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A Voice for Shelter Animals

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A Voice for Shelter Animals

By Jillian Marcussen

It is hard to imagine a better advocate for shelter animals than Jerry Rosenthal. He is the former President and CEO of the Monmouth County SPCA in New Jersey, and he has been a part of the Penn Vet family for many years—supporting the School through both his philanthropy and his commitment of time and leadership as a member of the Penn Vet Board of Overseers.

This philanthropy included a significant commitment in 2010, when he and his wife Cionna generously provided term funding for the Rosenthal Shelter Medicine Directorship. This early support provided the foundation that the Penn Vet Shelter Animal Medicine Program needed to establish the School as a resource for the region's significant homeless pet population.

Today, thanks to the Rosenthals' early investment and commitment to animal welfare, the Shelter Animal Medicine Program is a leader in the field. Under Director Dr. Brittany Watson, the program offers hands-on educational opportunities for students, advisory and medical services to the region's shelters, and community outreach to local public school students and residents of West Philadelphia. To build on this momentum, and continue to enhance the program, Jerry and Cionna have once again stepped forward by establishing the Rosenthal Penn Vet Shelter Medicine Student Research Fellowship.

The fellowship will create an environment where students interested in the shelter field can have long-term mentorship throughout their veterinary school education. Students selected for the fellowship will receive funding to pursue their own research projects in areas such as decreasing stress in shelters, effective adoption strategies, ethics, and improving shelter protocols for animal health. Research projects will span three years and will offer significant benefits to the students by broadening their understanding of the challenges facing the shelter community. Their research findings will also serve as a resource to our many shelter partners.

In addition, students will participate in the Shelter Medicine Rotation in their fourth year of school and have an opportunity to publish their findings. The end result is a truly unique learning opportunity for students who share the Rosenthals' dedication to helping homeless animals—creating future leaders in shelter medicine with the tools to effect positive change.



“I continue to be inspired by Jerry and Cionna’s passion for animal welfare. They have been an integral part of the Penn Vet Shelter Animal Medicine Program for years, and this new commitment to our students is yet another example of that.”

—Penn Vet Dean Joan Hendricks

As Jerry Rosenthal commented, “Providing research opportunities for students to promote the field of shelter medicine was an easy decision to make. We look forward to following these future leaders’ research as they develop new advancements in this important field of veterinary medicine.”

“I continue to be inspired by Jerry and Cionna’s passion for animal welfare. They have been an integral part of the Penn Vet Shelter Animal Medicine Program for years, and this new commitment to our students is yet another example of that,” said Penn Vet Dean Joan Hendricks.