

# pattersontoday

spring 20



## Enter the Culture of Better Medicine

Dr. Justin Kerr has all the bells and whistles

**All Creatures  
Great and Small**  
The Langstons treat  
all animals, from  
gators to Goldens

**Rapid Success**  
Dr. Janey Powe's emergency  
room grew quickly

**Rehabilitation on the Rise**  
Dr. Desiree Garthe's practice  
revolves around rehab



# When I grow up, I will be...

Remembering what motivated you to go into veterinary medicine in the first place is a common theme in this issue's stories.

For Dr. Justin Kerr, he found himself working in physical therapy with humans and was channeling all the money he made into dog rescue. One day, someone asked him, "Why don't you just become a vet?" Challenge accepted, Dr. Kerr threw himself into schooling and now into his state-of-the-art practice in southwest Florida.

For Dr. Desiree Garthe, her clients have followed her for decades. Her new practice in Arizona centers on rehabilitative care. It lets her practice medicine the way she wants and offer treatments to extend the lifespan of her clients' pets.

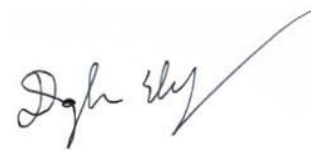
For Dr. Janey Powe, there was really never any other option. Her practice in Lubbock is for emergencies and was a natural next step from being an EMT in human medicine, then working in a mixed practice. Helping animals has always been her path.

For Dr. Wendy King in South Carolina, rescue work rescued her. Burned out running a practice by the book, she followed a more intuitive path and

recharged herself in the process with about 40 percent of her practice devoted to rescue work.

And for husband and wife team Drs. Adam and Niesje Langston? Niesje knew since she was five years old. Adam knew he did not want to become a mechanical engineer as high school career guidance tests had advised. Their practice supports their community's cats and dogs and its zoo, too.

Our motivation is to support all facets of your practice, with the best equipment, technology and products coupled with the customer service we are known for. Should you need any help with anything, your territory manager and a whole team of people are always available.



Doug Jones  
President, Companion Animal Group  
Patterson Animal Health

# pattersontoday

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## FEATURE STORIES

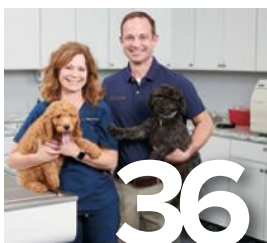


### SKETCHING SUCCESS

Dr. Janey Powe in Lubbock, Texas, sketched out plans for her state-of-the-art emergency clinic on a piece of paper. Now, her practice is in full swing and the fast pace suits her well. Growing from 1,500 to 7,000 square feet happened quickly, too.



Watch a video with Dr. Powe at [pattersonvet.com](http://pattersonvet.com) > [equipment](#) > [clinic design](#)



### ALL CREATURES

Drs. Adam and Niesje Langston's practice in Gulf Shores, Alabama, is for dogs, cats, lions and gators. The front is devoted to companion animals. The back serves as the official vet practice for the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo.



Watch a video with the Langstons at [pattersonvet.com](http://pattersonvet.com) > [equipment](#) > [clinic design](#)

## EDITORIALS



### REHABILITATION ON THE RISE

Dr. Desiree Garthe worked at practices that could offer her patients no further treatment. This didn't sit well with her, and her new practice in Phoenix, Arizona, centers on offering the finest rehabilitative care, from hydrotherapy to laser therapy to acupuncture.



Watch a video with Dr. Garthe at [patt.vet/paradisepoint.com](http://patt.vet/paradisepoint.com)

### 58 RESCUED BY RESCUES

Dr. Wendy King in Elgin, South Carolina, ran her first practice by the book. And got burnt out. She runs her current practice more from the heart, supporting local rescues. It's working out for her, her staff and the whole community.

## COVER STORY

### CULTURE OF BETTER MEDICINE

Dr. Justin Kerr in Punta Gorda, Florida, really throws himself into something – from school to fitness to martial arts training. He is all in with having the highest-grade equipment for his practice and has met his goal of not having to send anything out to a specialty clinic.



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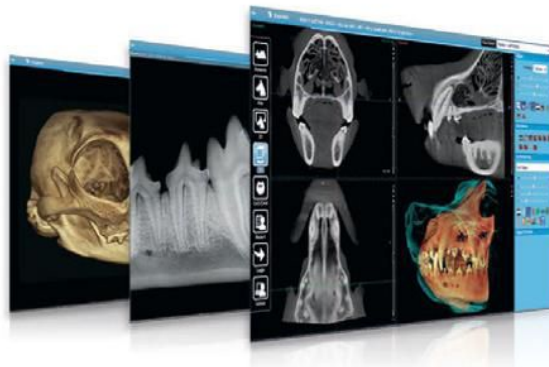
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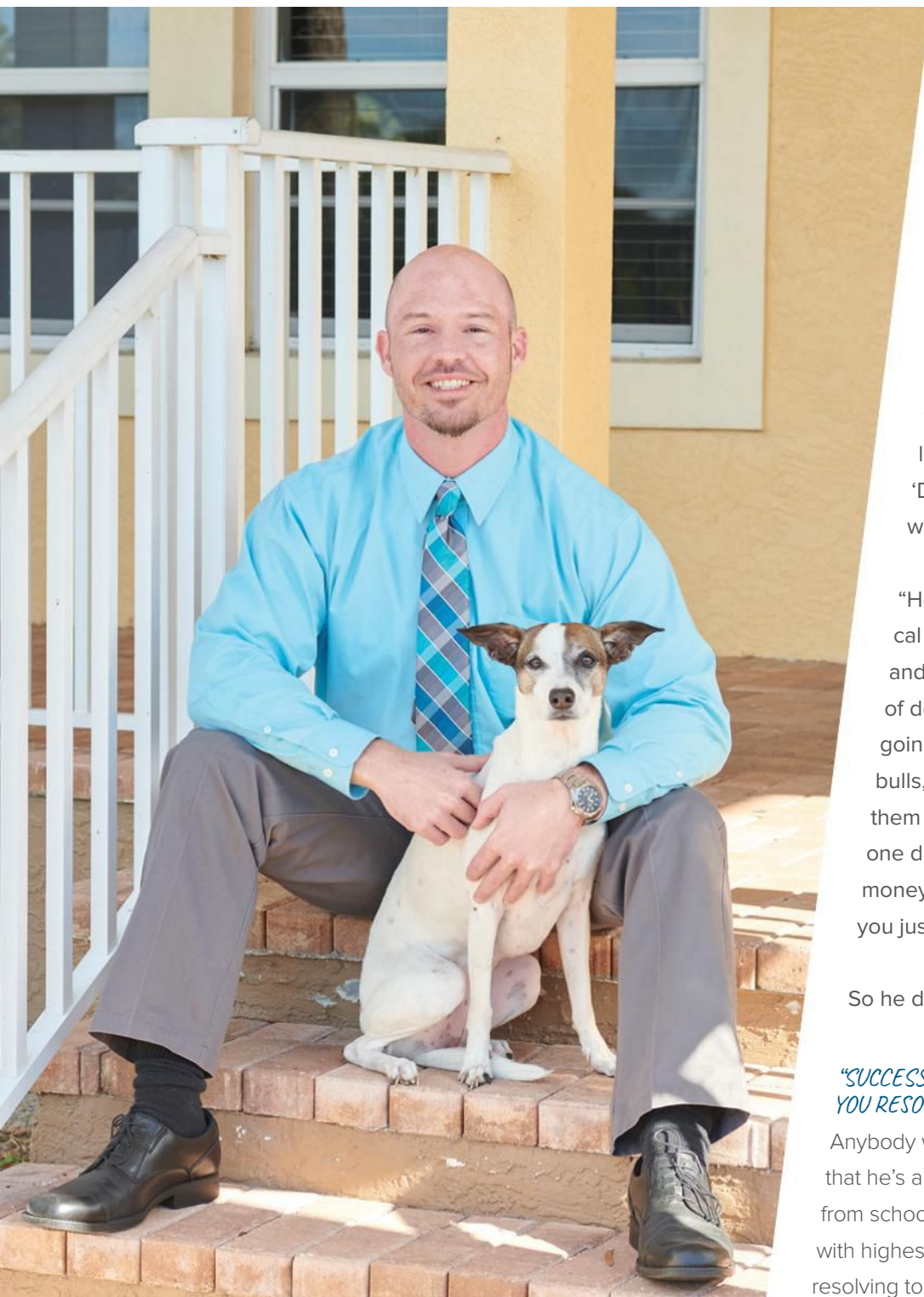
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# ENTER THE CULTURE OF BETTER MEDICINE

*Dr. Justin Kerr of Burnt Store Animal Hospital has the right tools for the job*



Dr. Justin Kerr is able to do a lot at one time. He buzzes from room to room, person to person, patient to patient and never misses a beat. Pictures on his website show him as a little boy, hugging and kissing puppies and napping with a cat and cheesing next to a shepherd.

He seems born to veterinary medicine. But a more in-depth talk with him revealed otherwise.

“I always loved pets, but I was told my entire life that it was impossible to become a vet. ‘Don’t even try. Nope.’ I listened to them!” For a while at least.

“Here we go, down the road. I’m working physical therapy. Hated it. And I’m taking all my money, and I’m putting it into aggressive breed rescue of dogs.” Kerr gets very passionate here. “So, I’m going into these dicey neighborhoods, getting pit bulls, they’re trying to bite my face off – but getting them rehabbed and rehomed and rescued. Then one day, somebody said, ‘Hey, so you spend all your money from human medicine on pets? Why don’t you just become a vet?’”

So he did.

*“SUCCESS IS ACHIEVED THE MOMENT YOU RESOLVE TO DO SOMETHING.”*

Anybody who meets Kerr for even a few minutes can tell that he’s a guy who really throws himself into something – from school to fitness to martial arts training. He graduated with highest honors. He operates under the philosophy that resolving to be successful is the start.



