

best friends NEWSLETTER

Spring 2013

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LOVE!

In order to find cures, we need your help to fund cures. Give generously to OVC Pet Trust. Help the pets we love live longer, healthier lives. OVC Pet Trust is grateful for your support.

Food for thought: pet health starts with good nutrition



Dr. Adronie Verbrugghe is hoping to expand feline nutrition research. Photo by Dean Palmer.

Cats are different. That's one thing that cat people and dog people can agree on.

Dr. Adronie Verbrugghe certainly does. Her research has found differences beyond the cat's reputation for independence and occasional contrariness: cats are also different in how they digest food and in the ways that nutrients affect their health.

"Nutritionally, they are not at all like small dogs," says Verbrugghe, who joined the faculty of the

Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) in late 2011 and holds the Royal Canin Chair in Canine and Feline Clinical Nutrition. "They are really incredible animals with specific needs."

For example, in dogs and humans, high carbohydrate diets may lead to insulin resistance, which is linked to obesity and Type 2 diabetes. Adding prebiotics (non-digestible dietary fibre that stimulates the growth of healthy intestinal bacteria)

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OVC

PET TRUST | BEST FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

From the Board: Building on a proud legacy

Pet Trust has become a very important and integral part of the veterinary profession, not just in Ontario, but also across Canada. I first became involved as a practitioner 26 years ago, contributing through their memorial donation program set up for clients who had lost an important member of their family. This program not only assists grieving families with closure but, at the same time, gives their veterinarian the opportunity to demonstrate caring and empathy with their loss.

For more than a quarter-century, Pet Trust has been the primary source of funding for investigational studies into companion animal diseases. The findings from some of these studies have been remarkable, not only in finding breakthrough solutions with our pets, but some of the work may be relevant to such problems as breast cancer in women.

More recently, Pet Trust has continued to expand its scope. With the support of our donors, we are funding more faculty and research positions at the Ontario Veterinary College. We were the driving force behind the \$15-million campaign to create the Mona Campbell Centre for Animal Cancer, which I'm extremely proud to say is now THE state-of-the-art cancer treatment facility in Canada.

However, the dust never settles and there is much more to do. While the Cancer Centre is operational, our \$15-million goal hasn't quite been achieved. But it is very much within our reach and completing this project will be a major focal point in the coming year. Pet Trust has been blessed with a huge array of dedicated volunteers who work diligently to raise the funds required to fund our many projects. From the inspiring work of Smiling Blue Skies in British Columbia, gala organizers in Ontario, to supporters from as far away as Germany and Australia, the hard work continues. We have also been the grateful recipients of support left to us by loving pet owners in their wills, who shared our vision to enhance the lives of our pets – those who bring so much unconditional love to our lives.

These are challenging economic times for all of us and the major task of raising the necessary funds to support our work will only increase in the years ahead. Consequently, social and digital media will play a greater role in our efforts to increase the awareness of Pet Trust on a national level. We have hard-working staff, a very dynamic board and many other dedicated volunteers who spend countless hours supporting the various goals and projects of Pet Trust. If you would like to become a part of Pet Trust's exciting and worthwhile work, we would love to hear from you.



Dr. Mary DeCaire is presented with a portrait as a memento of her service to the Pet Trust board of trustees. Pictured l to r: Dr. Elizabeth Stone, OVC dean; Dr. Mary DeCaire; Dr. Chip Coombs; Roger Warren.

Dr. Chip Coombs is the new chair of the Pet Trust board of trustees, taking over the reins this spring from Dr. Mary DeCaire, who stepped down after serving in the position for five years. Although he retired from practice in 2010 after 33 years at Eglinton Veterinary Facilities, Coombs continues to serve the veterinary profession as a consultant, writer and adviser to a number of boards and organizations.

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can help to reduce this insulin resistance.

But when she tested these approaches in cats, Verbrugghe found that the levels of carbohydrates used in commercially available diets, which are much higher than the amounts available in the natural diet of cats, didn't increase insulin resistance. Nor did adding prebiotics reduce it.

