Meet Leo, an eight year old border collie cross malamute that needed a little help getting back on his feet. When Leo was just 10 months old, he was diagnosed with severe hip dysplasia. If untreated, Leo’s joints would deteriorate to the point he wouldn’t walk properly and would develop arthritis. Leo’s owner, Annette Collins flew him from Darwin to Brisbane for surgery. The surgery included bone grafts to both right and left sides of the pelvis. After months of recovery, Leo was back on his feet – a smart, energetic companion.

Seven years later, Leo was diagnosed with chronic degenerative joint disease. Hip dysplasia had weakened his hind legs. In December 2008 he ruptured the cruciate ligament in his right hind leg. Leo had just recovered from this surgery when he ruptured the ligament in the left hind leg.

After his second operation, Leo needed to get moving again but gently. He was one of the first patients to use new rehabilitation equipment at Murdoch University supported by Hill’s Pet Nutrition.

The Hill’s Pet Nutrition Mobility and Rehabilitation Service provides a continuum of care for Murdoch’s patients. Professor Rick Read said, “The Hill’s Pet Nutrition Mobility and Rehabilitation Service will add another way to help animals live healthy lives. The Hill’s Mobility Service can help dogs recover from surgery or disease, help pets lose weight, increase the mobility of arthritis patients or improve an animal’s strength and stamina.”

Prof Read shares, “We are grateful to Hill’s Pet Nutrition for providing the necessary funding to establish this much needed service at Murdoch University Veterinary Hospital. As in humans, rehabilitation and physiotherapy are important for ensuring optimal recovery and quality of life.”
The Hill’s Pet Nutrition Mobility and Rehabilitation Service brings together expertise from different areas at Murdoch. Working with Murdoch’s referral surgery and medicine services, physiotherapist Charlotte Steed and veterinary nurse Ann Graham will help manage patients’ recoveries with a multitude of treatments and tools. Charlotte and Ann will also work with staff skilled in pain management, nutrition and complementary therapies.

Charlotte and Ann will offer a variety of other treatments that will improve a patient’s mobility after surgery, build strength, encourage a natural range of motion and improve balance. The Hill’s Pet Nutrition Mobility and Rehabilitation Clinic knows that recovery requires a team approach and will work with primary care or referring veterinarians to ensure the treatment is appropriate for each patient.

Working with the rehabilitation team, Murdoch designed a rehabilitation program that would improve Leo’s strength, stamina and balance. With the support of Hill’s Pet Nutrition, Murdoch is pleased to offer a new rehabilitation tool that has great promise for patients – an underwater treadmill. Swimming is often recommended for humans and animals alike when recovering from injury because the water’s buoyancy minimises the impact of any weight bearing exercises. Previously, Murdoch patients needing rehabilitation were taken to swim in a pool to help with their recovery.

The underwater treadmill has some significant advantages over swimming to help dogs that need to improve their mobility. First, the amount of water in the treadmill is adjustable – which means staff can add more weight bearing activity as patients recover. Second, the speed of the treadmill is variable. Additionally, water jets can be added to increase the water resistance. This will provide exercise opportunities for injured dogs all the way up to star athletes. Finally, the on-site location makes it easier for staff and clients so more time is spent on treatment and less on travel.

In 2009, Leo’s owner, Annette Collins decided to try using the underwater treadmill 8 weeks after Leo’s second cruciate surgery. At the time, Leo was favouring his recovering leg and rarely put weight on his injured leg when standing. The Murdoch rehabilitation team worked with Annette to develop a rehabilitation plan that would build muscle mass and strength without causing a re-injury to weakened joints. Leo came weekly to use the rehabilitation service.

Annette says, “With Leo’s recent injuries, we needed to get him up and walking. We wanted to build some muscle to protect his weakened joints. Ann Graham was really good with him. Leo’s a little shy but Ann had a great relationship with Leo. She saw what he could do and what he couldn’t. She knew how to get the best out of him. Since the mobility clinic, Leo’s really developed well. And he loves it.”

Murdoch also suggested that Annette should consider changing Leo’s nutrition to something that would better help protect against arthritis. “He’s really vulnerable to arthritis so I switched him to Hill’s Pet Nutrition JD. He looks healthier and feels better than he has ever been. With the new Hill’s diet and his rehabilitation, Leo looks good, feels good, and is a happy dog.”

Murdoch is pleased to announce a new partnership with Hill’s Pet Nutrition that will support several key projects at Murdoch School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences.