“Once I decided, I got it all in order. I moved right next to the school there. I took all my necessary requisite classes; got a 4.0 on everything. I hit the ground running – went off to a veterinary program and same deal. Just threw myself completely in there and did really well. Got out and started learning surgeries and doing everything. I mean, it all seems like a blur. Seems like it was yesterday that all this started. So yes, I knew very early on, but I don’t think I actually understood how *possible* it was and the steps that I needed to undertake until I was in my mid-twenties, honestly.”

### GETTING TO TODAY

Elevating the standard of veterinary care is Kerr’s mindset and is clear from the vibe and energy of his clinic and team, the array of equipment and his outgoing personality. He ended up with his own practice, again following an unusual path as well. Kerr was set to purchase another practice but found out, after being an associate for three years, that the owner had no intention of selling – particularly frustrating because Kerr had worked up a following and had increased revenue.

“I had to switch gears completely,” he said. “So, it came up from the roots of frustration. I practiced for about five years and was underwhelmed at every step of the road with my other clinics ... with the referrals I got, with the lack of competent and thorough examinations and medical care, with the lack of specialty involvement and communication with referrals. And so enough times saying, ‘Man! I wish / had that modality. I wish / could just go take a look at that spine. I wish / could go ahead and take out that biopsy laparoscopically...’”

Enough times of saying “I wish” became “I resolve to,” and soon Kerr had himself a brand-new clinic on Burnt Store Road in Punta Gorda, Florida. Getting from wishing to resolving takes a bit of teamwork, though. And it was his local team who stepped up. Denise Deters is Kerr’s territory manager. Shawn Gann is his equipment specialist. They enlisted design specialist Michael



Denise Deters, Shawn Gann and Dr. Justin Kerr

Reynolds to help with the floorplan and fitting in Kerr’s equipment list.

Kerr told us, “Now, of course, in comes Patterson and they say, ‘You can do that! You can do that!’ And so that’s what I’m doing.”

### GUIDING PRACTICE SUCCESS: KICKSTARTING THE PROCESS

Kerr started his journey at Guiding Practice Success, a two-and-a-half-day event in which equipment, technology, financing, contractors, business management, real estate and design experts are all in one place.

“Thankfully, due to Denise and the whole Patterson team, I was able to go to the GPS program and meet with architects and contractors and other vets who had been right where I’m at. We were able to, together, formulate a plan of how we would like to do things and how I want them done. And honestly, I think it all worked out for the better in the long run. I think I was able to do some things here as a startup clinic that I would not have been able to employ had I taken over an existing practice. We’ve been just immensely successful.” >>



Kerr's goal to be able to do all diagnostics, surgeries and procedures in house has come true already. "I have not sent one thing to specialty yet. I've been open six months. I've not had a single case that I have not been able to handle in house. That includes orthopedics, that includes intervertebral disc disease, nasal tumors, throat tumors. I work with the Cape Coral police officers' shepherds; we are doing prophylactic stomach tacking so that they won't show up with GDV syndrome. It's just been a dream come true, but it all sort of stemmed from an overriding frustration."

*COMMUNITY WORK AND BARKTOBER FEST*

Before becoming a veterinarian, Kerr was spending his income as a physical therapist helping a bully breed rescue. Community involvement seems to be in his blood. He and his team at Burnt Store have fun with it. His fiancée even designs T-shirts for regional shelters. Last fall, they hosted Barktober Fest, which included a meet and greet with Kerr, a hospital tour, a dog costume contest, bobbing for bones and a silent auction to benefit the nonprofits.

"We help out primarily with a lot of the rescue organizations. We include them in our Barktober Fest event here where we actually raised several thousand dollars for their organization, and we got two dogs new forever homes during the course of the event," Kerr said.

*PLANNING FROM THE GROUND UP*

Kerr can look back at the practice he had been planning to purchase and the practice he has now and compare. He told us that in the other place, he would have been trying to fit a square peg into a round hole and that starting anew allowed him to turn over a new leaf and start fresh.



"I planned it from the ground up, so I was able to plan a whole diagnostic center. It's got my digital X-ray; it's got my CT machine. I was able to allow space in my surgery room for the laparoscopic tower and all the extra equipment. I was able to make sure I had the proper lighting, the proper equipment, orthopedic implants and tools in order to be able to offer a higher level of service within a given amount of space. And it's been really embraced by the community so far. It's not just a regional or a local thing. I've got people that are anywhere from 10 to 50 miles away that drive in to bring their pets because we're able to offer that better service. We're open and honest. We're thorough and they trust us."

### FAVORITE EQUIPMENT

In a forest of high-tech equipment and tools, one might think it's hard to nail down a specific favorite. But when asked which is his favorite, Kerr doesn't hesitate.

"Absolutely it's the Aesculap Caiman; the vessel sealer that came along with the laparoscopic bundle is the *single* thing in this clinic that I could not do my job without. And I never had one before! It's funny to think of that. But everything from kidney removals to gall bladder, throat, tumors, biopsies, I use that thing for everything. In fact, I can even do a pyometra spay in less than 10 minutes with that particular piece of technology. So I'm getting referrals from other clinics, other emergency rooms and things like that because I've got the tools and the technology to offer better service."



Kerr loves it so much he adds, "That little vessel sealer: it's one of the smaller, less expensive pieces of equipment that I have, but I would never live without it again."

### SEAMLESS HELP, TOP TO BOTTOM

Following GPS, how else did his Patterson team help? "Denise got me in the proper places to meet with the people that I needed to. Every one of them bent over backwards to help me out and get me the right information, from the bank loan to the real estate. And then of course with the equipment, the whole team was here to set it up, install it, make sure it worked right and come back and fix it if it didn't. And so that really sets that team apart from the other individuals I know who ordered and maybe got their equipment through other sources and just had headache after headache."

It's standard practice for Patterson to house the equipment all together, then deliver it and install it on scheduled days. This avoids large boxes of equipment sitting around the practice or a contractor who doesn't have veterinary expertise installing it incorrectly.

We chatted a bit about any glitches once the practice was open. In one case, it was Mike Willcock, his TechEdge service technician, who came to the rescue. Willcock does preventative maintenance and repair for Kerr and other practices in southwest Florida.

"I had headaches, but that didn't have anything to do with Patterson. Their part was just really, really amazing. Mike has been instrumental. One day our dental bur just went out and I had money to make. I had several dentals on the books. I called him. He was here within half an hour with a replacement iM3 scaler, sent the other one back, got a brand-new one, shipped >>





For more information about **Burnt Store Animal Hospital**, visit [burntstoreanimalhospital.com](http://burntstoreanimalhospital.com).

to me, free of cost. And we kept on trucking making money. I'd say all positive things on that."

### *THE ACTUALIZATION OF SUCCESS*

So, now that his practice has been open a little under six months, what has been most eye-opening?

"How tired I am!" he said – but he certainly doesn't show it. In fact, part of the new space is dedicated to a workout room.

"Honestly, the amount of success that we've been able to achieve. It's one thing to have the idea to think, *Oh yeah, it's going to be good, it's going to be successful. I can do it.* I had drive, but you never know till you actually go there. But it does help to hear other people who have been down that road. I hope that I get an opportunity to help somebody who's been down that road because once you see it,

you're like, well, if they can do it, I think I can do it, too, you know?"

"It has been just an immense success, but we didn't know that coming in. We assumed it; we worked towards it; we did everything to make sure it happened that way. But just the actualization of success has been really rewarding and fulfilling."

### *ENTER THE CULTURE OF BETTER MEDICINE*

Kerr met up with Dr. Shane Whitaker, who has had a NewTom 3D X-ray in his practice in Chattanooga, Tennessee, for three years now. To ensure he could cover the payment, Whitaker raised his fees for dentals, and each patient gets a 3D scan. In turn, he raised the standard of care for his patients. This resonated with Kerr.

"I think he was spot on. What he told me was it's not a matter of making the money back on the NewTom by the scans. It's

what you're going to *find* with the scans. So if you want to enter into this culture of better medicine – of more surgeries, more definitive diagnoses given out – if you want to be successful in that sense, you need the tools to do it. It's just like being a carpenter. If you don't have the proper tools for the job, it's going to be a lot harder. So if you really want to achieve a level of better medicine, then you've got to have the tools. Now with new technologies such as the cone beam CT, it makes that modality affordable for us regular guys." Side note: Kerr and Whitaker are anything but regular guys. But back to the story.

"We can be a beacon within our community as well," Kerr continued. "I get referrals from other clinics all the time just because they want me to scan something for them. So we can actually help out the other veterinarians in our area."

Kerr added that he and Whitaker were soon going to be doing a surgery marathon at Kerr's practice. It's a connection that Kerr finds priceless. "Patterson not only sells you the equipment, not only certifies it and keeps up with it, but they're committed to furthering your veterinary medicine and your practice. There's a whole list of surgical procedures that all you have to do is let them know and they're going to make sure that you're up to speed on those procedures. And these are things such as sacral deroofing, advanced big dog knee surgeries, total ear canal ablations, gallbladder removals. Not standard stuff. We're talking advanced medicine and they've got people like Dr. Whitaker and all these experts who are willing to come to you."

"They're willing to take time out of their schedule, they're willing to bend over backwards. Les from VetOvation came down and ran us through the laparoscopic training. It's not just support with the machines, but it's support from other veterinary medical professionals. If I've got a problem with any of this stuff, I can call any number of five or six different people that know better than me and they'll walk me through the whole thing."