"Because cats are strict carnivores, their metabolism is different," she explains.

Born and educated in Belgium, Verbrugghe completed undergraduate and graduate degrees as well as post-doctoral studies in veterinary medicine and nutrition at Ghent University, where her research focused on cats and carbohydrates with a special link to obesity and diabetes and the role of nutritional supplements in treating inflammation in cats. She is certified as a specialist in pet nutrition by the European College of Veterinary and Comparative Nutrition.

At OVC, Pet Trust is supporting Verbrugghe's investigation of the role of vitamin D in dogs

with cancer. In humans, low vitamin D status is associated with an increased risk of a variety of cancers and vitamin D deficiency in cancer patients may be linked with poor prognosis. The results of this study may eventually lead to new perspectives for cancer prevention and treatment in dogs and perhaps people.



As a teacher and a scientist, Verbrugghe's goal is to implement nutrition as the fifth element of assessment for veterinarians, following temperature, pulse, respiration and pain. This is a new standard for assessment that is being added by veterinarians worldwide.

"Good nutrition means good health, and good quality of life, so it's important that we teach this to the veterinary students," says Verbrugghe, who is hoping to expand her nutrition-oriented studies of cats because very little veterinary research has focused on felines.

She has also launched a clinical nutrition consulting service for clients who are referred by their family veterinarian and wish to discuss

the nutritional needs of their pets. Many health problems, such as renal disease, urolithiasis, diabetes, liver disease and allergies require a change in the animal's diet. The program also helps owners with pets that need to lose weight.

Accurate nutritional information could serve as a counter-balance to the reams of opinions available on the internet, Verbrugghe hopes.

"There are a lot of opinions about nutrition for animals from people who don't really know anything about the topic," she says.

Helping people choose between the products available isn't always easy. She mentions, for example, that less expensive dog foods often use inexpensive ingredients that are difficult for the dog or cat to digest. That means the pet will need to eat a larger quantity to get the nutrients it needs.

"I've seen Beagles that had to eat 1,200 grams daily of a cheaper food, but only 400 grams of a more expensive food. So which is really more expensive?"

Special pets, special challenges

Avian and exotics specialist comes 'home' to OVC

Though he was born and raised in France and spent the past five years in graduate studies in the United States, the new head of the OVC Health Sciences Centre's avian and exotics service is already very much at home in Guelph.

Dr. Hugues Beaufrère's credentials include a one-year internship at the OVC, where he met his future wife – Dr. Melanie Ammersbach DVM '07, who is nearing completion of her PhD in the Department of Pathobiology.

"I chose the internship at OVC because of the international reputation of Dr. Michael Taylor, who was the head of the service at the time, and the reputation of the program," said Beaufrère.

Taylor DVM '80 retired at the end of 2012 after a distinguished 18-year career at OVC. Beaufrère began receiving clients April 1.

"I'm very excited to come back because I really enjoyed my time at the OVC during my internship" said Beaufrère, who is board-certified in avian medicine through the European College of Zoological Medicine and the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners.

"I love Canada and since I became a permanent resident after marrying a Canadian, I'm looking forward to building my career and making a contribution to my adoptive country."

The service will be augmented this spring by another veterinarian who will receive advanced training in avian and exotic medicine through the DVSc / residency position supported by donations to Pet Trust.

A graduate of the National Veterinary School of Lyon, France, Beaufrère developed a fascination

for birds early in life. His father's hobby is falconry, so Beaufrère grew up around birds of prey such as eagles, hawks and falcons. During vet school, he began studying avian biology and medicine, and had a Harris's hawk that he used to fly around the campus and nearby parks. After graduation, he began working with parrots at a private clinic in Belgium, where he adopted a 30-year-old African grey named Captain Cook.

"He was quite a character and further strengthened my commitment to specializing in avian and exotic medicine."

After completing his internship at OVC, Beaufrère enrolled in a residency / PhD program in avian and zoological medicine at Louisiana State University. While his PhD focused on cardiovascular diseases of parrots, he conducted extensive clinical research in other areas, published nearly 50 peer-reviewed articles and contributed to seven textbooks covering all aspects of avian and exotic medicine.

