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A Day in the Life of a Penn Vet Alum

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I have a confession to make.

They say “you don’t know what you don’t know.” Well, when I started my job as Director of Alumni Relations at Penn Vet, I knew a lot about the field of alumni relations and I thought I knew a lot about veterinary medicine. After a few months on the job, I realized I had no idea.

What our alumni do for animals, both large and small, as well as for human beings, our food system, medical research, government regulation, and the future of all living things is nothing short of amazing. So I said to myself... “What can I do to learn more about what our alumni do every day? What can I do to share with current veterinary students the work of our alumni? What can I do to tell the stories of some of the most amazing alumni I have ever met?”

From these questions came the birth of the “Day in the Life of a Penn Vet Alum” project. As I embark on this exciting journey, I go with an open mind. All I know is that it is going to be an adventure of learning and exploration, and I just hope I do the stories justice. I am open to any and all opportunities, knowing that even if I follow alumni doing similar work, it won’t matter – each and every story will be unique.

I invite you to visit the Day in the Life blog under the alumni tab at www.vet.upenn.edu to read more about these exciting experiences. A sampling of some of my adventures is below.



Join me as I spend the day with Quakertown Veterinary Clinic’s Nate Harvey, V’03, learning the ins and outs (literally) of the dairy cow.

My typical day usually begins by donning professional attire and heels, then fighting traffic from New Castle, Delaware to Philadelphia, or standing on the train platform waiting for the express SEPTA train into University City. This day was different. I put on my jeans, a flannel shirt, and my hiking boots, and punched the Quakertown address into my GPS.



P. Mark Lopez, V’03, and Elizabeth (Ballard) Lopez, V’03, own and operate Wholesome Dairy Farms in Berks County, PA – a grass-fed dairy farm producing milk, yogurt, Greek yogurt, kefir, and cheeses.

If I were to come back as a cow, I would want to be part of the Wholesome Dairy Farm herd. Nestled in a beautiful, lush green countryside are some of the happiest cows I have ever seen.



Spend the day with me – along with Jukuu and Dhoruba the giraffes, George the peccary, Mandy the armadillo, and other furry, scaly, feathered friends – as I shadow Adam Denish, V’93, at the Elmwood Park Zoo in Norristown, PA.

Father to 13-year-old twins, double black belt in martial arts, board member of the Holocaust Awareness Museum, owner and operator of two practices and a kennel, lab animal veterinarian for Arcadia University, creator of a startup company with a fellow Penn Vet alumnus to develop skin products for pets, and Director of Veterinary Medicine for the Elmwood Park Zoo...Dr. Adam Denish has a lot of energy! His enthusiasm for the profession was contagious during the day I spent with him and his vet tech, Cierra, at the Elmwood Park Zoo.



If you want to see a fast-moving and passionate staff, spend a day at the Delaware County SPCA. The day I spent with DelCo SPCA surgeon Gia Croce, V’92, was an intense day of surgery that she described as a “rocking chair day,” after doing 77 surgeries with another surgeon the previous day!

Being a surgeon is what Gia Croce loves...and it shows. She cheerfully chatted about the shelter with me while conducting back-to-back spays and neuters. Her impressive surgical skills were evident as she moved from large dogs to small kittens in the blink of an eye.

Visit the alumni tab at www.vet.upenn.edu to read the *Day in the Life* blog entries in their entirety. To participate in the program, visit the Alumni section of the website and click Get Involved.