The HSVMA-RAVS team in action.
As we wrap up another successful clinic season, I want to take a moment to reflect on the tremendous progress our HSVMA-Rural Area Veterinary Services (RAVS) program made in 2011. Throughout the year, HSVMA-RAVS field teams have provided high-quality preventive health care to more than 8,693 animals in 42 communities around the world; from Pine Ridge, South Dakota to Jimma, Ethiopia. All told, over $1.5 million in essential veterinary services were delivered, all at no cost to the communities and families served.

The impact of our services on families in communities hit hard by tough economic conditions and a lack of access to veterinary care is clear. In most cases, RAVS’ clinics have meant the difference between high-quality veterinary care and no care at all. For many animals, our presence has truly made the difference between life and death. Clients routinely line up outside our clinic doors—hours before we open—seeking care for their animal companions. In every area we visit, residents and community leaders express inmeasurable gratitude and appreciation.

By: Windi Wojdak, RVT, Director, HSVMA Rural Area Veterinary Service

Equally important, more than 230 veterinary students from 25 different veterinary schools throughout North America participated as volunteers. Each of these students gained intensive hands-on clinical experience ranging from client communication to humane animal handling, from anesthesia to surgery. Students also gained an appreciation for the realities of life in some of the most economically impoverished communities, as well as for the many ways in which they can apply their knowledge, skills and dedication to improve the lives of animals and their people everywhere.

This year, 130 professional volunteers participated in RAVS field clinics: highly skilled and dedicated veterinarians and veterinary technicians who take time away from their jobs and their lives to generously share their skills and expertise. Student volunteers who work with these inspiring professionals can’t help but be touched by the passion and commitment they demonstrate.

As our veterinary student alumni graduate, their time invested with RAVS helps extend compassionate medical care to animals everywhere. We see evidence of this connection in the many alumni who return as volunteer veterinarians to work in RAVS clinics. In 2011, more than a third of our volunteer veterinarians were RAVS alumni.

Looking forward to 2012, we will continue the hard work of caring for animals in desperate need, reaching out to communities where no other help exists, where change is slow to happen and progress only minimally incremental. With each step forward our dedicated, compassionate staff and volunteers inspire my utmost respect. They are truly what makes it all possible.

### BY THE NUMBERS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value of Services Provided in 2011</th>
<th>$1.5 million</th>
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<tr>
<td>Animals Treated</td>
<td>8,693</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Volunteers Trained</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Veterinary Schools Represented</td>
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SMALL ANIMAL PROGRAMS

In 2011, the HSVMA-RAVS international small animal programs provided training in the fundamentals of surgery and anesthesia at veterinary schools in Mexico, El Salvador, Bolivia, the Dominican Republic and Ethiopia. As in many veterinary colleges in emerging countries, these schools are severely challenged economically and lack many basic resources. Working one-on-one with veterinary faculty and students, HSVMA-RAVS provides training in anesthesia and surgery, supplementing and enhancing the curricula and clinical opportunities within a university. We demonstrate and teach the ability to perform surgery safely and humanely with minimal equipment and supplies, and we support university faculty efforts to incorporate these fundamentals into their academic programs.

In addition to our regular teaching clinics, this year HSVMA-RAVS introduced the first humane euthanasia training course in Bolivia. Twenty-eight veterinarians from all over Bolivia participated, learning to use sodium pentobarbital for humane euthanasia by injection. In many countries euthanasia is often performed using inhumane methods such as electrocution or chemical euthanasia with inhumane products. The acquisition of a humane euthanasia product and training in humane euthanasia techniques represents a milestone in Bolivian animal welfare.

EQUINE PROGRAMS

The HSVMA-RAVS equine programs in Peru, Nicaragua, Guatemala and Mexico provided veterinary services to more than 2,300 animals in dozens of remote communities relying on horses and donkeys for their work and transportation. These animals represent a significant investment and a critical resource to their families. Access to basic humane veterinary care provided by our experienced equine field teams has a tremendous impact on the communities by improving the quality of life for the animals and the humans in them.

Focused on teaching, HSVMA-RAVS international programs support advancements in veterinary education that help more and more animals around the world receive the humane care they deserve.