Over the past five years, Beaufrère has treated a wide variety of companion birds, reptiles and small mammals. At LSU, he worked with various conservation groups and treated wild cats and endangered species such as the Mississippi Sandhill Crane. He also took part in wildlife rescue efforts following the Deepwater

Horizon oil spill, providing basic veterinary care and decontamination of seabirds, turtles and dolphins affected by the disaster.

"We are very excited to have Hugues join our health-care team," said Dr. Stephanie Nykamp, OVC's interim associate dean of clinical programs. "His client-centred approach will be an asset to growing the referral avian and exotics service. This service is not only important to our clients, but it provides opportunities for our other specialists in training – such as anesthesiologists, surgeons, and radiologists – to develop expertise with these species and better prepare them for their careers."

Providing optimal care for birds, reptiles, pocket pets and other exotic species requires a special touch, and maintaining effective communications with pet owners and referring veterinarians is essential, Beaufrère said.

"The ultimate goal of our service is not only to offer a top-quality experience for pets, their owners and referring veterinarians, but also to support clinical teaching and continuing education to increase the number of veterinarians being comfortable and competent in the treatment of these wonderful creatures."

Dr. Hugues Beaufrère visits with a goshawk during a trip home to France last summer.



Partners in hope

New test may predict cancer treatment outcomes

A diagnostic test intended to improve treatment of human breast cancer is now under investigation by Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) researchers for potential use in dogs with lymphoma.

Dr. Brenda Coomber is the lead researcher working with Drs. Paul Woods and Dorothee Bienzle on the project funded by a grant from the OVC Pet Trust Fund and Rna Diagnostics, the Toronto-based biotech firm that developed the test.

Lymphoma in dogs is one of the most common types of cancer in companion animals; it resembles non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in people. The standard treatment for canine patients with this disease is chemotherapy involving multiple rounds of four drugs.

In about four of five dogs, this treatment leads to complete remission of the cancer, measured by shrinkage of lymph nodes to normal size. But about half of those dogs will suffer a relapse within six months and will need new treatment using a different combination of drugs.

Clinicians need a better way to tell sooner which dogs will have a longer remission and which ones will have a short remission or none at all, says Coomber, who along with Woods is co-director of the Institute for Comparative Cancer Investigation (ICCI) at the University of Guelph.

Certain molecules called biomarkers can help in predicting disease outcome or response to therapy. Cancer researchers are looking for reliable biomarkers that can be easily measured and help to improve treatment.

Rna Diagnostics, has developed a novel biomarker based on RNA. The test, called the RNA disruption assay (RDA), measures degradation of genetic material.

In a clinical trial with human breast cancer patients, the company showed that RDA can pinpoint which patients will not respond to their chemotherapy. That trial was sponsored by the National Cancer Institute of Canada. Rna Diagnostics plans more human tests.

Dr. Ken Pritzker, a pathologist and chief executive officer of the company, says, "We're also interested in using this test to help with dog cancers, canine lymphoma, because the response to therapy is similar. Some of the animals respond and some do not."

