

# Volunteers Needed to Foal Sit

New Bolton Center's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) needs volunteers to "foal sit." The NICU operates this volunteer program from January through June, enlisting up to 100 volunteers. The foal sitters are trained to 'sit' with critically ill newborn foals to insure that the patients' tubes and catheters are not pulled out. Other duties may include assisting with a variety of diagnostic tasks, restocking medical supplies, watching high risk pregnancy mares for signs of foaling, and helping with standing and turning of the foals and other neonates. Volunteers are needed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The George D. Widener Hospital, the School's teaching hospital for large animals, is located at New Bolton Center, near Kennett Square, Pa.

"Last spring we treated more than 180 neonates, primarily foals, but also calves, kids, lambs, and crias, which are baby llamas or alpacas," says **Dr. Jon Palmer**, director of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. "Our Neonatal Intensive Care Unit specializes in treating critically ill farm animal neonates. Young animals

less than 30 days old are considered neonates." The NICU staff not only cares for neonates but also attends approximately 100 births and cares for almost 70 high-risk pregnancy cases. The busy NICU sends 84 percent of the neonates home. "Our high success rate is in large part



due to the team approach to our intensive care, and a major part of that team is focused on nursing care. The nursing effort is directed by specialized veterinary nurses who are helped by lay nursing assistants and a large group of community volunteers whom we call 'foal sitters,'" says Palmer.

Foal sitters come from all walks of life.

"Although many of our volunteers are college students thinking about becoming veterinarians, or local horse owners wanting to lend us a hand, we also have RNs looking for a different experience, accountants wanting to spend some time with animals, high school students (16 years or older) fulfilling community service assignments, employees from local businesses that encourage community outreach, and even an occasional senior citizen," explains Patti Gillen, volunteer coordinator. "You don't need horse experience or a medical background. The most important qualifications are compassion and responsibility. This opportunity to 'sit' with these little patients is very gratifying and worthwhile when you see your foals progress from lying in a coma to running and bucking at the side of their dam as they play outside for the first time." The NICU staff is currently organizing the Foal Sitting program for this spring. For information about joining the Foal Sitting team, contact the Foal Sitter Hotline at New Bolton Center at 610-925-6445 or email <foalsitters@vet.upenn.edu>.

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## Field Service

(continued from page 5)

Perhaps a part of the job as enjoyable for Dr. Jorgensen as treating horses is interacting with the School's widely diverse clientele; horse ownership sometimes is their only common characteristic. Over the course of any given day, the Field Service team encounters a true cross-section of society, and today was no exception. From professional stable owners managing other people's horses, to people keeping a little pony for their children to care for, to affluent pleasure-horse owners—all had animals that needed expert veterinary care, and all turned to Penn's Field Service.

Back at the New Bolton campus, the other Field Service trucks gradually roll in, and students and doctors from separate teams reconvene in the parking lot to discuss their day. Feelings of accomplishment and camaraderie are apparent amongst the group, and several students linger as the others head to their cars or their dorm rooms. Tomorrow there will be other cases to treat, and other opportunities to learn—for both veterinarians and students alike.

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## New Horses for the Carriage Program

The School received a very generous donation of five nationally registered horses to its Carriage Program from Ms. Gloria Austin of Weirsdale, Fla. Ms. Austin is renowned among coaching and carriage driving enthusiasts for her high-profile participation in the sport of pleasure driving, as well as for her remarkable collection of antique coaches and carriages housed at the Austin Carriage Museum in Weirsdale.

Ms. Austin's decision to help the Carriage Program at New Bolton Center grew out of Penn's historical connection to Mr. Fairman Rogers, a nineteenth-century Penn graduate and trustee, who was directly involved in the decision to establish Penn's Veterinary School in 1884. Fairman Rogers wrote the classic reference and historical work, *The Manual of Coaching*. His rare book collection on the

horse and equitation is housed in Penn's Van Pelt Library.

Penn's Carriage Program is an important outreach, education, and development tool that has helped raise significant funds for New Bolton Center. Because of the loss of its team of donated Morgan horses through illness earlier this year, the program was at risk. Generous friends of the School loaned a pair of Hackney-Clydesdales to New Bolton Center to ensure that the School could participate in several important benefit events during the summer.

Ms. Austin's gift of her highly trained Kladruby grays and National Show Pintos ensures that the School, by virtue of this special program, can continue to demonstrate to a wide variety of local and regional constituents how important and value veterinary medicine can be.