This new 3 year partnership will provide support for the following key programs:

- Key funding for Hill’s Pet Nutrition Mobility and Rehabilitation Service
- Support for Murdoch’s Veterinary Professional Life program
- Support for our Hospital feeding program
- Support for Murdoch’s online education program, Rounds Around the States.
Just weeks ago, Bob, a gentle 10 yr old cat, was in danger of losing his eye and his life. Something was causing his eye to bulge. Renzhi Wang, Bob’s owner, took him to see his local vet. The first issue to rule out was an infection including a tooth root infection. Even with antibiotics and the tooth removed, the eye appeared to be getting worse. Renzhi was referred to veterinary ophthalmologist Dr Martyn King. On the ultrasound images, it appeared the pressure was coming from a mass behind the eye. Dr King took a biopsy, and the results came back: CANCER.

Bob has an aggressive cancer causing quick growing tumours. When first detected it was the size of a fingernail. Within 5 days, the tumour behind Bob’s eye was the size of a marble, pushing on the eye and the eyelid. As the tumour grew, it was creating incredible pressure on the eye – even causing the tissue supporting the eye to bleed.

Renzhi was very worried about Bob. Renzhi’s mum, Yanrong Li was also worried. “Bob is my son’s pet. Renzhi loves him very much. Unfortunately, Bob has fallen ill just before my son sits his TEE exams. Bob’s cancer diagnosis affected my son a lot.”

That’s when Dr King recommended the Murdoch Animal Cancer Care Unit. Dr Fleur James met with Yanrong to discuss how chemotherapy might save Bob’s life. With Bob’s eye area bleeding and painful from the pressure of the tumour, Dr James explained that Bob would likely lose his sight. “Lymphoma when untreated is a rapidly progressive, fatal tumour and we were very concerned for Bob and his family. As chemotherapy kills rapidly dividing cancer cells, it generally works against tumours like lymphoma very well and the improvements can be dramatic.”

On 13 October, Bob received his first chemotherapy treatment. Bob has commenced an intensive chemotherapy program designed to keep his quality of life high and his long term survival chances high. The morning after Bob’s first chemotherapy treatment, Dr James called to ask how Bob was feeling. Yanrong Li said “I couldn’t believe my eyes. Bob had improved overnight.” Within a week, the tumour had shrunk and Bob’s eye had miraculously returned to normal.

“It was so incredible. Renzhi and I brought Bob into Murdoch the next day. Everyone was so excited for us – the reception staff, nurses and Dr James. You could tell how happy they were for us and how much they cared about Bob,” Yanrong said. “We are so grateful to everyone who helped in the diagnosis and treatment of Bob, our vet Dr Raj, Dr King, and the staff at Murdoch are so wonderful. They are so caring. I can’t express what I feel about them.”

Sight for Sore Eyes: Cat’s cancer treatment saves his vision

Murdoch Animal Cancer Care Unit celebrates its 10th Anniversary

On 3 October 1999, Murdoch University opened the first purpose built facility for the treatment of animals with cancer in Australia, the Murdoch Animal Cancer Care Unit. Because of the powerful chemicals used in chemotherapy, the Cancer Unit required specialised storage, ventilation, and containment facilities. With the support of individuals and organisations, the Murdoch University Veterinary Trust was able to make key investments that would enable pets in Australia to receive the highest standards of cancer treatment.

Staff at the Murdoch Animal Cancer Care Unit are teaming up with some of Murdoch’s leading research scientists to support ground-breaking research into canine lymphoma. Seed funding for this research was provided by the Veterinary Trust’s Cancer Research Fund. Supporting research and veterinary care, Murdoch University is dedicated to the best cancer treatment possible for your beloved pets.
Veterinary students from Murdoch University spent a hair-raising night capturing lions in Kruger National Park recently as part of an annual South Africa field trip. The 10 students, with trip coordinators Dr Kris Warren and Dr Leisel Wion from the School of Veterinary and Biomedical Science’s Conservation Medicine Program, were helping vaccinate the lions against rabies after the pride killed a rabies positive dog.

The operation, a joint mission with the State Veterinary Service and Wildlifevets.com, involved radio tracking the pride of 17 adults and cubs, attracting them using a dead wildebeest and the recorded sounds of lions eating and then darting and anaesthetizing several of the adults. Teams of students helped vaccinate and health check the anaesthetized animals while keeping watch for other lions as well as for signs that their own lion was waking up. “We really appreciated the opportunity to observe a pride of lions up close in a natural setting” said Dr Wion. “It was truly a once in a lifetime experience”.