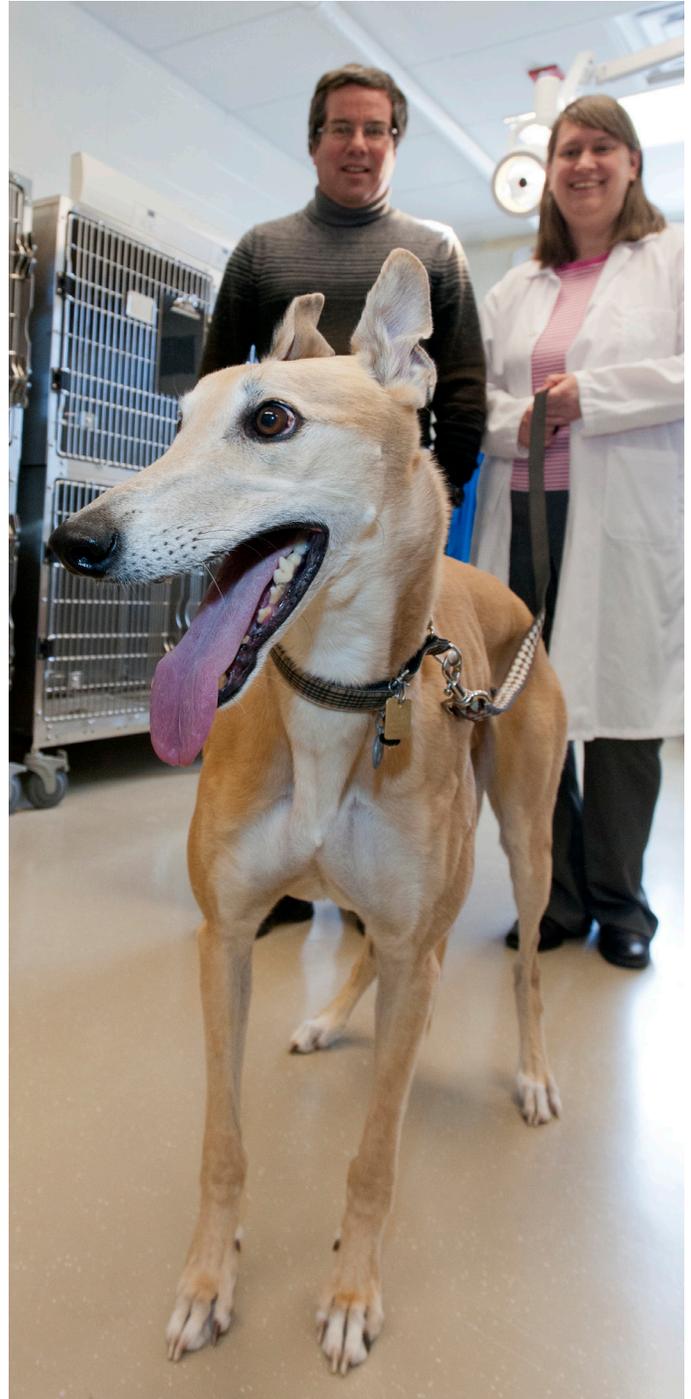
He expects the OVC team's research will also help his company refine its product. "We're very impressed by what they're doing and their approach to trying to understand how these drugs work in animal cancers."

The Guelph team will test RDA's use for predicting relapse in dogs with lymphoma being treated with the conventional drug protocol. They will sample dogs being treated at OVC's Mona Campbell Centre for Animal Cancer and send samples to the company for analysis.

The researchers plan to test 34 dogs.

Coomber says pet owners are usually keen to help with such studies.

"You'd be surprised how many owners who come to our facility to treat their dog ask, is anything being done to understand this better or is there anything we can do so others don't have to go through this."



Drs. Brenda Coomber and Paul Woods are conducting a clinical trial with RNA Diagnostics involving patients of the Mona Campbell Centre for Animal Cancer at OVC. Photo by Dean Palmer

The study is not designed to alter treatments for dogs in the trial. If the study results are promising, future clinical trials would investigate how to use the biomarker for treating dogs with lymphoma.

Coomber says a routine diagnostic test for therapy response would help clinicians decide earlier whether to use the standard drug cocktail for a particular animal or switch to another treatment.



Photo by Dean Palmer

The heart of the matter

Study to map the genes responsible for deadly heart disease

OVC scientists looking for the causes of congestive heart failure in Doberman pinchers are hoping their discoveries will help also answer questions about heart failure in humans and improve prevention and treatment of the disease for both species.

Up to 60% of Dobermans will die of dilated cardiomyopathy (DCM), an inheritable form of heart failure that is common in several breeds of large dogs. Though the age of onset varies, once a dog starts showing clinical signs of DCM, it experiences a rapid decline and may have only days or weeks to live.

