

## 300 VOLUNTEERS STEP UP FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE



Dr. Lisa Smart (left) examines Gypsy, who is accompanied on Spay Day by Jessica Kurek, class of 2009.

Don Preisler

Spay Day is fast becoming a community service tradition at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine.

On February 26, 100 dogs of all sizes were spayed or neutered at the Veterinary Medicine Laboratory Facility. Nearly 300 school volunteers participated.

Spay Day USA is a national effort to prevent overpopulation and abandonment of cats and dogs. In the Sacramento area up to 25,000 unwanted cats and dogs are killed each year because they do not have homes.

The local event is a partnership of many organizations spearheaded by the Sacramento Area Animal Coalition and the Doris Day Animal Foundation. This year, more than 20 veterinary clinics throughout Sacramento, Yolo and Placer counties provided services with the objective of providing 1,000 low-cost spay and neuter procedures.

A \$20 fee for dogs covers the spay-neuter surgery as well as vaccinations, flea-and-tick treatment, and a microchip with lifetime identity registration.

Spay Day organizers at the School of Veterinary Medicine thank all the volunteers, partners, and companies that donated medical supplies specifically for use at the school: Schering-Plough for suture material and anesthetics, Abbott Laboratories for anesthetics, Fort Dodge Animal Health for vaccines, and Bayer Pharmaceuticals for Advantage flea and tick medications.

## Physical Rehabilitation Optimizes Recovery in Animal Patients

Veterinary physical rehabilitation—often indicated to maximize the functional potential of animals following injury, surgery or disability—is an expanding field.

Both the AVMA and American Physical Therapy Association have adopted positions that support the collaboration of veterinarians and physical therapists to provide benefits to both patient and hospital.

“Physical therapy, an established field of licensed health care professionals who diagnose and manage movement dysfunction in people, has been important to human medicine for more than 80 years,” says Jackie Woelz, MS, PT, supervisor of the

Physical Rehabilitation Service of the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital (VMTH).

“Through clinical findings and research, we are learning that many of the same principles and treatment techniques used for decades to reverse or minimize impairment in people may be extended to veterinary patients.”

The Physical Rehabilitation Service, opened in 2004 in the new Center for Companion Animal Health, works with neurology, orthopedics, medicine, oncology and ICU patients.

Rehabilitation can support a variety of goals, such as to alleviate pain; aid recovery from soft tissue injuries, joint injuries, orthopedic surgery or neurosurgery; correct gait abnormalities; or provide conditioning for geriatric animals.

Rehabilitation techniques include postural, gait and proprioceptive training, therapeutic exercise, hydrotherapy, custom orthotic fabrication, manual therapy and other modalities, such as cryotherapy and neuromuscular electrical stimulation.

“Although we utilize various therapeutic modalities and exercise equipment, we also use manual techniques for assessing and addressing soft tissue restrictions, range of motion, quality of muscle tone and strength in order to guide therapeutic exercise,” says Ms. Woelz. She and VMTH veterinarians communicate throughout evaluation and the course of therapy, and each case is actively reassessed according to patient progress.

The UC Davis service is the largest of the few physical rehabilitation facilities associated with a veterinary school.

“We see amazing and complicated cases here—particularly in neurology and orthopedics,” says Ms. Woelz. It’s a wonderful challenge, because you never know what is going to be presented, and every patient has a unique set of needs.”



An individualized rehabilitation program for canine patients with hip dysplasia and osteoarthritis can include hydrotherapy with an underwater treadmill.

Certified orthotists, who normally work with humans, collaborate with the program to provide custom orthotics for canine joint protection.



Veterinary students learn about rehabilitation strategies and techniques in the Physical Rehabilitation Service for VMTH patients.