2011 EQUITARIAN WORKSHOP

HSVMA, in collaboration with the National Autonomas University of Mexico (UNAM), the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP) and The Donkey Sanctuary, conducted the second annual Equitarian Workshop in Veracruz, Mexico October 10-15. The Equitarian Workshop was organized to further education and experience in equine field medicine in economically challenged rural settings, while providing direct care to 1,067 horses, donkeys and mules.

Thirty attendees including veterinarians, veterinary technicians, students, farriers and community leaders, worked in extremely remote communities to provide therapeutic care to working horses. Many equids carry heavy loads on small or thin frames with little padding. This can create painful back sores which decrease their working lives. By correcting life-threatening dental conditions, providing hoof care, demonstrating handling techniques, and teaching preventive care and education classes, we help improve the welfare of these hard-working animals.

Dr. Dave Turoff, an HSVMA-RAVS lead veterinarian posted a blog from the Equitarian Workshop at http://www.hsvma.org/field_services/2011_equitarian_blog.html. His narrative about the week-long workshop highlights the extensive collaborative efforts and educational experience that took place.

By: Susan Monger, DVM, International Director

Dr. Susan Monger oversees surgery instruction at Jimma University College of Veterinary Medicine in Ethiopia. The RAVS International program focuses on teaching high standards of care within the confines of locally available resources. © RAVS

Dr. Mike Russell teaches equine owners in Peru about dental examinations. © Dr. Dave Turoff

Dr. Mike Russell teaches equine owners about dental examinations. © Dr. Dave Turoff

Dr. Dave Turoff, an HSVMA-RAVS lead veterinarian, at work during an equine field clinic as part of the Equitarian Workshop in Veracruz, Mexico. © Marc Laxineta, DVM/robovet.net
On Campus in 2011

VETERINARY SCHOOL PRESENTATIONS

During the 2010-11 academic year, HSVMA hosted 13 Speakers Bureau presentations on a variety of animal welfare and practice topics including the benefits of early-age sterilization, puppy mills, and factors to consider as a new veterinarian searching for your first job. We also began to run special suture dry labs exclusively for our student chapters, offering students one-on-one time with veterinarians focused on helping them improve their suturing skills.

In conjunction with the SAVMA Symposium, HSVMA hosted a networking reception attended by veterinary students and local HSVMA professional members. The reception featured a presentation by Western University veterinary student Heather Rally about her field advocacy work on behalf of marine mammals.

STUDENT CHAPTERS AND MEMBERS

Three new veterinary student chapters were established this academic year: at Cornell University, Oregon State and the University of California at Davis, bringing our total to nine student HSVMA chapters. We’re happy to report the new chapters are already quite active. Oregon State chapter members participated in a 2011 Spay Day event that reached 100 free-roaming cats, the Tufts Student Chapter held their first annual volunteer day at a local farm animal sanctuary, and a Western University veterinary student lobbied successfully for California legislation to provide rabies vaccination exemptions for ill and immune-compromised dogs—Molly’s Bill (AB 258)—which was signed into law this summer.

The response from our student members this year has been overwhelmingly positive and we are looking forward to academic year 2011-2012!
By: Barbara Hodges, DVM, MBA, HSVMA Advocacy/Policy Division

Each year as we expand our work, we take on new challenges conducting animal-related advocacy on behalf of a variety of species ranging from companion animals and wildlife to farm animals and animals used for entertainment. We are especially thankful to our HSVMA members who have volunteered their time and expertise in assisting us with these advocacy efforts.

LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY ADVOCACY

During 2011, HSVMA lobbied for a variety of state animal welfare reforms including legislation to ban gas chambers in Michigan shelters, to better regulate puppy mills in Texas, to prohibit the use of veal and gestation crates in Massachusetts, and to win medical exemption from rabies vaccination for ill or immune-compromised dogs in California. We also recruited more than 100 veterinarians to endorse farm animal welfare reform efforts in Oregon and Washington, which helped lead to an agricultural industry commitment to egg-laying hen welfare reform at the federal level.