“Even though DCM is very common in Dobermans, we know very little about the underlying cause. But research on other forms of heart failure suggests that genetic mutations in the heart muscle tissue are the most likely culprit,” said Dr. Glen Pyle, a molecular biologist in OVC’s Department of Biomedical Sciences.

Pyle is collaborating with Dr. Lynne O’Sullivan, a veterinary cardiologist in the Department of Clinical Studies, in an ongoing study of DCM in patients of the OVC Small Animal Clinic’s cardiology service. Their work is supported by donations to OVC Pet Trust.

Because Dobermans develop the disease naturally, the researchers expect to learn more than they would by studying DCM in other laboratory-based studies.

“There’s no guarantee that it’s caused by the same gene, but the development of the disease and the progression of the disease is similar in dogs and humans. So we can take what we learn about heart failure in one species apply it to the other.”

The study will also examine the effects of calcium sensitizers, a class of drugs used to treat DCM in dogs. Calcium sensitizers prolong the lives of DCM patients by altering heart muscle function, but they

do not cure the disease.

“It’s believed that these drugs work by targeting specific proteins in the heart muscle, but it’s not known whether they’re effective because they correct a defect or simply mask the problem. That’s one question we hope to answer,” said Pyle.

By using the calcium sensitizers that target unique proteins of the heart muscle, the researchers aim to map specific protein regions involved in

DCM and identify the genes that may have been altered. To make that possible, they are sequencing the genome of the Doberman with the help of a specialized laboratory in Finland. Results of the sequencing are expected later this year.

None of this work would be possible without the compassion and generosity of Doberman owners who donated the hearts of their dogs that have passed away. Most dogs with DCM are eventually euthanized when they reach the end stage of the

disease to alleviate suffering. The long-term care provided by the OVC cardiology service allowed the researchers to ask owners of dogs being treated for DCM to consider taking part in the study, and gave the owners time to carefully weigh their options well before the time came to say goodbye to their pet.

So far, the study has received 13 donations. As a result, the research team has completed and published one study and has four others at various stages; they’ve also presented their findings on DCM at international meetings.

“Doberman owners truly love the breed, and after they lose one dog they typically will get another Doberman even though they know there’s a good chance the new dog will develop DCM,” said Pyle. “This is one way for them to take something positive out of a sad situation and maybe help us find the cause of this devastating disease.”

Owners of any large-breed dog who are interested in participating in the DCM study are encouraged to contact Dr. Glen Pyle at gpyle@uoguelph.ca or 519-824-4120, Ext. 54772 for more information.



Six Degrees (or less!) of Separation

Smiling Blue Skies Cancer Fund is Going Places in 2013



Talia has raised more than \$300 selling custom pet-themed magnets.

At only nine years of age, Talia is a powerhouse. She has single-handedly become the 'Magnet Maven' for The Smiling Blue Skies Cancer Fund. There is a saying that goes, "You are your mother's daughter," and when it comes to Talia, this saying rings very true! Once upon a time, Talia's mother Lori was my student, back in the days when I was teaching at Acton High School. Who would believe that all these years later, Lori would also be a teacher and raising her family on Vancouver Island, and Talia would decide that she was going to help bring an end to cancer in pets.

Back in October, Talia's mother contacted me to say that Talia wanted to create a booth for her school's holiday craft fair. The plan was to sell custom-made magnets, with all proceeds donated to The Smiling Blue Skies

Cancer Fund. Talia invited her schoolmates to provide her with pictures of their pets, and she turned them into brightly coloured bottle cap magnets, accented with glitter and crystals. The plan was to have a magnet in every locker in the school and guess what? Talia made it happen. To date, Talia has raised over \$300.00. Talia's "Kindred Spirits" magnets will be available in all the participant bags at Calgary's Smiling Blue Skies Walk for Canine Cancer, taking place on May 5, and custom orders are always welcome. Simply send your favourite photo to magnetsbytalialia@yahoo.ca.