"Whitaker's coming down here, and we're just going to do surgery for two days straight – just massive orthopedic surgeries just to make sure whatever comes through the door, I feel confident and capable to handle it. That right there is worth its weight in gold." **PT**



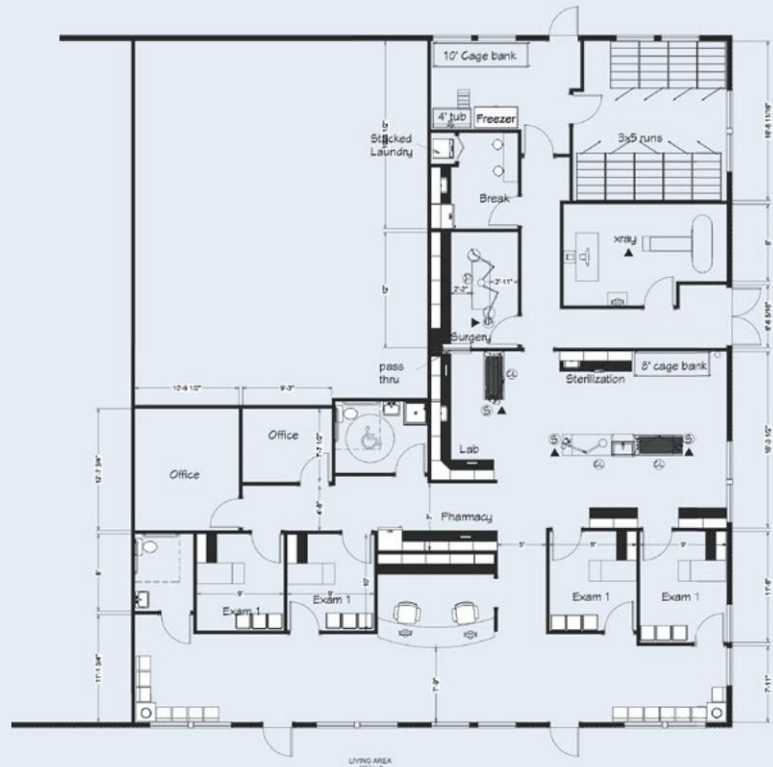
Watch a video with Dr. Kerr at [pattersonvet.com](http://pattersonvet.com) > [equipment](#) > [clinic design](#)



From left to right: Denise Deters, Shawn Gann, Dr. Justin Kerr and Mike Willcock

**PATTERSON TEAM**

- Glenn Rowell, *Branch Manager*
- Denise Deters, *Territory Manager*
- Shawn Gann, *Equipment Specialist*
- Mike Willcock, *Service Technician*
- Michael Reynolds, *Office Designer*



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Burnt Store Animal Hospital  
Punta Gorda, Florida

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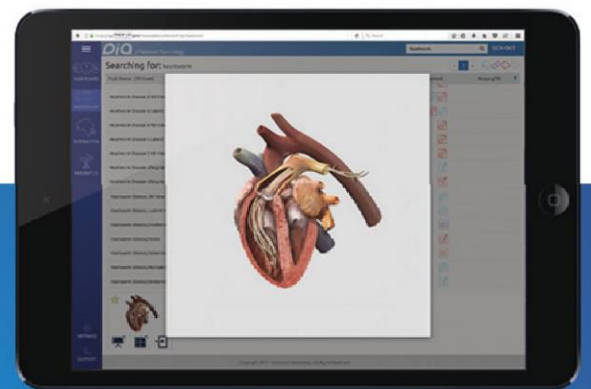
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Dr. Sarah McNeal  
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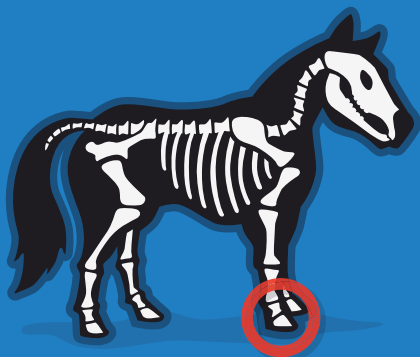
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VETERINARY**

# SKETCHING SUCCESS

## How a Texas doctor turned a drawing into her dream clinic

Lubbock Small Animal Emergency Clinic is an impressive space. It's thoughtfully laid out, immaculately clean, boasts the newest in equipment and technology and – swoon – those Pinterest-worthy floors! Taking it all in, one could never guess that this macro clinic started out as something quite micro. It joins the likes of Harry Potter, Shark Week and even the design for the Super Bowl trophy, in being a successful idea that first saw the light of day as a sketch on a piece of paper.<sup>1</sup> Of course, as with any grand idea, there were plenty of steps in between. The artist is Dr. Janey Powe, and with her signature blend of straightforwardness and southern charm, Powe shared the details of her clinic's transformation from a drawing into her dream.

### TIMING IS EVERYTHING

Two years ago is when Powe knew the time was right to make her move — more accurately, her moves.

For starters, there was the move to Lubbock. She and her husband were looking to relocate to the area to be closer to family as well as their cattle herd. That's when she saw the emergency clinic for sale and decided to buy it. "I was in a mixed practice for many years and, you know, you just get tired of working for people," she explained. "It was time to buy and own my own practice." It helped that emergency medicine is a specialty Powe is uniquely suited for. "Before vet school, I was an EMT and did human emergency medicine. I liked the fast pace."

That much is clear. At "Dr. Powe pace," the original Lubbock Small Animal Emergency Clinic, which had operated for three decades in the same 1,500-square-foot facility, outgrew its former footprint in just over a year. Increasing demands from pet owners in Lubbock and its surrounding communities meant it was time to design a bigger space post haste.

### PICTURE IT

Realizing she needed more space was step one for Powe. Next came putting pen to paper, followed by a call to her Patterson team. "I basically started and drew a picture of exactly what I wanted. Of how I wanted the clinic to flow. You know, 'I want the work stations to look like this.' 'I want this many cage banks.'" She then handed the picture to her Patterson Veterinary equipment manager, Graham Tschanz, stating matter-of-factly, "They don't teach veterinarians how to be project managers

or architects.' I handed him the paper and said, 'This is what I want. Can you give it to me?'" Tschanz got into gear immediately. "Graham did the math and laid it all out, then they brought in their designers and helped me turn my image into plans."



Graham Tschanz  
Equipment Manager

Tschanz has a fond recollection of his initial conversation with Powe and the "sketchy" origins of the project. "It's been great fun. We just kind of started drawing everything on a piece of paper, making sure everything was in the right spot. I would say, and I think she might agree, she kind of gave me free will to use my background to offer my opinion and suggest what equipment would work great for her. Everything went pretty smooth."

When it came time to trade 2D sketches for 3D selections like flooring and cabinetry, durability was a driving factor in Powe's decisions. "I wanted dark colors. Dark flooring and cabinets that would take a lot of dirt and wear and tear and still look nice." She described her thought process, and how she kept her clinic's future in mind. "I asked myself, 'What will it look like five years from now? Will it show scratches? Will it not show scratches? Will the oxygen kennels hold up?' All those kinds of things came into play as far as making choices. And sometimes you do make the more expensive choice, if it's more durable. That's how I went about it." >>





Watch a video with Dr. Powe at [pattersonvet.com](http://pattersonvet.com)



For more information about Lubbock Small Animal Emergency Clinic, visit [lubbockemergencyvets.com](http://lubbockemergencyvets.com).



Impressed by the quality, she selected a full Midmark layout. Custom Midmark cabinetry is also built into both of the clinic's enviable, oversized peninsula work islands. "We have three work stations on each side of the room, so there are six work tables. A lot of people are impressed by the islands. A lot of doctors are even amazed by how much work space and organization we have."

Six thousand square feet offers a lot of room to roam, but will it suffice for "Dr. Powe-paced" growth? She's confident it will. "We have five exam rooms, a radiology suite, a separate room for our CT scanner and our endoscopy machine, surgical suites and three different cage rooms. We have plenty of space."

#### *A PACE THAT DEMANDS PERFORMANCE*

While long-term sustainability motivated her cabinetry and floor selections, something more urgent was at the core of Powe's equipment needs. "In emergency medicine, it's especially important to make sure that your equipment

is working efficiently and quickly. When I set out to design this place, I knew I needed equipment that was very efficient. That's why I went with the NewTom CT scanner."

The need for on-demand excellence is also how she ultimately ended up with a Radmedix Acuity X-ray system, following a hiccup with her original unit. Tschanz elaborated: "One thing they did take from the old clinic was an older X-ray machine. It was running great for Dr. Powe when it was at that clinic, so that was something we didn't replace. It was about a week or two after she was in, when I got a frantic phone call and text saying the unit went down. We ended up basically overnighting an X-ray machine from Florida. We got it here in a day-and-a-half, we had it installed on day three, and then they were up and running."

After that, Powe was sold. "The customer service is great. They got it here fast and it works efficiently. We use the Radmedix X-ray machine every day, probably 10 to 12 times a

day if not more. We can shoot multiple images, the table moves automatically, it gives really high-quality images ... it just works very, very well for us."

#### *EQUIPMENT AS A DIFFERENTIATOR*

Powe isn't the only veterinarian who appreciates the unmatched efficiency of her equipment. Her clinic has found a unique revenue-generating opportunity in referrals. Powe breaks it down: "Here in Lubbock, we're kind of a central base for a lot of people from New Mexico and the panhandle of Texas, so we have doctors refer patients for CT scans. We're open to the public at night, but we run most of our CT scans during the day on a referral basis only."

According to Tschanz, this smart strategy for maximizing ROI was something they planned for from the get-go. "With the NewTom especially, that's a large investment for a clinic. But for Dr. Powe, it was kind of a no-brainer. Nobody in this area had a CT so we knew she could be a local



source for that. There's no other source for two or three hours. Her being an emergency and a specialty clinic, we knew she'd take off with it. And she's been doing excellent."

The same is true for her Radmedix machine. "We're able to email our referring clinics the images," says Powe. "We can also send them off to a radiologist if we need to. But our most important thing is getting high quality images to the referring clinics. The Radmedix gets them to where we need them to be."

A combination of hands-on time and tailored training opportunities has even led Powe to do something with her equipment that she would never do with her team, family or pets ... play favorites! "The CT scanner is definitely my favorite. I am currently the only one in this area that is trained proficiently on it, so a lot of my time is spent with it, using it and following up with the referring doctors on their cases. It's able to find anything from metastasis to sinus tumors. We do a lot of myelograms to look at herniated disks.

We've even seen adrenal tumors eating into the vena cava, so it's very detailed. I like that there's things that we find that we never thought we would find, and things you would never see on a normal X-ray. There are always new, interesting cases."

