



MEDIA RELEASE

www.sydney.edu.au/vetscience

Community and Sydney University Vets help pooch fight deteriorating oral health to bring back pearly whites

11th March 2010

Chinda the Pomeranian last week endured a complicated oral operation performed by Dr Alexa Brown at the Sydney University Veterinary Teaching Hospital to combat a range of chronic dental conditions made possible by the initiative and compassion of a joint community project.

Chinda was diagnosed with severe gingivitis (inflamed gums), receding gums, gum disease and tooth corrosion at the annual *pets at Northcott* event where students from Sydney University's Faculty of Veterinary Science volunteered their time to perform free pet health checks to support the Surry Hills community.

pets at Northcott is a joint community initiative between the City of Sydney, Surry Hills Public Tenants Association, Crookwell Veterinary Hospital and Sydney University Veterinary Society. The Rotary Club of Drummoyne pitched in and raised funds to help pets like Chinda who were identified as requiring more complex veterinary care. The project assists residents like Chinda's loving owner Annette Madigan in keeping an eye on their pet's health as they may not be able to regularly visit a vet.

Dr Brown is eager to use her skills to give something back to the community. She said, "*pets at Northcott* is a fantastic community project and for me it is a great way of people helping people and their companion animals".

Many dental problems are caused by a build up of tartar on the teeth especially under and around the gum line. Common symptoms are bad breath, discoloured teeth, red, swollen or bleeding gums, excessive drooling and reluctance to chew or eat. Dr Brown commented that old and young dogs are at risk of developing dental problems. Severe cases left untreated can spread to other parts of the dog's body resulting in serious illness. She also stressed how important it is for pet owners to introduce a dental hygiene routine into their pet's life from a young age and to have regular vet examinations.

Annette said, "I adopted Chinda as a rescue dog and I knew straight away she had dental problems as she had such bad breath. She brings so much happiness into my life and I cannot thank everyone involved from the Sydney University Veterinary Hospital enough for providing her with the dental care she needs".

Chinda's operation was a great success and she was given the all-clear at her post-operation examination on Tuesday.

Northcott Estate was built in 1961 and is one of several large public housing estates in the City of Sydney. It continues to experience many social problems and *pets at Northcott* is an important opportunity to provide practical support and encourage residents to interact with the local community.

Sydney University Veterinary Teaching Hospital is a 24-hour veterinary service for both emergency and standard consultations. It is located at 65 Parramatta Rd, Camperdown. The car park entrance is 500 metres down Parramatta Road from the main Ross St intersection.

SAVES, the new Sydney Afterhours Veterinary Emergency Service operates between 7pm and 8am Monday to Friday and 24-hours on weekends and Public Holidays.

****ENDS****

Media contact:

Liana Carroll

Ph: (02) 9351 5074

Email: vsf.media@sydney.edu.au