The students also visited nearby villages to help local vets from Mpumalanga State Veterinary Services vaccinate dogs and talk to local people about rabies – one of the most serious infectious diseases in southern Africa. The disease is endemic in many wildlife and domestic species and interactions between infected animals and other animals and humans can lead to human fatalities and the loss of village livestock and endangered wildlife. “It is critical that this disease is controlled at the interface between domestic and wild populations” said Dr Wion. “So a key management focus is vaccination campaigns of domestic animals and education of local people”.

Children from Masoyi and Manzini Schools were only too happy to bring along their pets for vaccinations and health checks. “One of the challenges for the vet students was adjusting their animal handling skills to dogs with very little handling and occasional aggressive tendencies” said Dr Wion. “But the students commented that it was incredibly rewarding to be involved in a positive project in such a poverty stricken area and to see the enthusiasm and warmth with which the local children greeted us”.

Other highlights of the trip included the opportunity to help hand raise two orphaned baby rhinos. Round-the-clock care included bottle feeding the babies and sleeping with them overnight. Students also helped capture and relocate two adult giraffe, and constructed huge “bomas” or barriers for funnelling and capturing game such as buffalos for disease testing. “Making the bomas demonstrated to the students the immense technical and logistical challenges encountered by wildlife veterinarians” said Dr Wion.

Fighting the rabies battle on multiple fronts helped illustrate the “one health” concept of conservation medicine: that endangered wildlife health is often interconnected with public health, the health of domestic and other wild animals and issues such as community development. “The students developed an appreciation of the links between poverty, socio economic issues and biodiversity conservation” said Dr Warren, Program Chair of Postgraduate Studies in Conservation Medicine. “Key aims of these field trips are to give students an immersion experience and explore issues related to conservation at the grassroots level”.

Dr Warren also hopes that their experiences in Africa will inspire students to continue to engage in local and global biodiversity conservation initiatives.
Regular giving is good for your heart

With the global financial crisis taking its toll, many people are finding regular giving an effective way to continue making a difference for the animals that they care about. Three pet owners have made the commitment to give a regular gift to cardiology treatment at Murdoch University.

In 2006, boxer puppy Thai came to see Boehringer Ingelheim cardiology resident Dr Josephine Dandrieux at Murdoch University Veterinary Hospital. Although Thai was less than a year old, Dr Dandrieux performed an echocardiogram and was able to diagnose Thai with an Aortic Stenosis, a condition which can be fatal.

Diagnosing the condition helped veterinarians at Murdoch provide medications that stabilised his condition and helped his owner Leanne Day know what danger signals to watch out for in Thai’s behaviour. Now, 3 years later, Thai is beating the odds. Leanne knows that excellent veterinary care is important for Thai’s continued good health. In gratitude for Murdoch’s help, Leanne Day knows what danger signals to watch out for in Thai’s behaviour. Now, 3 years later, Thai is beating the odds. Leanne knows that excellent veterinary care is important for Thai’s continued good health. In gratitude for Murdoch’s help, Leanne Day began giving a monthly donation to support animal cardiology patients at Murdoch’s veterinary hospital in 2007.

Later, spunky terrier Gizmo came to Murdoch’s Pet Emergency Centre. After being stabilised, Murdoch’s critical care vets identified the cause of her collapse—a serious heart condition. Diagnosing her heart condition was difficult because we needed to understand how her heart beat improved and worsened over longer periods of time.

Dr Mellora Sharman recommended that Gizmo wear a small heart monitor attached to a chest halter which would record when Gizmo’s heartbeat became erratic. Murdoch was able to borrow the heart monitor from a cardiologist in Queensland. With the aid of this equipment, Gizmo’s condition was accurately diagnosed and treated and she has since returned to her energetic self.

While Murdoch was able to get a monitor for Gizmo, her owners Ninetta and Peter Tsagaris didn’t want any other pet owners to wait and worry about borrowing equipment. Ninetta and Peter wanted to purchase a halter monitor outright for Murdoch’s cardiology patients but in the current economic situation, the equipment cost was a problem.

Making a regular monthly gift was the solution. Ninetta and Peter committed to a regular monthly gift over the next few years which meant the hospital could provide a new heart monitor now. Ninetta and Peter’s regular direct deposit donation became part of their monthly budget at an affordable amount. Most importantly, they can see what a difference their regular giving makes whenever Gizmo comes in for a check-up.