This year, Calgary's Smiling Blue Skies Walk for Canine Cancer has something very special up its sleeve! Walkers and virtual participants will be helping to fund the development of an immune response monitoring facility to support clinical testing of novel cancer biotherapies in companion animals. The long-term objective is to build a cancer research program focused on translating cutting-edge biotherapies into companion animal cancer models in the context of veterinary clinical trials. In turn, this will support the transfer of the most effective and refined treatments into human clinical trials, through collaborative partnerships. Smiling Blue Skies will be supporting these clinical cancer trials by funding a flow cytometry-

based immunological testing facility and facilitating the training of a future scientist, under the direction of Dr. Byram Bridle. Now a professor at the Ontario Veterinary College, Byram just happens to be the son of two people who were a central part of my life when I was a teacher at Acton High School. The circle of life and learning is truly magical, and Smiling Blue Skies is thrilled to be helping Dr. Bridle and his team.

Also new on the horizon is our very first mini-triathlon for people and their dogs to be held in Toronto on Sunday, June 16 and hosted by Joanne Cooper and Woof-Fit. Woof-fit combines personalized fitness training for you, while having fun with your dog. Amazing, right! Losing weight, toning up and increasing flexibility has never sounded so good.

"This is strictly a fun event!" Joanne says about the mini-triathlon. "You don't have to be a super duper athlete to participate. It's all about having fun with your dog and raising money for a great cause!" Oh, and did I mention, that Joanne is an old family friend? The connections and support are astounding. Sadly, Joanne knows all too well what it means to lose a dog to cancer, as her dog, Kodi, was diagnosed with oral cancer at the age of seven. Please visit www.woof-fit.com for information.

Plans are also under way for September's Smiling Blue Skies Walks in Toronto and Victoria. Updates will be posted on their Facebook community pages.

The skies have never looked bluer or brighter, thanks to all of you.
Suzi Beber

In the Community

PET TRUST TEAMS UP WITH A DRAGON

The OVC Pet Trust community of supporters keeps on growing — even dragons want to help the pets we love live longer, healthier lives.

In February, David Chilton, author of the bestselling *Wealthy Barber* books and a dragon on *CBC's Dragons' Den*, shared his recipes for success in a special presentation at the University of Guelph in support of Pet Trust and the Mona Campbell Centre for Animal Cancer.

Over 400 people attended the event that raised more than \$5,400 for the cancer centre campaign.

In an interview with the U of G student newspaper *The Ontarion*, Chilton said he “can’t live without” pets. On *Dragon’s Den* this season, he made deals with all three pitches that involve dogs, and as a result he took some ribbing from some of his fellow Dragons.



Chilton, who lives in nearby Kitchener, said he was happy to help out this great cause.

“I’m a pet guy so from every perspective it was ideal.”

The Chilton event was a great start to what is expected to be another exciting and successful year for Pet Trust, said managing director Karen Scott.

“We’re very grateful to Mr. Chilton for donating his time and talent, and to all those who came out to hear him speak,” said Scott. “The event certainly kicked off our year on a high note.”

The upbeat mood continued into the spring with the annual Dog Jog organized by Omega Tau Sigma (OTS) Professional Veterinary Fraternity, and the All About Pets Show.

The third annual OTS Dog Jog held March 23 raised more than \$7,000. Participants endured cold conditions as they walked, jogged or ran around the 5 km or 2 km routes through the grounds of the U of G arboretum.

Pet Trust was the charity of choice at this year’s All About Pets Show held Easter Weekend at the International Centre in Mississauga. Volunteers raised more than \$6,500 from pet show patrons who donated their loonies and toonies in exchange for a Pet Trust tote bag.

The Ultimate Air Dogs Canada donated \$250 raised from their dock-diving competition, and the All About Pets Show is matching that amount. Pet Trust is also receiving a portion of proceeds from sales of unique “love-live” pet harnesses made by Pretty Paw (see their website at prettypaw.ca).

“It was a fantastic weekend — thanks again to all our supporters and volunteers.”

Look for Pet Trust at more community events throughout the summer, and stay tuned for details about our next gala event in the fall as well as the annual Pet Trust Forum.

