



"Team Roatan" Successfully Delivers Rain or Shine

World Vets, a global veterinary aid organization, and its volunteers are dedicated to giving back to help animals, people and their communities.

The non-profit World Vets, which brings together veterinarians, veterinary technicians and veterinary students, had a team on the island of Roatan, Honduras, during the week of November 17, 2014, with the goal of providing free veterinary services for companion animals. World Vets has been committed to improving the overall health and well-being of animals on Roatan since 2008.

This team of 15 experienced several downpours during clinic days but, despite adverse weather conditions, nearly 300 animals were still seen and team members able to successfully deliver sterilization surgeries, as well as health consultations.

One of Team Roatan's members was MWI's own Kimberly Worstell, an Outside Sales Rep based in St. Petersburg, Florida. Kimberly has worked for MWI since 2008, covering the Tampa Bay area.

Originally from a Midwestern farm, Kimberly says her first paying job at 15 was at a southern Illinois animal hospital. She moved to Florida in 1998 for a "change of scenery" and began working as a veterinary assistant/technician while attending St. Petersburg College. She later pursued a bachelor's degree at the University of Southern Florida, and recently went back to finish up her last CVT courses.

Here, Kimberly shares in words and photos her experiences as a World Vets volunteer to Roatan:

Was this your first time volunteering with World Vets?

Yes. I first heard about World Vets from long-time veterinary friend and MWI client Shelley Harper who had led a few World Vets trips. I'm addicted to stamping my passport, so I thought it would be a good opportunity to help animals and make an impact on community at the same time.

How would you describe Roatan?

Roatan is a small island off the coast of Honduras mainland. It's only 48 miles long and less than 5 miles wide. It's located in the Caribbean Sea and the climate is very tropical. The fleas and ticks love it there. People there mostly rely on the tourism industry to earn their money. It's known for its great diving and fishing.

Why has World Vets chosen to aid animals and citizens on this island?

We want to help control the local animal population, as well as treat and prevent zoonotic diseases. They really don't have a veterinarian on the island, and the majority of the people who come to the clinic don't really have the means to pay for veterinary care. We brought all of our own supplies and medications with us.

Was it difficult to form a "team" with others whom you'd never met or worked?

We had a great team. You just never really know what skills everyone will bring to the table. I was impressed with how everyone pulled together. Our group had people from all

backgrounds. Most of us were from the U.S., but we had one student from New Zealand.

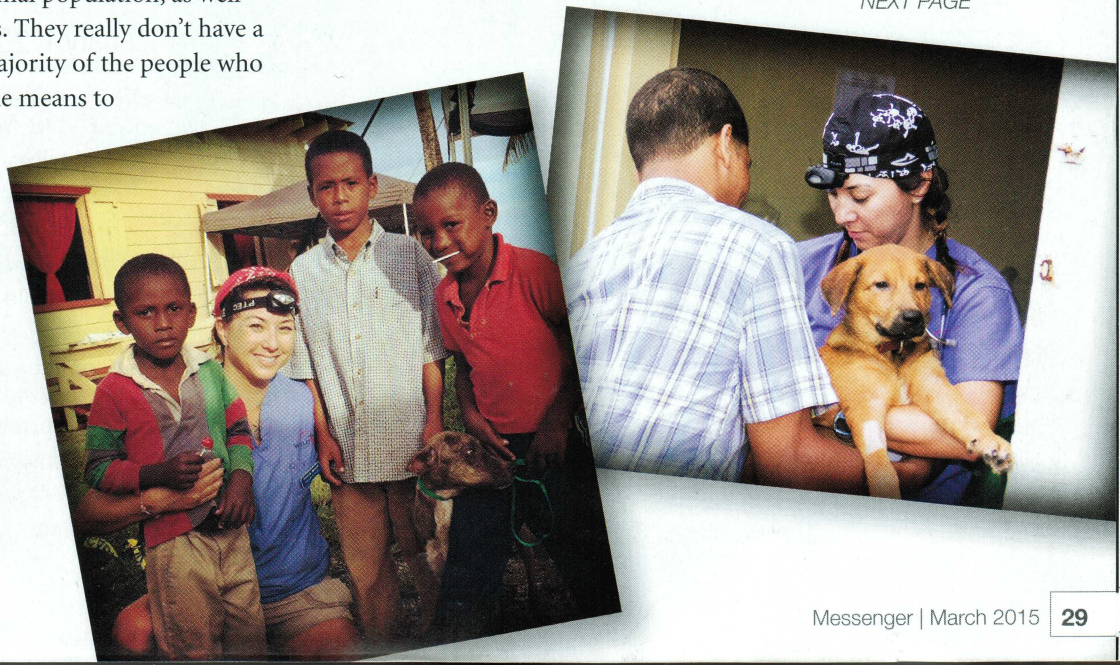
What was your main focus while in Roatan?

