Animals in My Community Programme over a four-month period at Emfundisweni Primary in Alexandra Township and Lenasia South Community Centre. Teens voluntarily attend classes and are educated on basic animal needs, as well as pet care and management. At the end of the programme, they graduate as animal ambassadors for their communities to help spread the word of how to treat and care for your animals. The hope is that their new-found love and respect for animals will filter through the rest of the community and slowly change the mindset of the greater population.

At the end of the four months, the project – with the help of the Sandton and Johannesburg SPCA – hosts a Dog Wash and Treatment Day in each community where the new graduates encourage the rest of their community to bring their pets. Each member of the team was able to spend one-on-one time with members of the community, educating them on correct animal handling and dog-bite prevention, while helping them to wash their dogs. With the SPCA, this opportunity was also used to check the animals (while educating the owner on what to look for) and deworm them.

The opportunity to interact with community members on such a personal level gave the veterinary students time

### MEETING

Community Engagement Committee meeting will be held on Monday, 21 October 2013 @ 13h30.

## 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

continued from page 2



Faculty of Veterinary Science students, with other Roots & Shoots volunteers, providing the community members and their dogs with much-needed tender loving care (TLC), made possible by the generous contributions from Royal Canin and Pick n Pay Morningside (Outspan Road).

to pass on the skills so far acquired from their studies at the Faculty of Veterinary Science and to contribute a part, however small, to the overall struggle in promoting animal welfare in communities throughout South Africa. It proved to be an extremely rewarding experience.

The team could not have done it without the cooperation of Roots & Shoots, the generous help of Tessa Chamberlain and the rest of her management, staff and customers at Pick n Pay Morningside (Outspan Road), who provided much-needed pet food to go home with owners, dog

washing resources, as well as food and juice for those children and adults working on the day, and Royal Canin, who generously provided each centre in Alexandra and Lenasia with Royal Canin gazebos for relief from the sun and heat. A big thank you must also go to the Vet students who volunteered to give extra assistance and advice on the day in Alexandra and Lenasia.

As a product of our involvement with this programme, the team hopes that a permanent partnership between Roots & Shoots and the Faculty of Veterinary Science can be established to work towards solving issues on animal

welfare from a grass roots level. These issues are not only important to us as future veterinarians, but also to all those people and pets facing the reality of limited knowledge and resources common to most communities in South Africa. The aim to bring people and animals together and encourage love, respect and a sense of responsibility for one's pet is an important objective to work towards to resolve many sociological issues that plague our country. It was a fulfilling experience and our team feels very privileged to have contributed to this important initiative.

# DOG BITE AWARENESS

**Bob Maswanganye**

(Principal of Kosea Moeka Primary School)

The day the Onderstepoort Vet students engaged with the Grade 5 learners to highlight dog bite awareness at Kosea Moeka Primary School created a new way of looking at a man's best friend of all times. The partnership between the Faculty of Veterinary Science and Kosea Moeka Primary School has a long way to go. A new way of looking at dogs in our community has been invoked.

The video presentation was fascinating to the learners and brought to the fore all the imaginings about man's relationship with dogs. A dog is not only a man's best friend, but a guide to the blind, a sniffer to the police and a security guard to those who keep them as pets. As echoed by the learners, dogs must be treated with the outmost respect as they have feelings too. It can be seen by the gestures of being happy, sad, scared, moody or sick.

## WORLD VETERINARY DAY AWARD

The Faculty of Veterinary Science, in collaboration with the Gauteng Department of Veterinary Services, annually organises vaccination campaigns. The vaccination campaign at Rust de Winter was submitted to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) by the Gauteng Department of Veterinary Services for the World Veterinary Day Award. It was announced in May 2013 that South Africa had received the award. Congratulations to all the participants.

## TuksFM Woolly Winter blankets

The University of Pretoria collected and donated over 700 blankets and goods to communities.

The TuksFM Woolly Winter Campaign was successful and the Faculty of Veterinary Science has proudly contributed to this great initiative, which was endorsed by the University's Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof Cheryl de la Rey.

# Performing to fight animal abuse

Nadine Strydom, Megan Naude, Lise-Marie Roux and Charney Sargent (UP Drama Students III)

Ever wondered what will happen when Veterinary Science students and Drama students put their heads together on a community engagement project?