Powe cites Patterson's ongoing educational offerings as the reason their CT unit has pulled ahead in the eyes of her team as well. "Patterson will come out and train you for several days and they key the trainings toward whatever you need to focus on. They first came out and taught me and the technicians how to run the software, how to position animals and how to do the initial scans. For our second set of training we decided to do myelograms because that is what we really need in this area. The third set of training we're going to have them come out and do is surgical training for laminectomies and diskectomies. They will really cater your training towards what you need as a practice. It's great."

### *SURPRISING STATE OF EMERGENCY*

For those unfamiliar with the specialty of emergency veterinary medicine, it's easy to conjure up thoughts of impossible hours, time spent away from loved ones and constant stress. According to Powe, you'd be surprised by the true nature of the beast. "Yes, we do work mostly nights. We work overnights except for weekends and holidays, when we work twenty-four hours a day. But most doctors work nine-to-five, eight-to-five or longer every day. We work two to three shifts a week. So you actually end up having a lot more family time and a lot more time at home compared to a regular small animal practitioner."

It turns out you don't even have to be a night owl to thrive in an emergency clinic. "We do attract some night owls, but we attract a lot of different varieties of people. We really try to work around everybody's family situations, including our technicians. A lot of us have children so we consider that and are really flexible with all of our schedules." >>



Powe displayed her disarmingly direct nature once again, offering, “If you like working two to three days a week and more family time, then this is kinda like, the place for you.”

There’s no denying the serious nature of the emergency cases that come through her clinic’s doors, but Powe promises that there are still plenty of good times to be had. “We laugh a lot here. You have to because it is a very serious situation we’re in,” she said. “I think if you’re not used to emergency medicine, or scared of it, you might not guess that it’s a lot of work, but it’s also a lot of fun.”

One group of folks who have caught on quickly to Lubbock Small Animal Emergency Clinic’s unique brand of fun are the clinic’s social media followers. This community of one-and-a-half thousand Facebook fans regularly support the clinic’s updates with hundreds of likes on each post. Powe hypothesizes that it’s because they have a rather unique case. “We are the only emergency clinic in the Lubbock area, so we see people from two to three hours away. I always tell people, ‘If you have an animal, you’re eventually going to come see us.’ So we’re just well-known and I think that makes it easier for social media. But we also try to post positive things, interesting cases, our extended hours. We’ve worked really hard on our image.”

#### *FURTHER DOWN THE TRAIL*

Reflecting on her journey to practice ownership, Powe expressed relief regarding the support she received from her Patterson team, sharing, “Patterson made it simple to start from an idea and see the process through to completion from beginning to end. I think it has made my job really easy.”



Tschanz reciprocated her gratitude and shared his admiration for Powe's growth. "Seeing where she came from in the beginning, to where she is now, that process right there is awesome to see. It's been great, building something like this with her and seeing somebody's dreams come true. She's really taken off with it."

Does Powe have any plans to bring out her notebook and sketch up a new picture of success? No. Her roots in Lubbock and in this role run deep. "I think this is it for me. I guess I just never wanted to be anything else. This has kind of been the path and the only path. They say that veterinarians change career paths at least once throughout their careers. I was in mixed animal practice and I'm fifteen years out and now I'm doing emergency medicine, so I think this is the end-all for me." **PT**

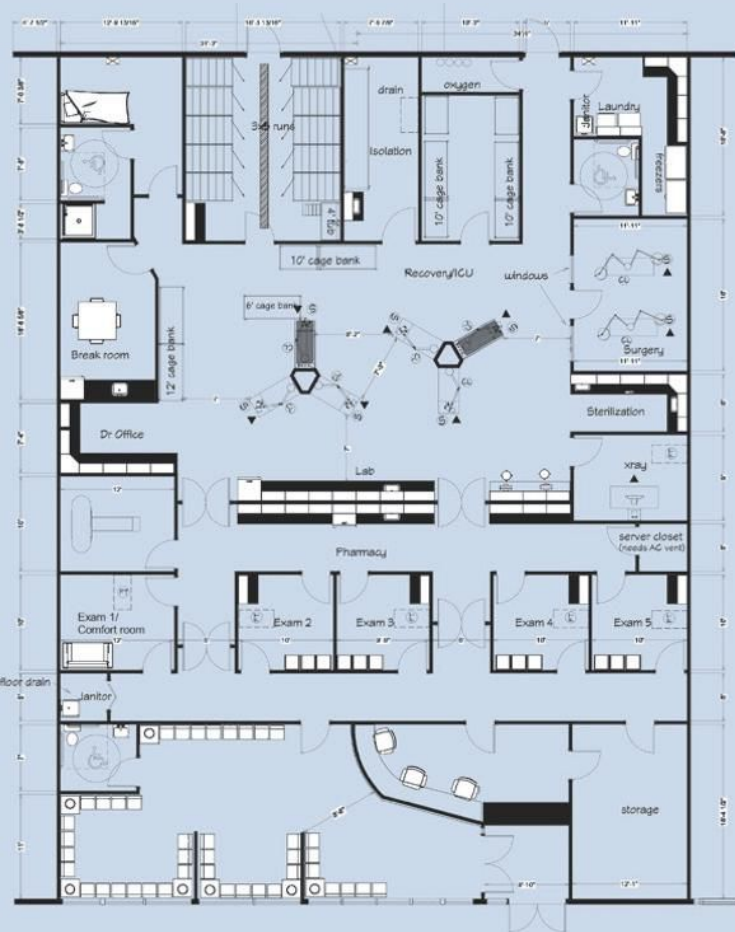
1. Wilke L. The Cocktail Napkin Hall of Fame. Eckel and Vaughan. April 22, 2015. <https://www.eandv-group.com/the-cocktail-napkin-hall-of-fame/>



Meg Lindstrom, Mark Miller, Dr. Janey Powe and Graham Tschanz

**PATTERSON TEAM**

- Meg Lindstrom, *Branch Manager*
- Mark Miller, *Territory Manager*
- Graham Tschanz, *Equipment Specialist*
- Rick Gavett, *Service Technician*
- Lawrence Price, *Service Technician*
- Joachim Bilancio, *Service Technician*
- Aaron Hilgen, *Service Technician*
- Joey Barfield, *Service Technician*
- Dave Naschke, *Service Technician*
- Michael Reynolds, *Office Designer*



**VETERINARY PRACTICE**

Dr. Janey Powe  
Lubbock Small Animal Emergency Clinic  
Lubbock, Texas

**OFFICE**

7,000+ square feet

**EQUIPMENT, SERVICES & TECHNOLOGY**

- Medical Illumination MI-550 Light
- Medical Illumination MI-1000 Light
- Midmark Casework
- Midmark Folding Exam Tables
- Midmark Grooming Tub
- Midmark/VSSI Runs and Kennels
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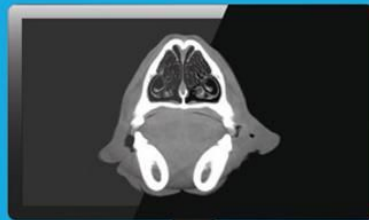
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X-ray and fluoroscopy



Middle and inner ear



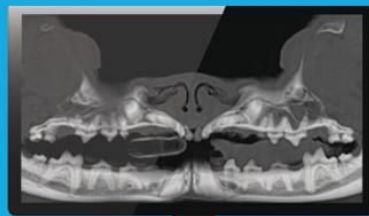
Sinuses



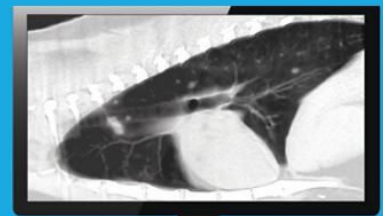
IVDD and spine



Elbows and medial compartment



Full mouth dental X-rays



Lung and metastatic



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Watch a video with the Langstons at [pattersonvet.com](http://pattersonvet.com) > [equipment](#) > [clinic design](#)



# The Langstons' New Practice

## Is an Absolute Zoo and We Mean That in All the Best Ways.

So much happens at Langston Animal Hospital in Gulf Shores, Alabama, that the idea for an Animal Planet series was being kicked around at the end of the day we visited. The *Living with the Langstons* series would include Adam and Niesje Langston, the husband and wife team heading up the hospital, along with a cast of thousands, including dogs, cats, alligators, lynx, servals, otters, ostriches, lions, Siberian tigers, kangaroo babies, cockatiels, kookaburras, boas, porcupines, monkeys and giraffes, to name a few.

It's what the Langstons love best about their new practice, now only seven months old, and designed to accommodate clients and pets in front and zookeepers and zoo animals in the back. So, a client who brings a toy poodle in for a health exam does not know that a tiger is coming in around the back.

The idea for the split entries came about when Adam was working at a previous practice. The owner of nearby Alligator Alley called and asked for help with one of their gators. Adam said, "Sure, bring him in," expecting one of the younger ones. Instead, three people came through the front carrying a seven-foot gator needing a leg amputation. Clients in the lobby with

cats and dogs got a little nervous. But at Langston Animal Hospital, gators and Golden Retrievers will never cross paths.

### FINDING THE PATH

Just as the practice shares two areas of expertise, so, too, does each doctor. Both grew up in Kentucky. Both attended the University of Kentucky. Both attended Auburn University, about three hours away. But each decided to become a vet following a very different path.

"I am one of those people that it's all I ever wanted to do," Niesje told us. "I grew up on a cattle farm and never had any other potential career choices in mind. I made the decision, I followed through and here I am."

Asking Adam when he decided to become a vet elicits a very different answer. "Yeah, so it's kind of funny – I'm not like other people, like I knew my wife knew since she was five. I was good in math, in physics and so I was told you need to be an engineer. And I really didn't understand what that person does. So in college, majoring in mechanical engineering, I was not enjoying going to class every day. I sure wasn't enjoying measuring a gear on a CAD program down to the micrometer. I was going to quit school. I just wasn't excited."

"But I lived with some guys who had an ag background who lived on farms and started in the animal science program >>





and really started enjoying school again. Started enjoying learning and going to class. And really just changed my whole perspective. I went to work for a veterinarian and saw what they did every day, enjoyed solving problems, joint fixing, large animal, cattle, sheep, horses, goats, dogs, cats – they treated about anything and everything. I thought, *I want to do this, with that variety.*”

### **FAST-TRACKING THE PROJECT**

Adam and Niesje had talked about opening their own practice. But talking got fast-tracked into doing when the hospital they were working at was sold to a corporation.

