



Valley Animal Clinic Internship

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Introduction

During the summer of 2022, I participated in an internship at Valley Animal Clinic in Cedar Bluff, VA. I spent around 35 hours per week for 10 weeks working with a veterinarian and assisting around the clinic. This clinic is a small clinic in a rural area, but there are not a many other clinics nearby, so they stay busy. There is one full-time and one part-time veterinarian on staff with two full-time veterinary assistants and three part-time assistants, whom I got the privilege to work with and learn from during my time at the clinic.



This internship gave me a lot of first-hand experience because we were short staffed the majority of my time there. Being short staffed made the job very hectic, but it also helped me to learn a lot since I just had to dive into the routine.

Pictured left to right: Myself, Dr. Sparks (full-time vet), Dr. Hendley (part-time vet), Levi (a part-time veterinary assistant)

Internship

My daily responsibilities during my internship:

- Cleaning out cages
- Providing food/water
- Providing fresh litter to residents
- Administering antibiotics to hospitalized animals, including administration of SQ fluids
- Restraining animals during exams
- Checking patients in and out
 - Talking to the owners to figure out what issues they were having before their exam, brining new client paperwork out, and transporting the patient in and out of the waiting area.
- Assisting with exams
 - Taking vitals before the vet began the exam, taking note of the issues the vet stated, cleaning wounds, informing the vet of the clients' concerns.
- Assisting with surgeries
 - Scrubbing surgical utensils after surgery and making surgical packs
- General cleaning of the clinic
 - Washing bowls, cleaning the exam rooms, etc.

I would arrive to the clinic and begin working at 10:00 a.m., and I would leave after the last patient was gone and all cleaning was finished, usually between 6:00-7:00 p.m.



Pictured below is myself providing SQ fluids to a patient.

Objectives

- To gain experience working with a veterinarian and ensure that this is what I want to do as a career.
- Working with animals to help enhance their quality of life and help them to maintain their health.
- Learning from an experienced Veterinarian about different medical issues presented and the steps and procedures used to diagnose and treat each patient.
- Preparing a proposal to gain funds for the clinic to be able to provide the necessary care for the stray cat population.



Pictured: Our client, Molly Grace, and myself.

Project

While I was at the clinic, there were multiple stray cats dropped off to us because the animal shelter was full and could not accept any more animals. With help from my coworkers, I came up with the idea to prepare a grant proposal to receive funds that could help provide care and treatment to these cats. There were around 15 cats/kittens dropped off at the clinic during my time there, and the clinic had to provide all the funds to care for them and ensure that they were healthy. We also had to provide the cats with a place to stay until we could find an appropriate home for them to go to. By receiving grant money, we would not have to turn any animals away and would be able to afford the proper care they are deserving of.

Grant Proposal Objectives

In the grant proposal, I requested an amount of \$10,000 that would cover the costs of treatment for 20 cats, I also included a budget with the price of each item and the quantity that would be needed of each.

	Price	Quantity	Total
FVRCP Vaccine	\$25	20	\$500
FELV Vaccine	\$35	20	\$700
Rabies Vaccine 1 yr	\$20	20	\$400
Spay Procedure	\$310.26	10	\$3,102.60
Neuter Procedure	\$227.39	10	\$2,273.90
FELV/ FIV Test	\$50	20	\$1000
Food	\$20.99	2	\$41.98
Terramycin	\$23.38	10	\$232.80
Panacur	\$15	20	\$300
Flea/Tick Prevention	\$25.70	20	\$514
Litter	\$9.88	3	\$29.64

The goal of the grant proposal was to receive funds to administer vaccines to the cats, provide any additional medical treatment/procedure, and ensure they are in the best health before finding them new owners. By bringing the cats in, we reduce the number of strays, and by performing a spay/neuter procedure on them, we prevent them from contributing more after finding new homes.

Additional Procedures Required by the Strays

Unfortunately, some of the strays brought in required more care than others. We wanted to ensure these animals had to best chance to find a new home and the highest quality of life possible, so the clinic provided the necessary procedures, despite the costs. One of the kittens dropped off to us had an abscess in the eye, so we had to remove it to prevent infection from spreading. We also had another kitten brought to us with a broken tail that had become infected and required an amputation, which we provided.



Both of these kittens were brought to us as feral kittens that were in pain. With the proper care and treatment, they have turned into sweet kitties ready for their new home. We have already found Winkie (pictured above) a loving home and are currently in the process of finding a home for Millie (pictured on the left).



Purpose of Treatments Listed in the Proposal

Each of the treatments listed in the grant proposal are very important in the proper treatment and care of felines dropped off to us. Upon patient arrival we provide:

- Initial Exam to see if there are any injuries or obvious health concerns.
- We then administer an FELV/FIV test to test for disease.
- With negative test, administer an FVRCP, FELV, and Rabies vaccine to prevent these diseases.
- We also provide a round of de-wormer and flea/tick prevention
- If they are old enough, we then perform a spay/neuter procedure to prevent any unwanted pregnancies contributing to the repopulation of the stray community, as well as help to prevent any health issues later on.
- Any additional medical care and treatments needed for injured or sick cats that are brought in.
- It also allows for food, litter, and bedding costs needed to ensure the animal is comfortable while in our care.

Once the cat is treated, we will then find them a home that will continue to provide the care and treatment they need.

Success Story



Pictured: Momma and her three kittens she had while in our facility.

Momma was dropped off at our door along with three kittens. Upon arrival, the kittens were still nursing, but they were too old and should have been weaned. The kittens were already old enough to be separated from her, so we found somewhere for them to go immediately. We then found out that she was already pregnant with another litter, which is why she was still lactating. We made a comfortable place for her to stay to give birth and raise the kittens until they were old enough to be weaned. During the nursing stage, we found people that wanted to adopt each kitten once they were weaned. We also were able to find Momma a loving home and provided her with a spay procedure so she wouldn't have to endure anymore unwanted pregnancies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this experience was very beneficial to my education and future. I developed a great relationship with two veterinarians who not only took the time to teach me about what they were doing and why during patient exams, but they also both wrote me letters of recommendation for my veterinary school application. This experience has helped me gain knowledge on what my future will contain as a vet, and it solidified my belief that this is the career I want to pursue. My internship at Valley Animal Clinic allowed me to make contacts that can help me with my future plans of becoming a vet and finding work once I have achieved that goal. I was able to work hands-on with many animals, all the while expanding my knowledge on the different ailments that these animals face and how to provide quality care to them. I also have learned how to build a good relationship with the patients so that they feel safe and do not associate the vet as a scary place, but instead as a place they enjoy coming to. All in all, I am very thankful for my internship at Valley Animal Clinic and the relationships I have made with the staff as well as the patients. I look forward to hopefully returning in the future as a veterinarian myself.

Pictured on the right is Dr. Sparks and myself with the HokieBird at the Virginia Tech vs. West Virginia football game.



Contact information

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