On the federal level, we supported legislation to ban the non-therapeutic use of antibiotics in animals raised for food, and to ban the transport and slaughter of American horses for overseas meat markets. We also spoke in favor of maintaining the ban on inspection of U.S. horse slaughter facilities, effectively continuing a ban on stateside horse slaughter.

Working with scientists and other experts at The Humane Society of the United States, HSVMA offered detailed input into the updating of the AVMA’s widely-referenced Guidelines on Euthanasia document. In the regulatory arena, we suggested improvements to the veal calf confinement regulations of the Ohio and Kentucky livestock care standards boards, and improvements to the Missouri Department of Agriculture’s animal care standards for large-scale commercial breeding facilities, known as “puppy mills.” We also submitted testimony in support of banning race-day medications to the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission and provided input into federal regulations strengthening oversight for puppy importation.

HUMANE CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR VETERINARY PROFESSIONALS

During 2011, HSVMA presented webinars and in-person events to provide welfare-focused continuing education opportunities for veterinary professionals. New offerings included:

- “Wildlife Care Basics for Veterinary Clinics and Shelters,” a presentation delivered by Dr. Roberto Aguilar, a wildlife veterinarian at the Cape Wildlife Center in Massachusetts. Dr. Aguilar presented this talk at both the Animal Care Expo in Florida and at a welfare conference hosted by the Michigan Humane Society.
- “Fundamentals and Standards of Small Animal Field Surgery,” a webinar co-presented by Dr. Susan Monger, HSVMA-RAVS International Director and Dr. Richard Bachman, HSVMA Leadership Council member and shelter medicine consultant.
- “Kitty Kindergarten: Creating the New Improved Cat through Early Kitty Socialization,” a webinar presented by Dr. Sophia Yin, behavior consultant.
- “Curing the Litter Box Blues: Feline Elimination Disorders,” a webinar presented by Dr. Susan Krebsbach, HSVMA Veterinary Consultant and behavior consultant.
- “Looking for Your First Job: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly,” a webinar presented by Dr. Gary Block, HSVMA Board member and private practice owner.
Humane Awards and Achievements

HSVMA presented our second annual Veterinary Advocate of the Year and Direct Care Practitioner of the Year awards during a special veterinary reception at the Animal Care Expo in Orlando, Florida in May. Dr. Gary Block, an HSVMA Board member who, along with HSVMA Board President Dr. Paula Kislak, presented the awards, said “Through their advocacy and direct care for animals in need, these doctors epitomize the HSVMA goal of promoting veterinary leadership in animal welfare. Their efforts serve as an inspiration to us all to use our veterinary skills and expertise to promote the health and welfare of all animals.”

**HSVMA VETERINARY ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR**

Dr. Brian Forsgren of Cleveland, Ohio, was recognized as the HSVMA Veterinary Advocate of the Year. Dr. Forsgren has been helping the companion animals of low-income families at his practice in inner-city Cleveland for the past three decades. However, his compassion for animals extends beyond the dogs and cats in his care to a broader concern for addressing all forms of animal cruelty.

A longtime animal advocate, he was one of the first veterinary professionals to step forward and endorse a farm animal welfare ballot initiative launched in 2010 in Ohio to address extreme forms of confinement on factory farms. Dr. Forsgren not only lent his public support to the initiative, he also collected signatures for the ballot petition, hosted a fundraiser and reached out to his colleagues, asking them to join him in endorsing the bill. His support—along with the endorsement of 75 other Ohio veterinary professionals—helped lead to a compromise agreement on farm animal welfare in the state that is yielding new improved guidelines for animal care.

“As veterinarians we are accountable for the health and welfare of all animals. That is the intuitive public perception of who we are and the role we play in society. We must individually and collectively live up to that vision of our professional self-concept,” said Dr. Forsgren. “Through advocacy we can make conditions better in a sustainable fashion for all animals. Our actions must be consistent with such a vision. Without veterinarians taking a leadership role, remarkable trauma and animal suffering exists. Times are always difficult. They are made much more difficult by standing on the sidelines. We need to get in the game and make a difference.”