So it was off to Austin, Texas, for Adam. It was there that Patterson Veterinary hosted a Guiding Practice Success event, a three-day workshop with all things needed for opening a new practice. Crystal Richards is territory manager for the Gulf Shores area. Shawn Gann is their equipment specialist for southwest Florida. Both have been with Patterson nearly eight years and are part of the Langstons’ local team of support who can connect them

to whatever they need. It was Crystal who suggested GPS, where Adam found information and made connections that got the ball rolling.

“At GPS, I got a good CPA, I got a good marketing person, I talked to an attorney and got some good advice, I hooked up with Wells Fargo through Patterson and it has been amazing. It really has helped get me here. We’ve been working at this for 20 years, so we know the medicine side. The business side, we didn’t.”

“GPS was really instrumental,” Adam continued. “I can’t tell you how important that was in getting this started. I can tell you this project would not have gotten off the ground as quickly if it had not been for GPS. I would recommend any veterinarian, young or old, who’s interested in starting a practice to go to that program. My only complaint is I wish I’d gone to it sooner.”

“You know, we had talked about purchasing a practice from someone over the last few years and that’s really complex. The startup, like anything else, was scary, especially for

the both of us, because our two incomes were going to depend on it. Are we going to be able to make enough to pay the bills, feed the kids and still make our payment on the loan? And so, GPS opened all those doors for me and allowed me to see how to make that happen. And to get to talk to veterinarians who actually did it and showed you the struggles they went through to get through the process – that was very helpful. I would strongly recommend it.”

### **MEETING OVER DRINKS, DESIGNING ON COCKTAIL NAPKINS**

At GPS, Adam was introduced to Patterson’s practice designer, Michael Reynolds. Reynolds’ presentation at GPS walks through common issues with vet practices, including how much space to plan for surgery rooms, dental suites, treatment centers and lobby, and examples of dos and don’ts. Attendees often have follow-up questions about specifics, and Adam was no exception.

“Michael Reynolds and I met over drinks,” Adam told us. “I was in a predicament because the clinic we were at had been sold, so I needed to leave and get things



started rather quickly. We had been in the talks of starting something, but now it all got pushed to fast-forward. The city wanted plans drawn up of the clinic before they would even talk to us and get started in the three-month process to open. They needed to see something in writing. So I sat down with Michael – he was nice enough to understand my situation – and we wrote some things on a bar napkin. He was able to turn that into this and we were able to present that to the city in three days.”

“It looked very professional and we were actually able to do that without having to acquire and pay for blueprints to be done. We built our entire practice off his plans. I can’t tell you how much I respect that individual and the work that he’s done, the flow that he gave us. I would have done a *terrible* job designing it if I had to do it myself. But with his guidance on the things that we were asking for, what he was able to put down on paper really was a godsend. We really appreciate the work he does.”

### INTERIM DIRECTOR FOR THE ALABAMA GULF COAST ZOO

Adam spent a year as interim director for the Alabama Gulf Coast Zoo, overseeing its move from a location that was a small, marshy 17 acres (which barely survived Hurricane Ivan) to an open, state-of-the-art 100-acre site ready to host 500 animals in beautifully designed, natural habitats.

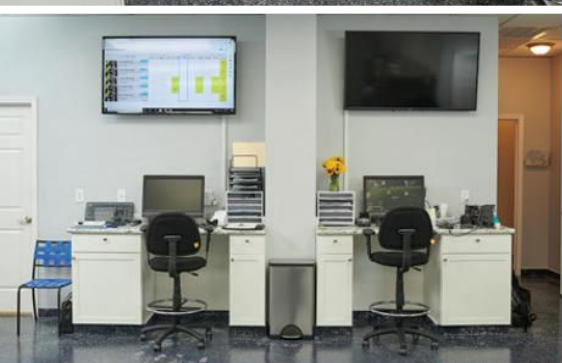
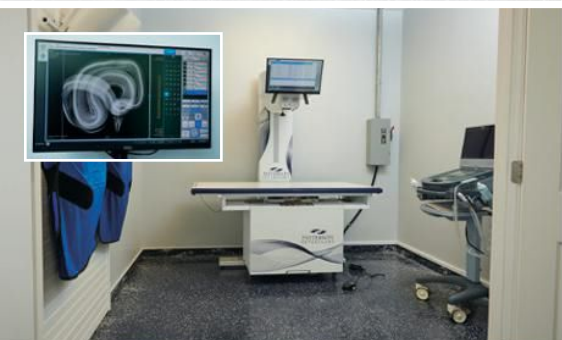
Known as The Little Zoo That Could, it is now The Little Zoo That Grew, and the new site will even serve as a venue for wedding receptions. The new zoo is scheduled to open two weeks after our visit. Adam will have his hands full, as many animals will need to be sedated for the move, utilizing Adam’s blow dart skills – a skill one of the lions at the zoo is not ready to forgive. During our zoo visit later in the day, most of the animals came trotting up to say hello to Adam and to get some belly scratches. All but one: a lion who was not at all happy about last week’s sedation for some stitches. The lion made unblinking eye contact with Adam, roaring loudly and angrily while pacing back and forth.

### AROUND THE PRACTICE

On the day we visited, we saw both sides of the practice in full use, as we used a few of Niesje’s exam rooms for photographs. While we were walking an otter into a treatment room, down the hallway Niesje could be heard and seen walking a mom and her daughter into a treatment room and reassuring the very concerned daughter that their pet was doing fine – otter and dog oblivious to one another. Later in the day, a smaller white dog peeked out of one of the treatment rooms. He seemed to have his suspicions. Could be he smelled Bruce Quillis, the zoo’s porcupine, who was ready for his close-up.



The treatment center is a shared space, with digital X-ray, surgery suite, kenneling and more. The surgery suite and X-ray room have double doors to accommodate the larger zoo animals. The endoscope, ultrasound and anesthesia system are on carts to go from room to room. >>



The Langstons also worked in a progressive kenneling plan to transition dogs from one set of kennels to the next.

Three areas are available with various amounts of sound insulation; the loudest dogs get moved to the kennels with the most insulation. Such was the fate of Jethro, a handsome young German shepherd dog being treated by Niesje for incessantly licking his back end.

Niesje told us that the community is behind them 100 percent. “Our practice has been received very, very well. We’ve actually been established in the community for 13 years. We were at a practice that ultimately sold out to a big corporation. Being where we were in our career, we had no desire to be part of big corporate veterinary medicine. We want to be able to make our own decisions and we live in a small community where people want to support small business. And so that has made it very easy for us to make our transition from where we were into our own practice.”

She added, “We’re very busy – a lot of hours, lots of late hours. But we treat it as another child. We’re here late doing the little detail work because we’re very proud of what we’ve done here.” Adam agreed, chiming in, “I’m a workaholic and I’m okay saying that.”

#### WHAT THEY CAN'T DO WITHOUT

The digital X-ray and the ultrasound are key pieces of equipment for Langston Animal Hospital, so selecting the equipment wasn't too hard. They did need two surgery tables, which they push together for surgeries on larger zoo animals.

“For me,” Adam said, “it’s like what I’m not going to practice without. We got digital X-ray pretty early on in our practice career. Then we changed practices and had to go back to the old way. It was terrible! So, we’re definitely not going to be without digital X-ray.”

“I’ve always had an ultrasound as well. We started ultrasounding when I was in school; I’ve had an ultrasound at every practice, and I won’t be in practice without one. We got a nice high-end Edan ultrasound with Doppler. It’s very nice. And everything is saved to the cloud so we can access that information at



home or in surgery, wherever I need it. Those pieces of equipment have been fantastic.”

Adam added, “The images are pretty amazing. The newer digital radiographs are much better than even the unit that was made four or five years ago. In addition, they’re producing 75 percent less radiation. So the safety factor is going up for us and our staff. We’re excited about that as well.”

### 500 PATIENTS NEXT DOOR

With such a high patient load, considering the 500 zoo animals and the practice’s dog and cat patients, we asked if there was a favorite. Adam was quick to answer. “Yes. We’ve just acquired two new giraffes, Benjamin and Akayla. They are pretty magnificent. Benjamin’s eight years old and he’s about 16 feet tall. And I had the pleasure of picking them out. Akayla’s four years old. She’s just become breeding age and they’re magnificent creatures. This is my first chance to work with this particular species, but very excited. They eat out of your hand.”

And soon, we were off to meet Benjamin and Akayla. No surprise: they came right over to greet Adam. Adam fed them some romaine lettuce as Benjamin towered over us. It was a bit of a reach for Akayla.

“They’re very easy to work with right now. We’re getting through their health issues and problems they’re going to encounter as time goes on. But we’ve really got a beautiful habitat for them.” And all the creatures of Langston Animal Hospital. **OT**

For more information about  
**Langston Animal Hospital,**  
visit [langstonanimalhospital.com](http://langstonanimalhospital.com).



