STILLWATER, Okla.—The veterinary students at Oklahoma State University (OSU) come to Stillwater to do more than learn. They come to make a difference in the community. For the ninth year, veterinary students have taken the initiative to organize a Neighborhood Neuter for shelter animals, which was held on Saturday, March 29, at the OSU Center for Veterinary Health Sciences.

“We arranged to spay/neuter animals from the Washington County SPCA,” explains Sharla Birch, 4th year veterinary student who has participated in the event for the last four years, organizing it for the last two years. “It is a great opportunity to give back to the community and to help hone our surgical skills.”

A total of 54 students participated in this year’s program held at the Center’s Veterinary Teaching Hospital. First year students performed physical exams and blood work on the animals while second year students handled anesthesia during the actual surgery. The third and fourth year veterinary students are in charge of the spays and neuters, supervised by residents, interns and faculty who volunteer their time.

“Neighborhood neuter was an unforgettable experience,” says Jennifer Clarke, first year veterinary student. “As a first year, it was a great reminder of the reason we are working so hard in our classes and it helped me look forward to the day when I can perform the surgery myself!”

Participating students (by class) were: Class of 2008—Sharla Birch (co-organizer), Sherry

Craycraft, Sandra McBee, Jon Pucket, Jacque Schrock, and Ed Sifford; Class of 2009—Janel Blaylock, Allison Bosworth, Barbara Braziel, Jennifer Campanicki, Katie Carpenter, Doug Connington, Jeremy Cramer, Lauren Cunningham, Lauren Davied, Darryl Dees, Scott Floyd, Justin Harper, Alana Jenkins, Sabrina Kordis, Jennifer Miller, Jennifer Moreno, Catherine Sawula, Kristen Sievert, Lacey Sullivan, Melissa Tillotson, Lauren Thomas and Sabrina Vobornik (co-organizer); Class of 2010—Heather Briscoe, Katie Cope, Madeline Deatherage, Meredith Dooley, Libby Gutting (co-organizer), Kendi Horner, Sarah Kalivoda, Avery Kasten, Stephanie Rollins, Nicole Stec, Laura Townley, Alicia Webb, Becca White and Jessica Zink; Class of 2011—Shelagh Christ, Jennifer Clarke, Tara Coxsey, Amy Edwards (co-organizer), Jill Houk, Jen Lu, Gina Roberts, Jeff Skaggs, Sara Smith, Michelle Sonnema, Michelle Stives, and Dan Wagnon.

"It's a win-win situation," says Heather Briscoe, second year veterinary student. "Dogs get an improved chance of adoption, students get extra hands-on surgical experience and an opportunity to help their community."

Faculty, interns, residents and staff on hand included: Interns—Drs. Tembra Gatlin, Danielle Kelton and Leanna White; Residents—Drs. Michelle Franklin, Brent Newcomb and Zachary Ricker; Faculty—Drs. Jude Bordelon (head surgeon), Meg Gross and Susanne Short; and Staff—Dianne Hudson, senior veterinary anesthesia technician.

In preparation for the surgery, Dr. Gross and Dianne Hudson provided an anesthesia lab on Friday afternoon to help prepare the second year students for the event on Saturday.

A special thanks to this year's Neighborhood Neuter sponsors: Nestle Purina ($1,800), Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association ($1,000), VCA Animal Hospitals ($300), Fort Dodge Animal Health (drugs and supplies), Pfizer (drugs) and Hill's (dog treats).

The Oklahoma State 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. For more information, visit http://www.cvhs.okstate.edu.