



## The Latest in Pawprint: October 23, 2015

Also available online at [www.pawprint.cornell.edu](http://www.pawprint.cornell.edu)

### Vet College celebrates work of veterinary technicians



When people first learn that Laura Barlow works in a cancer clinic, they assume her job always is depressing. Barlow tells them that her experiences are more often like this:

“One of my patients saw me from the other side of the waiting room, bounded over the chairs at full speed toward me, and rolled over on his back for a belly rub,” she says. That would be unusual behavior for human cancer patients, but Barlow, a licensed veterinary technician (LVT), says it happens regularly at the Cornell University Hospital for Animals (CUHA).

“Since they visit us frequently for treatments and monitoring, I get to interact with the owners every visit, I get to bond with the patients,” she says. “Many of our patients get on the table willingly for their treatments. We love these pets and bond with them as if they are a part of our family as well.”

“Don’t get me wrong – cancer stinks,” Barlow adds. “I hate that anyone or any animal gets it. But I am here to help my patients have a good quality of life for as long as possible.”

It is tempting to characterize LVTs as nurses, but the analogy only goes so far. “I get to work alongside the veterinarian, but I have all the fun,” Barlow admits. “I do client communication and patient care: restraint, venipuncture, IV catheter placement, fluid therapy, anesthetic monitoring, surgical preparation, blood transfusion medicine, medication and chemotherapy administration and much more.”

Requirements vary across the U.S., but in New York state preparation for a career as an LVT includes two to four years in a college-level animal science program accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association. Candidates must then pass a national exam in order to obtain their license and complete a set number of continuing education hours afterwards to

maintain it.

It takes a great deal of motivation to become an LVT. Perhaps some people are just born with it.

“I always knew that I wanted to work in veterinary medicine,” says Barlow. When an uncle suggested becoming an LVT, “I explored the option and just knew that this was exactly what I wanted to do!”

Other LVTs come to the profession after exploring other career options. Patrick Brennan, head of the LVTs in Emergency and Patient Care at the equine and farm animal hospitals, originally went to college to study animal nutrition, “but within a week learned I wanted a career that was more hands-on.

“I grew up on a dairy farm and always enjoyed being around animals, specifically large animals,” he adds. “They have always been a huge part of my life.”

Erin Berthelsen took an even longer route: She became an accountant first. One tax season her childhood dog became ill. “I nursed him until he passed away,” she says. “I discovered that I really was intrigued with learning about what makes animals sick and how to treat them.”

Berthelsen is now the clinical research coordinator at CUHA. Researchers from across Cornell University contact her to request samples of animal blood, hair and other tissue for their studies, and she encourages owners to donate the samples from their pets. Berthelsen also keeps track of all of the clinical trials in the hospital that involve client-owned animals. When the hospital is very busy she helps by drawing blood, restraining patients for exams, helping to administer chemotherapy, sedating for radiographs and ultrasounds and drawing up vaccinations.

It does get busy—and stressful—at times. “Veterinary medicine in general is 24/7,” says Brennan. “That is one of the things I like most about my job. However, CUHA never closes. There are always people here, 365 days a year around the clock. My colleagues deserve gratitude for the personal sacrifices that they make to keep the hospital going and the animals cared for, just like doctors and nurses, police and firefighters.”

National Veterinary Technician week, Oct. 11–17, was created to raise public awareness of the profession and the educational background, skill set and knowledge LVTs have to offer. At CUHA, the celebrations were extended beyond the hospital’s 90 LVTs to the entire staff. “Each member is integral and necessary to making our hospitals run efficiently,” says Barlow. “It starts with the custodial and facilities staff, to the admission, discharge and scheduling personnel, animal attendants, farm hands, pharmacist and veterinarians. The list goes on and on.”

What about the part of the job that most people would dread? Berthelsen readily admits that patient deaths are hard to take. “Seeing that pain and sadness in owners when a beloved pet is gone breaks my heart. I know firsthand what they are going through.”

More often, though, there are moments of pure joy. “The best part about my job is when I see how happy pets get when they see their owners after treatment,” says Berthelsen, “especially if we were able to help that pet feel better. I can expect to say, ‘aww,’ at least once a day here.”

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## Endowed benefits open enrollment begins Nov. 1

Benefits open enrollment for endowed faculty and staff will be held Nov. 1-20 for coverage effective Jan. 1, 2016.

During the open enrollment period, endowed employees can make changes to their health or dental plans or sign up for flexible spending accounts (FSAs) and legal insurance for 2016. Contribution limits to Cornell’s Tax Deferred Annuity Plan (TDA) will increase for 2016, and employees can increase their contributions accordingly.