Ninetta said “I’m glad to give because when Gizmo was at Murdoch we saw what a difference having the right bit of equipment can make. While we wish we could have done more, we can all do something. Our pets are part of our family. Maybe it’s a bit of stationery, a piece of machinery, supporting a staff person, but we can all do something to help sick dogs and cats.”

By pooling the regular gifts of Leanne Day with Ninetta and Peter Tsagaris, the Murdoch University Veterinary Trust is able to help patients like Thai and Gizmo receive better diagnosis and better treatment of their heart conditions today and into the future.

For more information on regular giving, please contact the Murdoch University Veterinary Trust at 08 9360 2731 or vettrust@murdoch.edu.au

Murdoch student wins award for improving heart disease learning

Murdoch’s veterinary student, Alex Tinson, is the only Australian student to be given a $4000 Morris Animal Foundation Award this year which she will use to improve student learning on heart disease. Miss Tinson said the ability to accurately grade heart murmurs is an important factor in using the technique to diagnose early and mild heart disease. Supervised by Dr Caroline Mansfield, the project aims to look at veterinary students’ ability to grade heart murmurs over a period of time, identifying the variations that can occur and then potentially lead to better training methods for veterinary students.

“Listening with a stethoscope is an extremely effective clinical tool in assessing cardiac disease and noting disease progression – but it’s also subjective.” Alex Tinson said. “My project has the potential to determine the best method for allowing students to become more accurate, leading to better assessment and treatment of cardiac patients.”

Guest cardiologist brings new skills to students and practitioners

The 2009 Boehringer Ingelheim Guest Cardiology Lecturer Dr Richard Woolley held training sessions for students and practitioners during his visit in October. Student Rachel White shares, “Richard was very approachable and easy to learn from, I feel more comfortable with the cardio work up and treatment options, it has been the highlight of my rotations this year!”

The Boehringer Ingelheim Guest Cardiology Lectureship brings internationally renowned specialists to Western Australia to deliver world-class cardiology education to practitioners, students and residents. The Boehringer Ingelheim Guest Cardiology program will increase Australian veterinary skills in the diagnosis and optimal treatment of cardiac problems.
The Murdoch University meat judging team has won first place in the Australian Intercollegiate Meat Judging (ICMJ) overall competition. Named Champion Australian University, the Murdoch team was also runner-up in four other categories. Attracting participants from around the world and across Australia, the Australian Intercollegiate Meat Judging (ICMJ) program saw high profile industry speakers and training opportunities alongside a beef, lamb and pork judging competition.

Murdoch's veterinary student Peter Carrigan was Champion Australian individual and runner-up in lamb judging, while fellow veterinary student Nicola Fargher was winner of retail cut and primal identification class and the value adding class. Four of the six Murdoch University students were named in the final 15 with Peter and Nicola gaining selection to attend a Meat Standards Australia (MSA) training week in Brisbane, from which the Australian team will be selected to compete at the National Western Stock Show in Denver, Colorado, USA in January. Murdoch's students were sponsored by Linley Valley Pork, Wellard and the Royal Agricultural Society of WA, who have been behind the University's participants for the past three years.

Established in 2007, the Art Meets Vet Science residency program provides an opportunity to encourage creative thinking and new ways of looking at the animal/human relationship. Supported by donations from Dr Clyde McGill, Dr Colleen Rigby, Ms Mary Macha and the Holmes á Court Family Foundation, this residency brings an artist on campus to engage staff and students and the Murdoch community in discussions about the connections between art and science, humans and animals.

Murdoch tops in Australia for meat judging

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It's amazing how much changes in 10 years. Murdoch has changed — adding new buildings, new curricula and new staff. Every year, new students make their mark on campus. We want to help our alumni keep up-to-date. During this year we have enticed over 300 alumni to update their details on the vet alumni webpage by offering a chance to win one of eight Discoverers compasses. The lucky winners were: Karyn Feltus, Kevin Au, Nina Coultard, Greg Rodda, Andrew Hughes, Jacqui Hirst, Pauline Fong and Arlette Broeze. Congratulations!

An additional benefit of keeping in touch with us is that when it is time for a reunion we can assist in getting your class together. From this year on we have three reunions a year – 10, 20 and 30 years! The 1989 and 1999 groups have each had a weekend to catch up and renew old acquaintances. The 1979 year group will gather over 4–5 December to reminisce and welcome the 2009 graduates into the profession.

