

NYCAVMA Tiekert Educational Scholarship Essay 2024

I first learned about integrative animal medicine 2 years ago when I started working at an Emergency and Specialty hospital. I was able to witness how after complex surgeries and traumatic injuries, these animals were able to gain close to or completely normal function of their bodies again. To say I was astonished was an understatement. The western world underestimates many forms of alternative medicine commonly used like in the eastern world. I grew up in an immigrant Indian-American household where many traditional forms of Ayurvedic medicine was used to treat many illnesses we faced. I always knew the power of holistic modalities, but never in animals until I witnessed it first-hand.

Acupuncture piqued my curiosity after watching it being used in immobilized patients. Seeing a dog walk again after being told the chances of that were slim to none, is no less than medical magic. When my own childhood dog, Casper, got diagnosed with chronic kidney disease, I knew there was only palliative treatment available to him that could exacerbate its effects. I learned from the CVA that acupuncture could be a good alternative therapy to help him feel comfortable without negative consequences.

Just a few sessions into his acupuncture treatments, my family and I saw major changes in his behavior. He was less lethargic, eating more of his food, and did not have to urinate and drink as much water as he used to. He started playing more with his toys and engaging with other people. You could see how his quality of life improved. When he first got diagnosed with CKD, his prognosis was not great, approximately 6 months to 1 year of life left. It comforts me to know that he made it to almost 2 years after his diagnosis and lived a much more pleasant life until his last days.

Using traditional Indian and Chinese holistic modalities to help with my own health was the start, and seeing just how incredible it could be for animals with injuries and chronic health conditions made me realize that I wanted to incorporate this medicine into my future practice. It encouraged me to become the school ambassador for PennVet's affiliation with Chi University and help organize and participate in our next CVA course. I will be working on taking the course to obtain my CVA from May 2024 to May 2025.

This scholarship can help lessen the current burden I face with student loans while making the CVA more accessible for me. As a student from a single-parent household, I am paying for vet school all by myself including housing and living expenses. I get need based grants to support part of my tuition, however, I have no financial assistance in paying for this additional certification. Getting this scholarship will allow me to pull out less loans for a certification I have wanted to pursue for a long time while decreasing my financial load in obtaining it.

Thank you for your time and consideration,
Radha Patel
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