Visit the [Benefits Enrollment](#) site for plan options and rates, read the [2016 Open Enrollment Benefits](#) booklet, and use [Workday](#) to enroll or make changes. Your 2015 plan selections will automatically carry over to 2016 unless you take action to

enroll in another option (except for the FSAs, which require you to enroll each year to be covered).

There are some changes in enrollment options for 2016:

#### Medical FSA rollover

- In 2016, FSA medical reimbursement accounts can now roll over up to \$500 to be used during the entire year of 2017. Previously, larger amounts could be rolled over into the following year, but they had to be used up by March 15.
- In 2016, FSA medical care accounts can roll over up to \$500 of unused funds into a 2017 account.

#### Prescription drug vendor change

- A new prescription drug vendor, OptumRX, replaces Express Scripts Pharmacy Services. Copays by tier will not change, but certain medications could be listed under a different tier than before, requiring higher copays or prior authorization by your physician, or be excluded altogether.

#### Health plan changes

- Premium rates for Aetna's Health Savings Account (HSA) plan will not change. The HSA family maximum amount is changing from \$6,650 to \$6,750 for 2016 (includes Cornell's \$1,000 contribution). To change the amount of your personal HSA contribution to the increased maximum amount for 2016, you need to fill out an HSA enrollment form.
- Premium rates for the Cornell Program for Healthy Living (CPHL) and the Aetna Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) plan are increasing slightly from 2015. The CPHL and Aetna PPO medical and prescription drug copays now apply to the out-of-pocket maximums for 2016, decreasing the overall out-of-pocket costs.
- Preventive care coverage has expanded: Aetna HSA and Aetna PPO now cover preventive care benefits at 100 percent in-network, just like the CPHL Plan. All endowed plans are compliant with the Affordable Care Act.

#### Social Security and other documentation required

- To enroll or add a dependent to your health or dental plan, you are required to provide documentation such as a Social Security card and – for your spouse, domestic partner or child – birth or marriage certificate or Statement of [Domestic Partnership Form](#).
- Recent health care reform regulations require Cornell to report health coverage information to the IRS for 2016. All employees must provide the university with their dependents' Social Security numbers to verify that you and your family are participating in a health plan, or you can be subject to a tax penalty from the IRS.

Attend BeneFair, Nov. 5 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in G10 Biotechnology Building, or check out the [Benefits Enrollment](#) web page for details on all your benefits plans.

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## Conference on disability access Oct. 28

In celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), colleagues from Cornell's Northeast ADA Center, Infrastructure Property and Planning and Student Disability Services are holding a half-day conference, "25 Years of the Americans with Disabilities Act: Assessing Progress, Addressing Challenges and Looking Ahead," Oct. 28, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. at the Robert Purcell Community Center.

Through a keynote presentation and a variety of breakout sessions on such topics as the ADA and the NYS building code; accessible technology; trends in employment and the ADA; accessible design; inclusion and disability; and service animals on campus, this conference provides a forum for reviewing the successes afforded by the ADA as well as an opportunity to delve deeper into some of the challenges, advanced issues and future work needed to fully accomplish the ADA's goal of full and equal inclusion of persons with disabilities. Angela Winfield, program manager for the Northeast ADA Center, will give a personal perspective in the lunchtime keynote presentation.

Cost: \$25; free to Cornell students. [Registration is required](#) and space is limited. First come/first served.

Disability-related accommodations: If you require accommodations in order to participate in this event (e.g. handouts in alternate format, sign language interpreter, etc.), indicate this on the online registration form or call Katie Steigerwalt at 607-255-8660 no later than Oct. 16.

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## Big Red women unite on ice for United Way



The United Way Women's Hockey game for neighbors in need against nationally ranked #2 Boston College will be held Oct. 24 at 3 p.m., in Lynah Rink, with students competing for the mayor's "spirit" trophy.

A dollar will be donated to the United Way for every fan in attendance, thanks to The Computer Center and Mirabito.

A series of raffles - with great prizes, including a Key West getaway - will be held during the game.

Cornell student groups wearing their club or organizations' colors at the game will be eligible to receive the inaugural "Cornell and Community Spirit" trophy from Ithaca Mayor Svante Myrick, to be presented between the first and second periods.

Cornell students are admitted free; tickets are \$6 for adults, \$5 for seniors, and \$4 for Cornell staff and children K-12. Preschool children are free.

