

# Community Engagement Newsletter

Faculty of Veterinary Science

Summer 2013



## Vaccination Day at Friends of Rescued Animals

Karin Volker (BVSc III)

On Saturday, 1 June 2013, six intrepid BVSc III students from the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Pretoria set out on a mission to vaccinate all the dogs that are currently residing at Friends of Rescued Animals (FORA) in an effort to create awareness about responsible pet ownership.

FORA is an animal shelter in Krugersdorp that cares for abandoned cats and dogs until they can be adopted. The shelter was founded in 2003 and has been providing a much-needed service to the area ever since.

Annually, FORA organises a vaccination run in its Dog Division with the goal of keeping every dog up to date with its vaccinations. This year, we had the privilege of helping FORA organise the vaccination run and to actively participate in it.



After setting up two vaccination stations early that morning, the vaccination day began. Three students manned each station. One station was overseen and run by our volunteer veterinarian, Dr Liza Koster, while the other station was run by Sr Katie Suddard, a volunteer from Community Led Animal Welfare (CLAW) in Johannesburg. Each dog underwent a basic physical examination and health check and received the vaccinations it needed according to its medical record. A few volunteers from the community and the handlers employed by the shelter brought around 350 dogs to and from the stations.



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The students also made use of this opportunity to prepare a pamphlet on responsible pet ownership. The aim of the pamphlet is to prevent animal abandonment by informing potential pet owners of the needs of cats and dogs, and preparing them for the financial and emotional aspects of pet ownership. Printed pamphlets were made available to members of the public who wished to adopt animals from FORA.

Many thanks to Dr Liza Koster, without whom this project would not have been possible. Thank you also to Francois van Heerden, Reuben Henshill and Coreen Clark from FORA, as well as Sr Katie Suddard from CLAW in Johannesburg. Joanet van Zyl, our high school learner volunteer, also deserves a special word of thanks. The students would also like to thank Virbac for their generous donation of deworming tablets to the shelter.

## PGSA donates 67 minutes to Onderstepoort Primary School on Mandela Day

Kgomotso Sako (Community Engagement Officer, PGSA)

Nelson Mandela International Day is celebrated annually on 18 July. On this day, volunteers donate 67 minutes of their time to community service. The Postgraduate Student Association (PGSA), comprising postgraduate students from different departments in the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Pretoria, carried out a project at the Onderstepoort Primary School on this day.

During the project, learners were taught the purpose of and reason behind Mandela Day. They were given the opportunity to present their wishes about Madiba, while receiving different attractive and appetising goodies.

The teachers were also provided with manuals on the proper use of Microsoft Word 2010, and received some treats as a token of appreciation. The school premises (the yard, classroom windows and floors) were cleaned, and surrounding bushes were trimmed with the support of volunteers from the Agricultural Research Council (ARC), Onderstepoort Biological Products (OBP) and the postgraduate students.

The day turned out to be a great success, and volunteers and pupils from different organisations were able to interact under a unified purpose.

We thank everyone who helped in the planning, as well as the students who donated their time. Let's go beyond this in the coming years.



# Keeping BG the honey badger happy

Kerry French (BVSc III)

This project was aimed at helping the Johannesburg Zoo to improve the quality of life of their mascot, a two-year-old male honey badger named BG. Six veterinary students and five engineering students from the University of Pretoria collaborated to upgrade the badger's enclosure. The main goal was to enrich and refurbish his enclosure to curb his destructive behaviour, as well as to provide an aesthetically pleasing enclosure for the public.

BG was hand-reared at the Johannesburg Zoo and is accustomed to plenty of stimulation and attention. One can sometimes see him being walked around the zoo in a harness. A recent behavioural study done on the honey badger's destructive behaviour in his enclosure left his caretakers pondering about whether a little environmental enrichment could brighten up his days. Our group made contact with the zoo and proposed a plan to upgrade BG's enclosure. BG is a very active badger and utilises every

available inch of his enclosure. As it offers limited space, we had to get creative to make his life a little more adventurous.

After a few weeks of gathering sponsorships and planning and designing with the engineering students, the team was set to take on the job during a weekend in May.

