

MATTHEW J. RYAN VETERINARY HOSPITAL

of the

UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

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August 24, 2009

Laurie Peek, DVM
Veterinary Program Director
Maddie's Fund
2223 Santa Clara Avenue, Suite B
Alameda, CA 94501

Dear Dr. Peek,

It is a pleasure to provide you with an update about the Maddie's Fund Shelter Medicine Externship and the Maddie's Fund Shelter Medicine Resident at Penn Veterinary Medicine.

Earlier this summer one of our fourth year students completed an externship at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Kanab, Utah. This is the second student that has visited Best Friends through the help of the Maddie's Fund Externship Program. Both students have had extraordinary experiences. I have attached a letter that she prepared for you.

I am pleased to report that on July 1, 2009 our first Maddie's Fund Resident began training under the direction of Dr. Michael Moyer, the Director of the Shelter Medicine Program. Aime Berman, VMD is a 1997 graduate of Penn Veterinary Medicine. Following graduation, she completed a one-year private practice internship training in emergency and critical care. She began her career in veterinary medicine at South Paws Veterinary Referral Center in Northern Virginia focusing on critical care, general medicine, and surgery. Attached is Dr. Berman's CV for your reference.

On behalf of the entire Penn Vet community and the animals we care for, thank you for all that you do for animal welfare. We are truly grateful to Maddie's Fund for its support of our program and more importantly for the region's most needy animals.

Sincerely,



David E. Holt, B.V.Sc., Dipl., A.C.V.S.
Professor of Surgery, Clinician Educator
Faculty Coordinator, Shelter Animal Medicine

Attachments

Cc: Julie Bloomfield, Grants Assistant

Summary of Personal Experience at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary

Prepared by: Lauren Price

Prepared for: Maddie's Fund

Date Submitted: August 8, 2009

I recently had the opportunity to spend two weeks working in the veterinary clinic at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in Kanab, Utah. Best Friends is a unique animal shelter, and a wonderful place to do an externship. During my time there I was able to participate in, and manage a wide variety of cases.

The day that I arrived, I spent the morning taking a tour of the sanctuary which is situated in Angel's Canyon. When I arrived in the clinic I was immediately put to work closing Spays and neuters. Each day Best Friends provides low cost spay and neuter services to the public. A spay or neuter costs just \$25 for any animal. Over the course of the first day I helped out with a chipmunk de-gloving injury, where we successfully anesthetized a 35g chipmunk, and placed stay sutures for a bandage, and saw 10 routine "Dogtown" appointments in the afternoon. The "Dogtown" appointments are for dogs who currently reside at the sanctuary, and can range from yearly physical exams, to more complicated internal medicine cases. I was able to assess each animal myself and come up with a plan to present to the attending veterinarian.

The first Tuesday and Friday I was there, I spent with the large animal veterinarian. We cared for the horses, sheep, goats and pigs that live at the Sanctuary. We managed two equine colic emergencies during my stay, performed a thyroid biopsy on a horse, managed several distal limb wounds, sheared an alpaca, and managed a case of caseous lymphadenitis in a sheep.

The second Tuesday and both Thursday's that I was at the sanctuary I performed surgeries during the Sanctuary's feral cat days. On these days spays and neuters are performed at no charge for cats trapped locally, so that they can be vaccinated, micro chipped and re-released. Helping out with the feral cat days allowed me to practice my surgical skills, and I was able to perform over a dozen feline spays and neuters. Patients ranged in age from 6 weeks to adult, and pregnant spays were performed as well, giving me a fairly diverse group of patients to practice my surgical skills on.

I was also able to accompany the veterinarians to the various cat areas at the sanctuary where they triage feline cases daily. The most interesting feline cases that I saw were two cats with Tularemia, and two with Yersinia, as well as one kitten with Distemper. The sanctuary has close to 900 cats currently, and many of them have special needs. They have specific areas for diabetic cats, FeLV and FIV positive cats, cats with renal insufficiency, and even IBD and stomatitis.

In terms of canine cases, the most interesting ones that I saw during my stay were emergencies. The first was a 2-year-old Airedale, who was hit by a car and had a hemo- abdomen. Despite the fact that the dog did not survive, it was a valuable experience in resuscitation. Best Friends was the ideal place to be, because cost is not a factor, they treat any animal to the best of their ability. The dog came in severely hemodynamically compromised, and immediately the whole clinic was at work on this one animal. Within 5 minutes we had a blood donor in order to give the dog a transfusion, and the dog was given multiple units of hetastarch. We performed CPR and attempted to defibrillate the dog to no avail. It was nice to watch a case where nothing was spared in order to save the animal, rather than having to worry about cost constraints, as is often the case elsewhere. I left that day, disappointed that we were unable to save the dog, but feeling confident that we had tried everything possible to save the dog's life.

Another interesting canine case was a boxer who had been bitten on the head by a rattlesnake. I assumed that this would be fatal, but in fact, they often are not. After some reading, I discovered that the

best way to manage these cases is to give them hetastarch because the bites cause a severe vasculitis, and to try to minimize the bleeding and swelling around the wound with either antihistamines or steroids. The amount of swelling around this dogs throat and the degree of discomfort necessitated giving it both Benadryl and Dexamethasone, but we were able to control the vasculitis, and the dog went home with some facial swelling, but was otherwise fine.

Another exciting emergency was an arterial laceration on a greyhound. There was no apparent external injury except for one small pinhole over the metacarpal area, so the origin of the wound was somewhat mysterious. We were unable to control the bleeding, and had to go in surgically and dissect up the leg in order to ligate the artery. It was a good experience for a veterinary student because I had to stay calm in the face of significant blood loss in order to locate and ligate the artery.

Some other interesting cases included a neurologic duck, who went down acutely and was unable to stand. For this patient we performed a barium series, abdominal ultrasound and took digital radiographs but were unable to pinpoint the origin of the problem. We also fixed a radial fracture in a bat, and I got to do a gastropexy in a dog, and a front limb amputation also in a dog.

Overall, the staff of veterinarians and technicians were amazing. They gave me every opportunity to learn, and try new things. It was nice to work in an environment where no treatment is spared due to cost. If any animal needs a surgery or a treatment it gets it. Although this is not always possible in the real world, it was still a valuable experience. The primary concern at Best Friends is truly the animals, and the staff works together as a cohesive unit to ensure that this is the case.

The level of care that the animals at Best Friends receive is nothing short of amazing. I was extremely impressed with their work on some of the most difficult behavior cases, and enjoyed talking to the trainers and caregivers and listening to all their stories about abused, fearful, and sometimes aggressive dogs, who, over time had slowly learned to trust people again. No animal is ever given up on at Best Friends, and it shows. Their environments are enriched, all animals are properly socialized, and they have even instituted a rule stating that any dog who is to be adopted has to pass a canine good citizens test before leaving the sanctuary in order to facilitate the dog's transition to a home, and minimize returned animals. Best Friends is made up of a group of people who are not afraid to admit when they make a mistake, and who are quick to make amends to their programs and values when they do.

Anyone who is interested in Shelter medicine should definitely visit Best Friends. It opens up a whole new idea of what shelter life can, and should be like for animals. I was a little worried that I would be saddened by the sight of so many animals in one place, but in fact, after only a few hours there, it is hard not to feel happy, and to be thankful for the opportunity to take part, even for a short while, in something so amazing.