May 5

11th annual Smiling Blue Skies Walk for Canine Cancer

Glenmore Park, Calgary

Contact smilingblueskies.com or Mary Shillabeer at lottadoghair@shaw.ca for more information.

June 8-9

Woofstock

St. Lawrence Market, Toronto

July 18

Hamilton Academy of Veterinary Medicine Golf Tournament

Copetown Woods Golf Club

1430 2nd Concession, Copetown ON

(905) 627-4653

Please fax or email registration to Dr. Angela Whelan

1-905-627-5520 (fax)
hamiltonacademyvetmed@gmail.com

Coming Events

September TBA

Smiling Blue Skies Walk for Canine Cancer, Toronto and Victoria, BC.

October 17

2013 Walk in the Park Gala, Toronto

Check pettrust.ca or follow us on Facebook for details about the Gala and other events.

Lynden Animal Clinic: Caring knows no boundaries

Each year, hundreds of Ontario veterinary clinics show their support for OVC Pet Trust in a variety of ways.

The Lynden Animal Clinic contributes by raising money for the Nana Kiska Memorial Foundation for Canine and Feline Cancer Research. The foundation was established by longstanding clients Aidan and Katherine Finn in memory of their dog Nana Kiska, who succumbed to cancer in 2005.

“Since then, we have dedicated the proceeds from our annual open house and Photos with Santa events to the foundation,” said Dee Morrison, a veterinary technician, events co-ordinator and ‘Jack of all trades’ at the clinic. “Each year we dedicate our time to raising awareness that by working together, we can find a cure for cancer. Clients have participated in the events, donating their time, money and items to help us help spread awareness of OVC Pet Trust and the wonderful work they do for our pets.”

Nana Kiska was a special dog and an integral part of the Finn family and their Orange aPEEL cleaning products business for nine years. Her sweet face is also featured on the pet products page of their company website.

Morrison said the clinic’s clients and staff are happy to be a part of raising funds for the advancement of teaching and research at the Ontario Veterinary College.

The Lynden Animal Clinic’s charitable work also extends beyond Ontario.

Since 2011, Morrison has worked with the Association of Friends of the Animals of Sosua (Asociación De Amigos Por Los Animales De Sosúa) in the Dominican Republic, a not-for-profit dedicated to improving the lives of the people and animals of the Caribbean nation.

“Each year we dedicate our time to raising awareness that by working together, we can find a cure for cancer.”

In March, Morrison made her third trip to the Dominican Republic — this time with a full team from the Lynden Animal Clinic including Dr. Brent Babcock, his wife (and office manager) Robin and friend Carolyn Jones, and veterinary technician Helma Bos. Supported by donations of medical supplies and money, the team established a field clinic at the local fire hall, where they performed spays and neuters on 133 dogs and cats in just over three days. Dr. Babcock also performed additional surgeries in the clinic and team members went out into the community with a local outreach group to treat animals for parasites and other minor ailments.

“On our return to Canada we were able to bring 11 dogs back for adoption, some already spoken for and a few still available for adoption to their forever homes,” said Morrison.

For more information, visit www.aasosua.com or contact Morrison at peaches151@sympatico.ca.



A boy waits while his dog recovers following surgery at a spay-neuter clinic set up by the Lynden Animal Clinic in the Dominican Republic. Photo courtesy Dee Morrison.

OVC Pet Trust

Best Friends of Pet Trust is published by the Ontario Veterinary College for interests of Pet Trust donors and friends. Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the OVC Pet Trust Board of trustees. Reproduction of material from this newsletter is welcomed.

OVC Pet Trust

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Bequests and Planned Giving

One of the greatest feelings is knowing that your gift will live on and keep on giving to help and benefit the health and well being of our beloved companion animals.

A planned gift is a charitable donation that can be arranged during your lifetime to benefit the health and well being of pets in the future.

If you would like to find out more about planned giving and its many forms, please get in touch with us.

**Karen Scott, Managing Director,
Pet Trust 519-824-4120 Ext:54370**

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CHANGING LIVES
IMPROVING LIFE