We are honored that Dr. Forsgren accepted an invitation to join our HSVMA Leadership Council this year. We’re sure his creativity and dedication will serve us well.

**HSVMA DIRECT CARE PRACTITIONER OF THE YEAR**

Dr. Lori Pasternak of Richmond, Virginia, through her aptly-named clinic Helping Hands Affordable Veterinary Surgical and Dental Care, works to ensure no animal goes without surgical or dental care due to prohibitively high costs by putting a portion of every fixed-cost procedure into a fund to help clients who cannot afford a procedure their pets need. Those who use the fund are required to repay their debt or any local animal welfare group.

By limiting the focus of her clinic to surgery and dental care and eliminating office visit and consultation time and fees, Dr. Pasternak is able to provide low, all-inclusive costs to clients. With her unique system of providing access to care, she is improving the quality of life for animals in her community and helping eliminate wrenching ‘economic euthanasia’ decisions—due solely to unaffordable veterinary care—for their caregivers.

“Surgery happens to be my talent. We should all use our talents to make the world a better place,” said Dr. Pasternak. “No one should ever have to make the choice between paying their bills and saving their best friend’s life.”

**HSVMA VETERINARY STUDENT ADVOCACY AWARD**

Our third annual HSVMA Veterinary Student Advocacy Award was given to Dr. Ruth Dunning, a 2011 graduate of the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine. This award was developed to honor veterinary students who have shown extraordinary commitment to animal welfare including the courage to follow their hearts and promote humane treatment of animals in their veterinary training.

Among her accomplishments, Dr. Dunning sparked the implementation of a viable “alternative program” at UGA, in which veterinary students may opt to learn surgical skills on donated animal cadavers. She helped establish a small animal Educational Memorial Program or willed body (cadaver) donor program, which was facilitated by an HSVMA grant. Dr. Dunning also helped launch a Shelter Medicine Program, including a fourth-year student spay/neuter rotation, shelter medicine-related courses in forensics, small animal herd management and disease prevention; and she started a digital media/DVD library of non-terminal surgical procedures for use in sophomore and junior surgery courses.

Dr. Ruth Dunning received the 2011 HSVMA Veterinary Student Advocacy Award. © Dunning
In addition to encouraging participation among veterinary professionals, the HSVMA reached out to the educational community by sponsoring a Spay Day event at Wisconsin’s Madison Area Technical College (MATC) and another event with veterinary students from the Oregon State University College of Veterinary Medicine (OSU-CVM).

The Wisconsin event included a healthy dose of playfulness, with veterinarian-and-technician surgical teams competing for the cleverest name with titles like Hello Kitty, Nutter Pluckers, Castration Sensation, Team Emasculators, and Uterine Obliterators. Humor aside, the volunteers had a serious purpose: providing free and low-cost spay/neuter surgeries and treatment for 86 feral cats. This was accomplished with a combined force of five volunteer veterinarians, three volunteer veterinary technicians, 15 veterinary students, 26 veterinary technician students, and a number of dedicated lay volunteers.

For the Oregon event, veterinary students from OSU-CVM donned their surgical gear to fight the spiraling pet overpopulation problem in their community. They teamed up with the Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon, a local nonprofit that focuses on assisting free-roaming cats, to help sterilize approximately 100 feral cats. In addition, prior to their event, the OSU Student Chapter of the HSVMA, hosted an HSVMA lunch presentation on the veterinary professional’s role in curbing free-roaming cat populations through Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR). Therefore, the HSVMA-sponsored Spay Day event gave the students a chance to see firsthand and put into practice what they learned in the classroom.

What makes these HSVMA-sponsored events so unique is that they support the education of veterinary students and veterinary technician students—the future of our profession—in a way that benefits both the animals and the communities. Involving students in spay/neuter events ignites their desire, and increases their knowledge and ability to become effective advocates for and community resources about the benefits of spay/neuter as they become practicing veterinarians and veterinary technicians.
HSVMA is excited to announce our new website and membership system, which will be up and running in early 2012!

Benefits of the new system include:

- Online renewals
- Career Center
- Member message boards
- The option to list your information in a public member directory
- ...and much more!

Please visit us at hsvma.org