From 13 to 17 May, a number of schools in the Mamelodi area discovered the answer to this question. Two groups of Drama students from the University of Pretoria visited several schools in Mamelodi and delivered interactive performances. Pupils of all ages got to learn more about animal welfare.

Theatre for development is based on the principle of edutainment, in other words, teaching through performance where the spectator not only observes the performance, but interacts with the performers and becomes part of the performance. This form of theatre is applicable to any age group. First, a target audience and pressing issues will be identified. Through a workshop process, the actors and facilitator explore these issues by means of several exercises. By means of devising, the actors and facilitator create a performance (they make an entire show from

nothing) that addresses these problems with possible solutions. In the Mamelodi area, there is growing concern about pets in general. The performers addressed several issues, such as caring for your pet, dog fights, where to seek help for abused animals, why cats can be great pets, and why adopting a pet is the right way to go. All this information was obtained from the Mamelodi Animal Health Clinic (MAHC). The first group focused on learners in Grade 4 to Grade 7, which were identified as being the most influential group on this matter. The second group visited high schools.

After the performance, when pupils approach you with questions about what was said in the show, or tell you stories from their own lives, you realise that this project makes a difference. After most shows, there was a Q and A session. At Balebogi Primary School, when we gave the SPCA's number, most of the students scrambled for their pens. Later, one boy explained that his dog was his best friend and that he looked after him with great care. He went on to say that he wanted his dog to live as long as he does, so they go to the SPCA together for vaccinations.

It is a great experience going to a school, entering these pupils' learning environment and teaching them in a whole new light. As performers, we strive to entertain, and there is nothing more rewarding than seeing the excitement and joy in a child's eye as you perform. For all the parties involved, this project was a great learning experience and there are no limitations to the heights this project can reach.



## OP 4 MANDELA DAY

The staff members and students at the Faculty collected over 600 toiletry items for Mandela Day. The items were wrapped into gift packs and donated to just over 200 elderly people in needy communities, including the Institute for Primary Health in Soshanguve, on 28 August 2013.

# All eyes on ears

Carine du Toit (BVSc III)

Ermelo Animal Rescue Society (EARS) in Mpumalanga takes care of about 50 neglected, abused and stray dogs. This registered non-profit organisation relies completely on donations to feed and house the numerous dogs that they find roaming the streets and being dropped off on their doorstep. As this is no small undertaking, the Veterinary Professional Life (VPL) 300 community engagement group decided to lend a helping hand to this cause.



A group of about 50 dogs can be rather intimidating to take care of and keep under control. The aim of the Vet students' visit was to build three new open-roof enclosures to add to their existing housing. These enclosures will serve as environmental enrichment, and will also keep puppies and older dogs separate from the larger group to prevent fighting and unwanted procreation. After some digging, fencing and plenty of curious dogs to keep them company, the enclosures were completed on 4 May 2013.

dogs, as well as basic pet care, in an interactive yet fun way! A few dogs from EARS were brought along to the schools, with the children being very receptive and keen to learn more about them. As an indirect result, there are now also many young minds set on becoming veterinarians!

During their stay, the group decided to get the local community involved by approaching four local primary and pre-primary schools: Laerskool Ermelo, Ark Christian School, JJ van der Merwe Primary and Pre-primary. Apart from informing the children about EARS, they presented information on identifying abused, stray and neglected

This project enabled the group to help EARS, firstly on a very practical level with their extra enclosures, environmental enrichment in the form of toys, some warm blankets and donations from the various schools, as well as to create awareness about the society locally and to promote animal health care in general.

Tonia Anthonissen, Carine du Toit, Elsabé Hamman, Chanel Lombard, Madré Rheeder and Orsilla Smit would like to thank the following sponsors who made this project possible: Anton and Erika van Dyk, Marnus Kruger, Steve Robinson, Louis de Kock, Afgri Ermelo, PM Sand, Ermelo Spar, Nutrochem and Bakenkop Animal Clinic.

## 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 (Summer 2013). The community engagement article should not be more than one page in length. Contact person: Eugene Machimana Tel: 012 529 8100 (w) Cell: 083 687 0181 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.