

(August 27, 2009 Stillwater, OK) – The Oklahoma State University's (OSU) Center for Veterinary Health Sciences has partnered with the Humane Society of Stillwater. The partnership is paying dividends for both organizations.

One of three OSU veterinarians working with the Shelter Medicine Program, Dr. Lesa Staubus is an OSU veterinary graduate (Class of 1990) working at the center's Boren Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital on the Stillwater campus. She instructs fourth year veterinary students as part of the center's Shelter Medicine Program. The three-week rotation is an elective and provides the veterinary students with hands-on experience.



“We bring animals to OSU's Boren Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital from Cimarron Valley near Cushing, Okla., Edmond, Okla., and Stillwater,” explains Staubus. “We also travel down to Norman, Okla., to care for animals there.”

By the end of the shelter medicine rotation, veterinary students can perform spay and neuter surgeries unassisted.



“One group of veterinary students completed 18 spays/neuters in one day—nine dogs and nine cats—as they finished their rotation,” smiles Staubus.

While the shelter animals are providing basic surgery experiences for OSU's veterinary students, OSU is providing a great service to animal shelters.

“It's a fabulous win-win situation,” says Staubus. “The director of the Humane Society of Stillwater is dedicated and energetic. It's a great opportunity for our veterinary students to gain valuable hands-on experience, it provides a great community service and it helps make the animals more adoptable.”

“What Dr. Staubus and the veterinary students do for us is fantastic,” adds Ms. Jackie Ross-Guerrero, director of the Humane Society of Stillwater. “Without her help, we would be unable to spay/neuter the majority of our animals.”

The Humane Society of Stillwater is a no-kill facility. It rescues healthy animals from the city shelter that are slated for euthanasia and keeps them until they are adopted.

“We rely on the Shelter Medicine Program heavily for a lot of different things,” says Ross-Guerrero. “We had a 12-week old Labrador puppy that had a broken leg. Dr. Staubus made some calls and was able to arrange for the leg to be fixed. We could not afford to do that; the puppy would have been euthanized but now has a healed leg and a new home with one of the veterinary students.”



The Shelter Medicine Program also took care of a coon hound suffering from glaucoma.

“The dog was in chronic pain from the constant pressure in its eye,” explains Staubus. “It wasn’t a mean dog, but if you reached to pet it, the dog cowered away to avoid any more pressure and pain on that eye. We removed the eye and returned the dog to the shelter. It was immediately pain free and happy.”

Another benefit for the veterinary center is access to a diverse population of animals that can assist veterinarians in clinical studies of naturally occurring diseases; especially infectious diseases.

“Because we take in so many animals, when someone is doing a study, we have the opportunity to assist them by drawing blood samples from relatively healthy animals,” explains Staubus. “Currently we are collecting blood samples for a study Dr. Theresa Rizzi in Veterinary Pathobiology is conducting on cytauxzoonosis, which is nearly 100 percent fatal to cats. The samples we take from the various shelters we serve will help Dr. Rizzi as she looks for evidence of previous exposure to this disease. Hopefully, her work will lead to a company that is willing to develop a vaccine to protect cats from this deadly disease.”

The Oklahoma State University Center for Veterinary Health Sciences is one of 28 veterinary colleges in the United States and is fully accredited by the Council on Education of the American Veterinary Medical Association. The center’s Boren Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital is open to the public and provides routine and specialized care for small and large

animals. It also offers 24 hour emergency care and is certified by the American Animal Hospital Association. For more information, visit www.cvhs.okstate.edu or call (405) 744-7000.

###