After two days and some hard labour, the team completed a new double-storey wooden platform equipped with ladders, a hammock, climbing ropes and a tyre swing. A new rock feature and swimming pool was also added to his enclosure. A magnificent new six-tyre, jungle-gym ladder, a second tyre swing and some half-tyres were mounted to the night room walls for his evening entertainment. The enclosure fence was also mended and neatened and all of BG's holes were filled with fresh sand.

Tired, yet satisfied, the team packed up and left the zoo with blistered hands, several splinters, stiff backs and big smiles. All we hoped for was to hear that BG loves his new playground.

The project would not have been possible without the incredible generosity from Mica Morningside Hardware and Edenvale Supa Quick. These sponsors donated almost all the building material and tyres that we needed to complete the project.

The project was great fun and a good team-building experience. We hope this encourages future groups to work with the Johannesburg Zoo to improve the lives of more of its animal inhabitants.



## MEETING

Community Engagement Committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, 11 February 2014 @ 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  
**Mr Jacques van Rooyen** 012 529 8339  
**Mr Eugene Machimana** 012 529 8100

sarah.johnson@up.ac.za  
jacques.vanrooyen@up.ac.za  
eugene.machimana@up.ac.za

# Supporting the Salvokop community

Sr Kate van den Berg and Dudu Bembe (People Upliftment Programme)

Photos by: Christiaan Blihnaut (BVSc III)

The People Upliftment Programme (POPUP) recently had the opportunity to uplift the animals in Salvokop in collaboration with the Faculty of Veterinary Science at the University of Pretoria. Together we were able to educate the children at Jopie Fourie Primary School and invite the community to have their cats and dogs immunised and treated for worms.

It was clear that these animals have not received any attention from vets and we are very grateful to the students and vets who donated their time and got donations in order for us to be able to assist our community in this way.



We were also able to influence some of the enthusiastic young children who wish to become vets in the future. Collaboration with the Faculty is very exciting as we are also doing fieldwork with the Department of Family Medicine at UP. We are training care workers to go out into the community to identify problems in the animals that they encounter. This is the first project of its kind in Pretoria.



Thank you to the facilitators of this initiative for identifying our community as a worthy recipient of this community involvement. We look forward to working together again in the future.

## National zoos aid in providing educational experiences

Belinda Mokhanda (NZG intern)

The National Zoological Gardens of South Africa (NZG) was proud to form part of an exciting educational activity for children with autism.

Veterinary science students from the University of Pretoria presented a fun-filled day at the zoo for learners from the UNICA School for Autism. NZG staff members assisted the students to facilitate an educational experience where learners not only learned more about the animals in the zoo, but also about veterinary science.

The students welcomed the learners to the zoo before accompanying them to the first area of activity for the day. The first stop was the Cape fur seals' enclosure where learners were taught more about the seals by indicating what type of food seals eat, why they have flippers and what hunting strategies they use, among other things.

The students explained their role in caring for seals that are covered in oil from a stranded oil tanker, and how best to clean them up. The learners participated in an activity in which they answered questions by matching pictures to the corresponding answers.

The use of pictures as part of a visual teaching approach is essential for creating an optimal learning environment for most learners, especially learners with autism.

After completing the interactive activity, the learners were introduced to the seals. The seals performed some tricks and were rewarded with fish. The learners also had an opportunity to get a kiss from a seal! This learning experience was one of the many highlights of the programme.

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The second stop on the learners' tour was the primates' enclosures, where they learnt more about how enrichment programmes benefit the animals and how enrichment is conducted. On this particular day, popcorn was placed around the enclosures for the primates to find and eat. Enrichment is done to stimulate the animals' minds and to encourage them to be creative and active when foraging for food.

The learners also enjoyed the cable car ride, which gave them an aerial view of the zoo. The final stop was the lion and tiger enclosures, where the learners learnt more about the big cats and took part in another activity. They had to explain what types of food the big predators eat, how lionesses carry their cubs, why lions have claws, and what their habitat looks like.

Learners thoroughly enjoyed this exciting visit and visually enriching learning experience, as most of them had not been to the zoo before

The UNICA School for Learners with Autism is a public benefit organisation that provides specialised education to learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder between the ages of 3 and 18. Autism is a disorder of neural development characterised by impaired social interaction and communication, and by restricted and repetitive behaviour.



## 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 (Autumn 2014). 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.