Shawn Gann, Dr. Niesje Langston, Dr. Adam Langston and Crystal Richards

### PATTERSON TEAM

Glenn Rowell, *Branch Manager*  
Crystal Richards, *Territory Manager*  
Shawn Gann, *Equipment Specialist*  
Jean Rosado, *Service Technician*  
Michael Reynolds, *Office Designer*



### VETERINARY PRACTICE

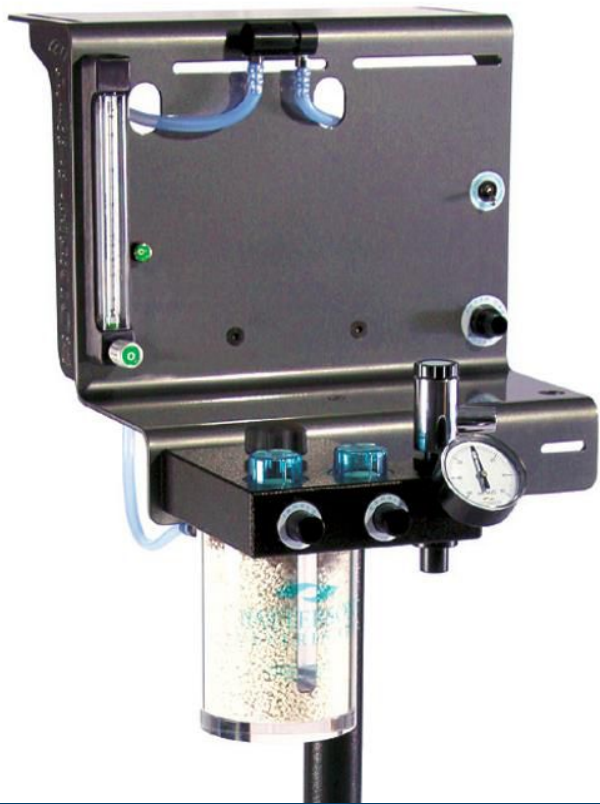
Dr. Adam Langston  
Dr. Niesje Langston  
Langston Animal Hospital  
Gulf Shores, Alabama

### OFFICE

5,000 square feet

### EQUIPMENT, SERVICES & TECHNOLOGY

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- 55" Monitors for Whiteboard
- AirSep Oxygen Concentrator
- Edan AX8 Ultrasound
- Endoscope
- Icare Tonovet Plus Tonometer
- iM3 Dental Unit
- Medical Illumination Lights
- Midmark Grooming Tub
- Midmark Kennel Runs with Glass Run Doors
- Midmark M11 Autoclave
- Midmark Wall Mount Exam Tables
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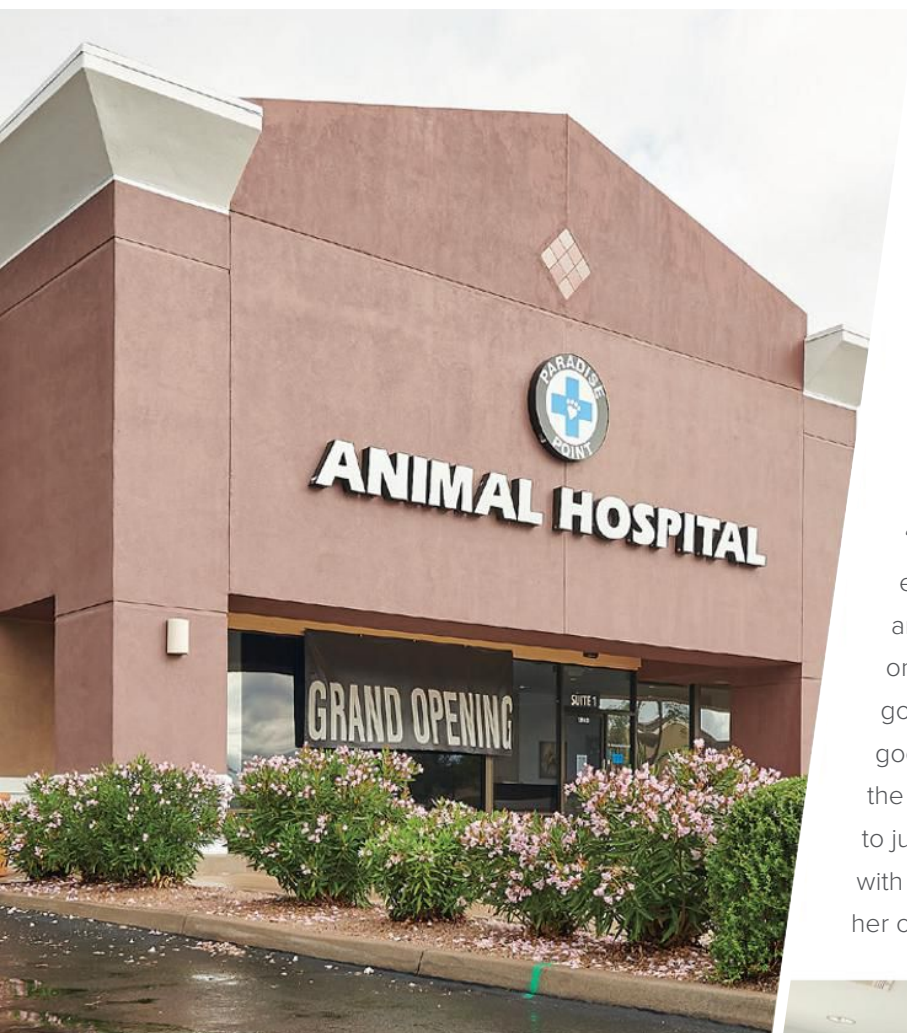
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# PARADISE POINT

## *A whole new rehabilitation facility in the heart of Phoenix*



“I’ve known Dr. Garthe since three dogs ago,” said a client with her rat terrier/Catahoula mix in the lobby of Dr. Desiree Garthe’s new practice in Phoenix, Arizona. Long-term relationships are a common thread for her, her team, clients and partners from Patterson, who have known her and worked with her for a long time.

So when it came time to open her Paradise Point Animal Hospital, it’s no surprise that Dr. Garthe turned to her territory manager, Theresa Hurley, to start.

“I’ve known Dr. Garthe pretty much my entire career,” Hurley explained. “She was an associate at another practice that I called on for quite some time. The owner was going to sell to a corporation, and it wasn’t a good fit for her. So she reached out to me. In the meantime, she started a mobile practice to just keep her clients with her and familiar with her.” The mobile practice helped Dr. Garthe keep in touch with her clients and patients.



Theresa Hurley and Dr. Desiree Garthe



Dr. Garthe discusses the role of rehabilitative care in her practice. Watch the video at [patt.vet/paradisepoint](http://patt.vet/paradisepoint).



“We went to lunch one day and decided it’s time. We put it together – a little plan, a little bit of financing – and we talked about what to do to differentiate her from the other practices in the area,” Hurley said. Hurley lives three blocks from Paradise Point and is familiar with all of the practices in the area.

“That’s when we decided to work with the laser therapy. She does Eastern–Western medicine too. So we did the laser and the treadmill – all things that we thought would be a good differentiator for her and her practice.”

### NO LONGER A DEAD END FOR HER PATIENTS

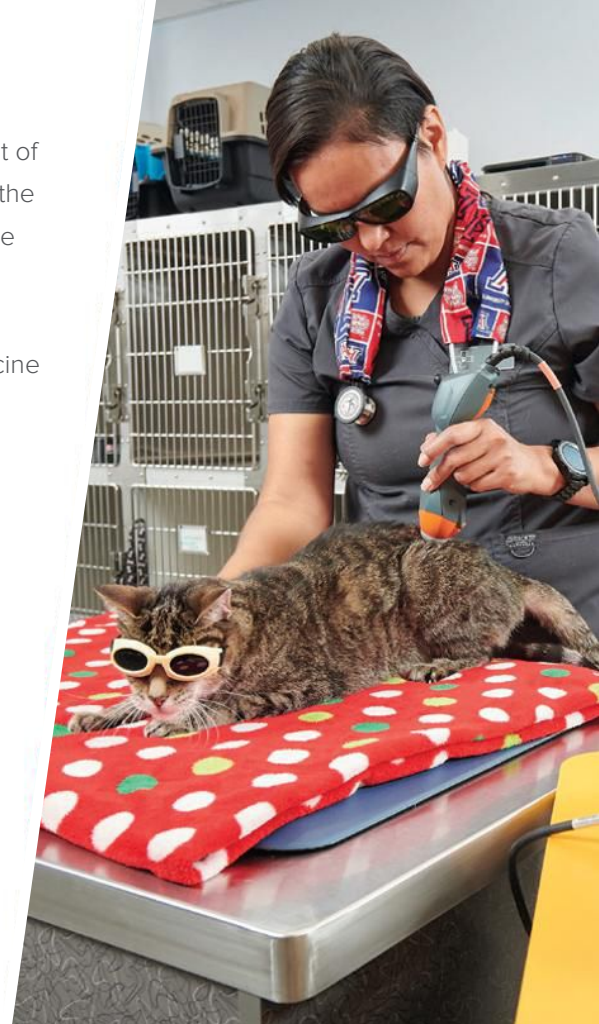
Garthe’s motivation to open her own practice and to showcase rehabilitation – right in the front window! – came from her love for her patients. “When I first started practicing medicine, I would come to dead-end cases. It’d be like: *Oh no, there’s nothing more we can do.* That just always bothered me; there’s got to be something more that we can do for those pets! I started exploring alternatives and I became certified in veterinary acupuncture. I’ve been doing acupuncture for over 15 years. It sets me apart from other facilities and it’s something I enjoy.”

“I love having other options to treat pets and help them get better and make them stronger,” she continued. “I knew that rehabilitation is in the forefront. It’s starting to take off. And why not? You know, we have physical therapists when we have injuries. That’s part of *our* protocol. Why isn’t it for *them*? I just felt that it was a good area to have my interests go towards. And then for business purposes, too, I thought it was a good field to get into that would set me apart from other hospitals in the area. I don’t have grooming, so I needed another revenue source. That was also a reason I kept the *On the Go* practice.” In fact, there was a *Vets on the Go* van parked outside the practice as we spoke.

### LASER THERAPY

One of the key aspects to rehabilitative care for her patients is laser therapy. She chose the CE Laser for her practice. “We got the laser when we opened the practice. I use it for postsurgical incisions. I use it for wound care. I use it for arthritis, for muscles, strains and sprains.”

Garthe is certified in acupuncture and patients are accustomed to it. But it means they need to be able to sit still for 20 minutes or so for it to work. That’s where the CE Laser can help because Garthe can also use the CE Laser for acupuncture. “I still needle; if the dogs or the cats will tolerate needles, I needle them. I’ll probably use the laser on pets who I know won’t sit for needling. I’m sure for a lot of cats that will be beneficial because they don’t sit for 20 minutes with needles very calmly. Some do, most don’t. It just gives me another option.” >>





## HYDROTHERAPY

Garthe selected the Tudor Neptune Hydrotherapy Treadmill for her practice. There were a number of influences that led to her decision to offer hydrotherapy – but at first, her husband was not one of them. She knew she had two important considerations for Paradise Point. *How can I set the bar on the standards of care higher? How I can differentiate myself within the veterinary community in the area that we're in?* were key questions that hydrotherapy provided answers to.