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## Runners' clinic for faculty and staff

A "Runner's' Clinic" will be held on the morning of **Oct. 28** in Gannett Health Services' physical therapy department, Schoellkopf Hall. Faculty and staff members who participate will receive a professional running evaluation by sports physical therapists who have years of clinical musculoskeletal experience, and an individualized follow-up appointment.

The evaluation includes a musculoskeletal examination, biomechanical foot evaluation, functional testing and a video analysis

of the participant's running stride to identify specific movement faults; the follow-up appointment includes a USB with copies of the running video and recommendations regarding exercises to improve any deficits or movement faults.

**Cost: \$150**, cash or check to Gannett Health Services.

Participation in the Runners' Clinic is by appointment only: call 607-255-7217 to schedule an appointment or to learn more.

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## Community Supported Agriculture blossoms on the Cornell campus



“Deliveries arrive on Wednesdays and Thursdays,” explains Cindy DeCloux, the coordinator for community supported agriculture (CSA) at the College of Veterinary Medicine. “And by the end of each day, the employees have picked up their shares.”

CSA drop-off spots were set up this spring at the Vet College and the East Hill Office Building (EHOB), where participants receive a weekly portion of the farm's harvest in a box full of fresh vegetables, including kale, carrots, Brussels sprouts and squash. What started with a handful of participants has grown significantly. “The Vet College location started with five subscriptions in May, and now we're up to 36,” DeCloux says.

The CSAs provide electronic newsletters with lists of upcoming harvests and delicious recipes.

Cornell Cooperative Extension helped link the Cornell campus with the three local farms that are able to deliver – Full Plate Collective, Early Morning Farm, and Good Life Farm. “Some people choose to get fresh meat deliveries or even cheese,” says Tanya Grove, the EHOB CSA coordinator. “But most people enjoy the huge box of veggies. Plus, we have great, healthy conversations in the office. You'd be surprised. There's a lot to say about vegetables!”

Information about how to arrange for CSA delivery in your building can be found on the [Cornell Wellness website](#).

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## Show you CARE: Online auction

Bidding for the annual online auction to benefit the [Emergency CARE \(Cornellians Aiding and Responding to Employees\)](#)

[Fund](#) will be held Nov. 2-6. Donations to the auction are accepted through Oct. 26.

The Emergency CARE Fund offers confidential financial assistance to faculty and staff who have experienced a non-recurring sudden or emergency-related financial hardship due to an unforeseen or unavoidable event. It provides one-time funds to address the faculty or staff member's emergency financial challenge. The program is funded through the donations of faculty, staff and others.

If you don't have something to donate, consider supporting the CARE Fund by becoming an auction sponsor. Pledge a monetary gift and the committee will purchase an auction item on your behalf or you can designate your donation directly to the CARE Fund.

See <http://auctions.weblite.ca/carefund2015/> for a list of items already donated and more information.

Any questions or want to donate? Contact [Michelle Eastman](#) or [Kristie Devine](#).

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## Run for your life: 5K Chili Challenge Nov. 1

For a healthful event started in 2006, the [5K Chili Challenge](#) has grown to 500 runners and walkers. Participants traipse through an autumnal, beautiful Taughannock Falls State Park – and then eat chili at the finish line. [Registration](#) is available until midnight Oct. 31, but you can sign up the day of the race if there is available space.

The event has been organized for 11 years by Gary Cremeens, of Transportation and Mail Services, and in 2013 the race began sponsorship by the [Cayuga Medical Center](#) and the [New York's 529 College Savings Program](#).

The suggested registration fee is \$15, with the proceeds going to the Cayuga Medical Center Foundation Financial Assistance Fund, which helps support the care of Cayuga Center for Healthy Living Patients. In lieu of paying registration, participants can donate to a NY 529 savings account.

Cremeens created the 5K Chili Challenge to motivate others for weight loss, fitness and to maintain a healthy lifestyle. He recently finished the MVP Health Care Rochester Marathon on Sept. 20 – his fourth completed marathon.

Why does Cremeens serve chili con carne – and a vegetarian chili – after the race? “Because chili tastes great,” he said. “What is better than a warm bowl of chili on a cold day? Besides, sharing a meal creates a sense of community.”

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## Reminder: Child safety seat checks

Is your child safety seat really protecting your child?

Find out at the annual child safety seat check, held by the Cornell University Police, **Nov. 21, 9 a.m.-noon**, at the Cornell Grounds Shop, 307 Palm Rd. Trained child passenger safety technicians will be on site to provide instruction in the proper installation, use and maintenance of child safety seats. For more information, contact the Cornell Police Crime Prevention Unit, G-2 Barton Hall, (607) 255-7404 or (607) 255-7305.

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