If you and your classmates are thinking about a reunion, please contact Maryanne Culliver on M.Culliver@murdoch.edu.au to discuss how the vet alumni office can assist with making your reunion happen.
Camel business benefits from science

Murdoch University scientists are poised to tackle new scientific frontiers through a cross-cultural collaboration based in the desert sands of Al Ain in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Up to 1000 camels, with some individuals worth up to $8 million, will be accommodated in the new personal camel racing facility for H.H. The President Sheikh Khalife Bin Zayed al Nahyan. Camel racing in the UAE and Qatar alone is worth $US 1 billion every year.

The Murdoch team, including veterinary anaesthetist Dr Peter Gray and forensic geneticist Dr Peter Spencer, has been invited to contribute its expertise towards the expansion of the facility, designed to draw on the best modern science can offer. The project will see veterinarians, geneticists and agricultural scientists from Murdoch team up with camel experts at the Scientific Centre for Racing Camels at Al Ain. The Al Ain facility is primed to become a centre for groundbreaking research in camel health. Dr Gray will work together with the Al Ain centre to develop systems for prolonged anaesthesia for the camel surgery, raising the bar for anaesthetic techniques for camels and training UAE veterinarians in these methods.

The cooperative project will also draw on the advice of Murdoch University’s digestive diseases expert Dr Guy Lester, veterinary studies Associate Professor David Murphy, Professor of Sustainable Agriculture Nick Costa, veterinary nurse Sue Smith and Dr Spencer for forensic genetics.

Donations to the Murdoch University Veterinary Trust can make a real difference to the lives of animals

Your donation can fund the next research breakthrough, prepare new veterinarians to deliver world-class care and provide equipment and expertise for the most difficult veterinary cases.

100% of every dollar given goes to key priorities in the School and you can earmark your donation for a project that is important to you.

Please help us help animals.

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Murdoch University Veterinary Trust, South St Murdoch WA 6160 Phone 08 9360 2731.
2009 was a landmark year as Murdoch University prepared for the first veterinary global accreditation visit. The School of Veterinary and Biomedical Sciences welcomed 14 visitors representing the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Europe on campus for its Global Accreditation visit. From the 25 September – 2 October, the accreditation panel assessed Murdoch’s ability to meet international best practice standards for veterinary education in the following areas:

- Organisation and financial management
- Facilities, equipment and other resources
- Admission and student support
- High quality faculty and clinical staff
- Research to support learning activities
- Innovative curricula with effective outcomes assessment

After analysing reports, inspecting facilities and interviewing staff, students and employers in the veterinary field, the accreditation panel assessed how effectively Murdoch meets these standards. Following the visit, a recommendation will be made to each nation’s accrediting body regarding Murdoch’s status as an internationally accredited veterinary school.

While the results of the accreditation visit are not yet known, the accreditation panel praised Murdoch’s commitment to international excellence in veterinary science and the strong relationships between our staff, students and members of the community. The School would like to thank the students, staff and other school supporters that made the visit possible. Professor John Edwards, Dean of School of Veterinary and Biomedical Science said, “We are especially grateful to the many individuals and organisations that have supported our efforts with gifts and pledges for key projects. We look forward to the results of the accreditation visit in 2010.”

Murdoch first for global accreditation

For some rural communities, veterinary care is inaccessible. Each year, Professor Ian Robertson travels to rural and indigenous communities in Australia to provide needed veterinary care and an eye-opening experience for final year students. This year, students Narelle Thompson, Rachel White, Luke Annetts and Cali Goad helped Professor Ian Robertson load drugs, surgical equipment and vaccines in the University van before heading out into the Outback.

At Sandstone (300km east of Mt Magnet), Murdoch students and staff provided vaccinations, worming and sterilization for needy dogs and cats. Additionally, some station horses received dentals and the school children learned about responsible pet ownership.

After three heart-warming nights in Sandstone, students drove to Wiluna at the beginning of the Canning Stock Route. With many dogs in this isolated community needing worming and desexing, students set up surgery in the disused cells of the police station. They only managed to lock themselves in once!

Students practiced communication, decision-making, surgical, animal handling and teamwork skills. The trip also provided an excellent opportunity to learn about issues in Western Australia’s more isolated regions. Our staff and students appreciated the warm welcome these communities offered and look forward to returning next year.

Into the outback

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Our pets are a gift

Whether it’s the wag of a tail happy to see us after a hard day, the exhilaration of a wild run on the beach, a purr of contentment as one settles into sleep, or the look of your pet that says you are the most important person in the world, our pets enrich our lives. This holiday season, you can give something meaningful back – a happier, healthier future for your pet and to other pets that may not be so fortunate.

Your pet gives you unconditional love, what can you give in return?

Use the donation form on the reverse to make your donation.