Garthe added, “My clients know who I am and how I’ve treated their pets for years, so they would expect that I would have some added modalities to help their pets.” But convincing her husband was the next step. Since he was her general contractor for Paradise Point, it was an important step. “My husband tried to talk me out of it. He thought having multiple exam rooms was better to begin with, then eventually adding it in. He finally saw the light after talking to him multiple times about it. He’s happy with the final product. But certainly, having it from the get-go was nice!”

## WHAT DOES HYDROTHERAPY HELP?

In her experience, Garthe has found that hydrotherapy helps with everything from

arthritis to postsurgical recovery. “My patients use it to build or maintain muscle mass, intervertebral disc disease, various neuropathies, help with the offloading and placement of the paws correctly versus trying to do something on the ground. It’s that offloading of the weight, especially in neurological cases, that can really help them. Dogs who have had an anterior cruciate rupture – they have some pretty significant muscle atrophy so we can help them build muscle back.”

Garthe reflected on some patients she would be seeing that week. “I currently have an agility dog that also does dock diving. He’s a flat-coated retriever, very thin and well-muscled. So, we’re using it to try to help build better muscles in those hind legs.”

Garthe even had an overweight cat named Roger (pictured above) in the clinic during our visit. “We’re actually using the treadmill to see

if we can get an obese cat kind of back to normal size.” Surprisingly, Roger the orange tabby did agree to walk on the treadmill with a little assistance from one of the vet techs.

## ADVICE FOR OTHERS

Paradise Point had been open about five months at the time of our visit. For Garthe, it felt like only two. Opening a practice can feel a lot like a wedding reception: it goes by fast and you barely remember it. But having her territory manager and equipment specialist by her side throughout made it possible.

For colleagues thinking of starting their own practice, Garthe said, “Just definitely talk to Patterson reps and hopefully you’ll build a relationship with them. I did with Adam and Theresa and they really know their stuff and really held my hand walking through this.”

Just like Roger the cat, everyone needs a little help and encouragement now and then. In fact, that’s what Patterson is all about. **PT**



Dr. Desiree Garthe, Theresa Hurley and Adam Fritz

## PATTERSON TEAM

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 Theresa Hurley, *Territory Manager*  
 Adam Fritz, *Equipment Specialist*  
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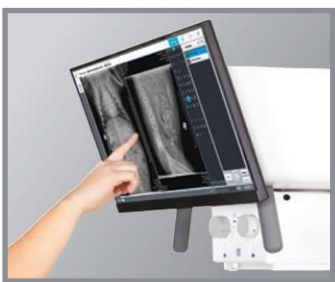
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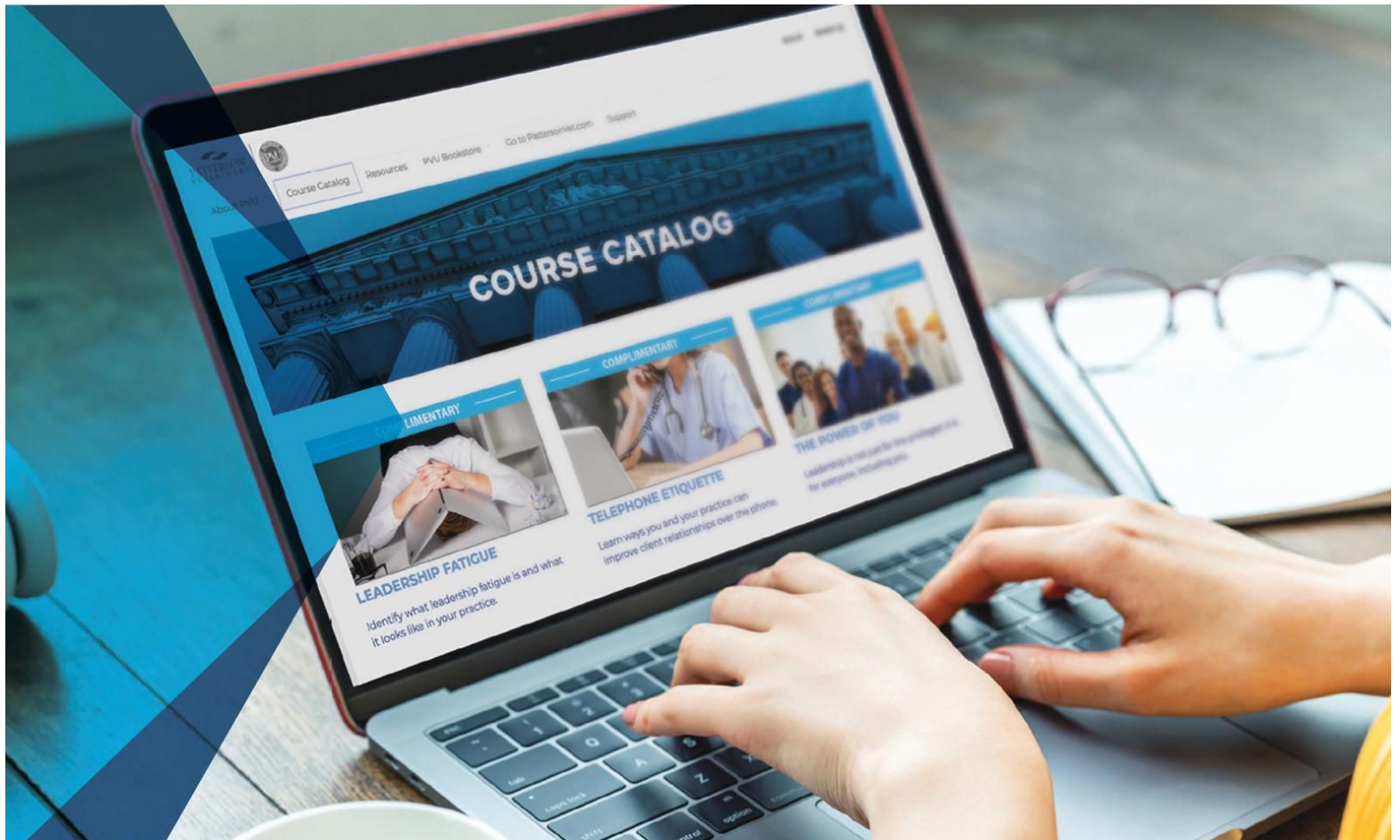
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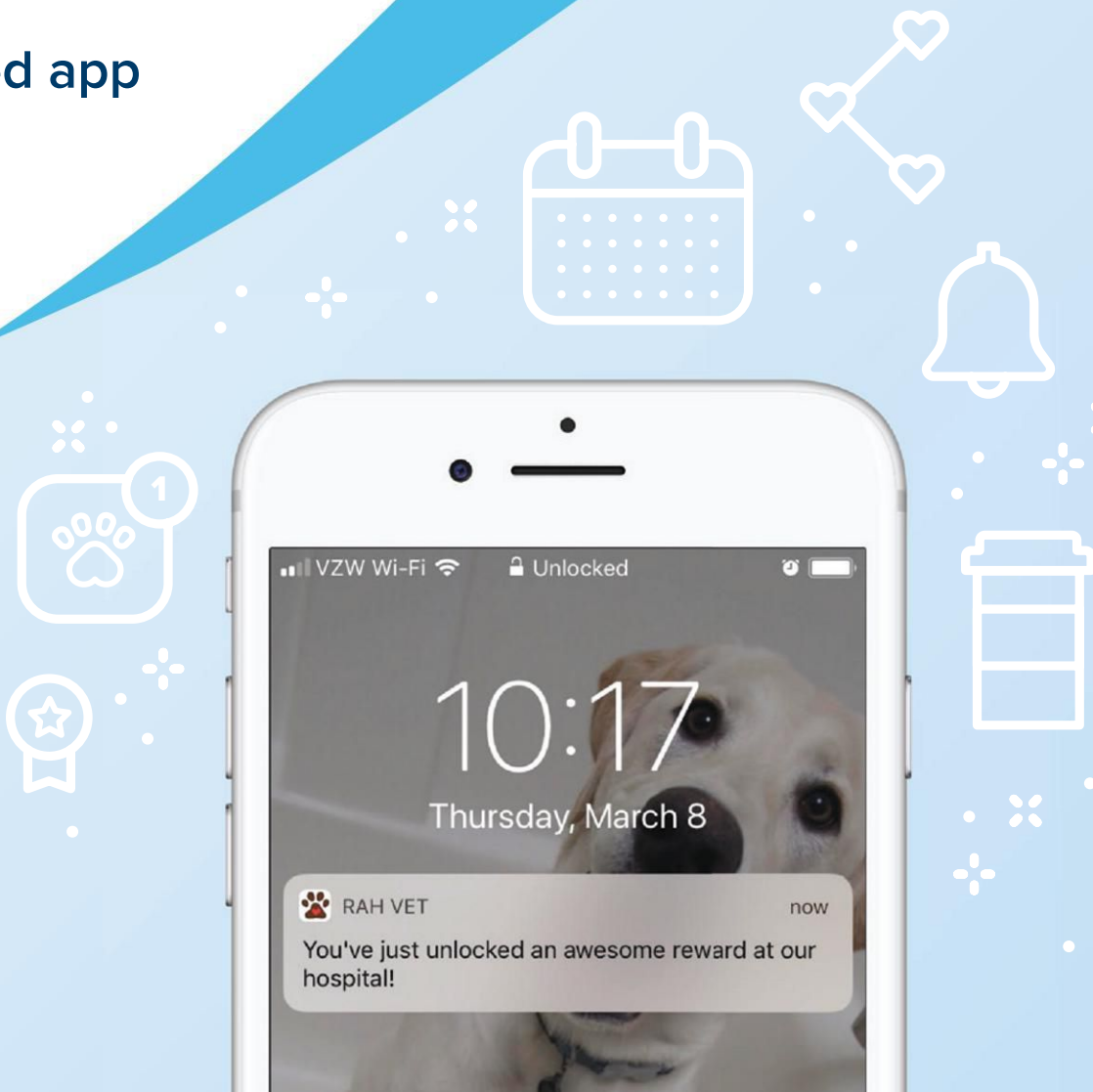




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# ROLLBACKS, RESCUES AND REST: ONE CLINIC'S UNCONVENTIONAL RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

How do you transform a veterinary practice into a booming business? You could charge a premium for your services. You could extend your hours and keep your doors open for emergencies. You could hold your team to a strict no-discounts policy. Or, if you're Dr. Wendy King of Spears Creek Veterinary Clinic in Elgin, South Carolina, you could throw the rule book out the window and opt for an entirely unconventional approach.