I wanted to take in the island culture and help make it a successful clinic. Before going on this trip, I considered how it would be interesting to meet other animal health people who like to travel and explore other cultures.

What were the conditions of the animals brought to the clinic?

For island dogs, I wouldn't say they were in great condition but, overall, not too bad. Of course, there were some dogs that came in that just looked like they were defeated – skin and bones. You could tell that they were just used to going through trash to find whatever they could. They actually tried to get into ours and that was heartbreaking.

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About World Vets

By Cathy King, DVM, Ph.D., Founder and CEO

World Vets was founded in 2006 from the humble beginnings of an idea and a donation jar. Eight years later, it's now one of the largest veterinary aid organizations in the world with programs in 41 countries on six continents. Nearly 1,000 veterinarians volunteer with World Vets as well as many more technicians, veterinary students and assistants who carry out programs worldwide primarily in developing countries.

Programs are diverse and include street dog population management, rabies eradication, working horse and donkey welfare, livestock and numerous others training-related, including a veterinary training center in Nicaragua that teaches Latin American veterinarians proper surgery and anesthesia techniques, while providing free veterinary services to community animals. The training center is also the location for our student program that provides international opportunities for U.S. and other English-speaking students studying veterinary medicine or technology.

World Vets also provides veterinarians for U.S. Navy humanitarian aid missions in Latin America and Southeast Asia, having deployed our teams on seven missions in the last five years. World Vets deploys a veterinary team nearly every week of the year, and we are always in need of veterinary volunteers to help make these programs possible.

An MWI Tie

World Vets initially got started at Hometown Animal Hospital in Deer Park, Washington. Heather McCabe, MWI's National Sales Development Manager, was our MWI rep back then, and during her visits we discussed purchasing needs for our World Vets programs and our ideas for the future. Those discussions led to Heather volunteering with us on international projects and then becoming one of our board members. She has remained actively involved since then as a trusted adviser, providing valuable input, ideas and efforts that have helped us expand our programs and the scope of our work.

In 2008, Hometown Animal Hospital was sold in order to provide full-time leadership for World Vets. The World Vets headquarters is now located in Fargo, North Dakota.

For further information about this organization or how to volunteer: worldvets.org • www.facebook.com/WorldVets • (877) 688-8387

I had actually never seen TVT before except in textbooks. It's a canine transmissible venereal tumor known as canine transmissible venereal sarcoma. We treated several dogs for this condition. Instructors in my veterinary technology program actually requested that I bring back some slides to help students identify it for cytology lab. You just don't see it very often back home.

How educated are Roatan citizens about animal care?

The situation there is relatively sad. For example, on one of the days that we had the clinic, I noticed a dog staked to a pole in the water just off the shoreline. It was obvious that this animal was struggling and stressed. Apparently some of the islanders believe this to be a good method for getting rid of fleas and ticks. I had been warned to not rescue the dog because it was an "owned" pet. It was beyond frustrating to be less than 100 yards away from the dog, knowing I had access to flea topicals and parasite control. I did keep checking and eventually someone did go retrieve it from the water.

What were the people's attitudes towards your team for this pet care?

Most of the people that came to the clinic were very appreciative and thanked us for coming. On the last day, I ran into a patient that we had neutered a few days earlier. The client was very thankful that we had come to the island.

Do you feel you made a difference education-wise for the pet owners the clinic served?

I definitely feel like we made an impact.

What are some of your more memorable experiences?

It was hard seeing the young children bring their pets for medical care. They would have twine around the necks of the dogs or sometimes an old heavy chain. A few of the kids didn't have shoes. I thought about the economic impact of what World Vets was doing for the island as well.

Are you planning another trip with World Vets?

I actually just booked my next World Vets trip today. I'll be going to Cusco, Peru (June 3-10). I'm so excited to hike the trail and meet the team.