King's recipe for success calls for a dollop of discounts, a ration of team rest (doctor's orders!) and a heaping helping of work with local animal rescue groups. Amidst an afternoon brimming with pre-scheduled appointments, the doctor made time to speak with us and share a bit more about what gives Spears Creek its signature spark.

## THE SPARK BEHIND SPEARS

King's confident, intuitive approach to running Spears Creek presents as second nature. So much so, that we were surprised to learn it isn't the only veterinary practice she has owned. "I had owned a clinic before, and everything ultimately ended up becoming about paying bills," she shared. "I did everything by the book the first time. Regular hours. No discounts. And I burned out. I promised myself that this time it would be about the animals, not the money."

Though a noble mission statement, that doesn't mean endless funds were available to invest in her new venture. At the time King leased the Spears Creek building, a former emergency clinic that had been sitting vacant for five years, the team was lean and so was the budget. "I only had one receptionist, one tech and me!"

Even customers seemed to be a slow trickle in those early days, when King admits to having twiddled her thumbs a time or two. But

that all changed with client 95. "We had one client ... then another ... then another ... then client 95 came in the door and said, 'I have a rescue! You're the only vet that can see me today. You're the only one available.' So we said, 'sure!'"

After a successful surgery and a great experience, King recalls the woman pledging, "'I'll give you all the spays and neuters you want if you can do them at the same price that the shelters do.' Again, we said, 'sure!'"

Word quickly spread from that rescue group to the next rescue group, who told the next and so on. According to King, that was the point when the magic came in. "The rescue groups had their rescue animals, but they also had their personal pets and loved that our clinic worked with rescues. So they said, 'We really like you! Can you be our vet?'" Then there were the people fostering the rescue animals who had their personal pets, and they liked us too and asked if we would be their vet!"

## THE RESCUES THAT RESCUE

Working with rescue groups hasn't only been good for Spears Creek's bottom line. It provides the team with a sense of great purpose. King elaborated, "I burned out before, but I love what I do now. I think the rescue work rescued me. It has really enlivened all of our passions. It's good for our hearts and our emotions. With this work, there is absolutely no doubt among our staff that we are literally rescuing animals."

The groups take animals out of high-kill shelters and place them in foster care for two weeks, during which time the Spears Creek team does a full evaluation as well as a spay or neuter procedure. The animals are then shipped north to no-kill shelters. King mused, "It's like a rags-to-riches story!"

According to her, the current state of fostering is vastly different now than it was even a decade ago. "It used to be that we were just trying to get the dogs out of the shelters and



into foster homes, hoping that you'd fall in love and keep them. Now, we already know the dogs will be adopted up north. So you can still fall in love with the animals, but you've got to let them go. It's amazing how many animals can be transported north! Their shelters are empty. They just don't have the animals."

Indeed, the numbers are staggering. "One of the rescues that we work with alone has sent 2,000 animals up north. We facilitate that. It makes my heart sing. It makes my staff's hearts sing."

### NEUTERS BY THE NUMBERS

The demand for spay and neuter procedures has swelled to such levels that the Spears Creek team has added another doctor to their ranks just to keep up. It should come as no shock that not just any doc would do for Wendy King – she convinced her mentor to come out of retirement. "He's a great surgeon. He's here two full days a week doing exclusively spays and neuters."

At this point the breakdown for Spears Creek is about 40 percent rescue work and 60 percent clientele. "I try to do the rescue work on Tuesdays and Thursdays, because Mondays and Fridays tend to be busy in a veterinary practice, so I use those days to focus on my regular clients. Of course, it doesn't always happen that way because rescues don't just get sick on Tuesdays and Thursdays!" King said, laughing.

Luckily, in the event the schedule doesn't go according to plan, her regular clients don't mind. As it turns out, they're some of her biggest champions. "The clientele is aware that we do the rescue work, and they love it."

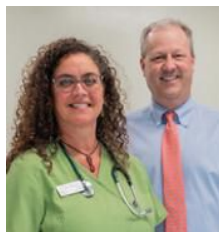
In fact, one area woman is such an advocate that she has extended an unlimited grant for Spears Creek to continue spaying, neutering and vaccinating the animals of South Carolina. King explains, "I have a grant that covers free spays, neuters and rabies vaccinations – she pays us to do them at the shelter price. We're doing over 200 spays and neuters a year, at totally no charge to the people. It's amazing." Better still, these efforts are having a measurable impact on the local cat overpopulation issue. "We're actually making a dent. We're going to see if we can do 300 this year!"

### THE TEAM SUPPORTING THE DREAM

King puts her whole heart into running Spears Creek, and that dedication tends to inspire loyalty amongst those in her circle. "I recently had a client say, 'My neighbors told me that they would haunt me if I didn't come to you as a veterinarian. So here I am!'" >>



Even her Patterson rep has worked with her for over two decades. Of Territory Manager Matthew Colclough, King noted, “Matt has been my rep since I became a veterinarian 23 years ago. He was absolutely essential to me getting this clinic up and running and helping me outfit it and get everything installed in the beginning. I have always believed in putting all of my eggs in one basket and protecting that basket with my whole life.” That’s one reason she orders almost exclusively from Patterson. “It saves my team time hunting around for the best deals because Matt will see that he does us right.”



Dr. Wendy King and Matthew Colclough

For Colclough, the feeling is mutual. “Dr. King is great! She has always been a dedicated and passionate veterinarian and I have really enjoyed working with her the past 23 years. It is obvious she is having more fun with her second clinic. Same with the staff, everyone is on the same page. It is a fun and relaxed environment but at the same time they take their work very seriously.” Regarding the rescue work King does, Colclough believes “it is a great example of the old adage, follow your passion and success will follow.”

Even King’s husband has been drawn into the Spears Creek orbit. “My husband has been very supportive throughout this whole thing. We tag-team Facebook! He is not a veterinarian, but he helps me find content. I’ll take the pictures of the staff and the animals and do the in-clinic stuff, and he finds the outside clinic stuff like articles and cartoons. It’s pretty neat because that way I’m not overwhelmed. It just flows.”

## BROKEN RULES AND BOOMING BUSINESS

After her first experience with clinic ownership, King was determined to tear up the rule book page by page. The Spears Creek team doesn’t do emergencies. They don’t remain open after hours. They close at 1 p.m. every Wednesday to promote team wellness. The staff is empowered to offer discounts. They provide free nail trims, which shocks people more than anything, according to King. “Everything you read says I’m doing it wrong. I broke all the rules here, and it seems to be working.”

Charging less means the team has to work a little harder, but King has a positive outlook on the matter. “We do dentals that are one-third the cost of what everyone else charges, so we have to do twice as many dentals. But we look at it as we *get* to do twice as many dentals and help twice as many animals. We have to work a little bit harder because we offer lower prices, but in the end it’s better work in my opinion.”

King cites her clinic’s rescue work as the reason they do almost no marketing, save for having a web presence. “Working with rescues has been an insanely good tool for growing our customer base. Insanely good. I don’t know why everybody doesn’t do this. They should teach this in vet school. When it comes down to it, even though it’s not about the money, we’re a highly successful clinic. And I get to give that back to my employees as well. And we are all hard workers. We get crazy busy, and then we just put our heads down and go.”

How busy? It recently reached the point where a staff meeting was held to discuss the possibility of not taking on any new clients. Shortly after the meeting, King recounts, “We

laughed about it. Everyone said, ‘Dr. King, you’re full of it. We’ll just have to work harder!’ And we did.”

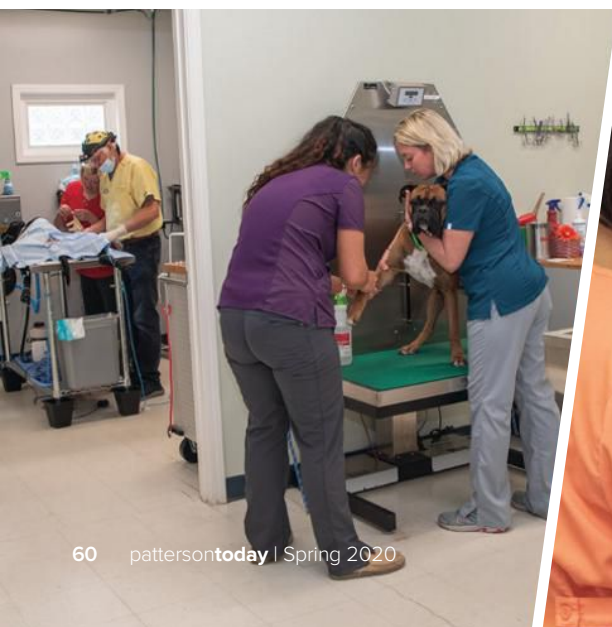
## LOOKING AHEAD

Our conversation with King took place shortly after the clinic’s 2020 vision meeting. “We get together each year to talk about the year to come, discuss our hopes and dreams, make a wish list and decide what we’re going to focus on and change for the better.”

This year – besides those 300 surgeries – King and her team hope their rescue work inspires other clinics to follow suit. Even though they are a small business, they want to show others that the sky is the limit, no matter the size of the practice.

As for what advice she would offer other clinics that want to get involved, King suggests, “They might just have to reach out to a rescue. It starts with one. Just say, ‘We want to help.’ If you reach out to one, word spreads fast.” If their story unfolds anything like it has for Spears Creek, we suggest they prepare to hire an additional doctor. **PT**

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