

Thank Your Vet for a Healthy Pet Regional Winners

DOG FANCY and CAT FANCY announce the regional finalists in the 2008 Thank Your Vet for a Healthy Pet contest.

Lee Morgan, DVM
Northeast Finalist
Georgetown Veterinary Hospital
Washington, D.C.
Nominated by Mary Lynn Reed and Scott Sonntag

To Lee Morgan, DVM, of Georgetown Veterinary Hospital in Washington, D.C., helping animals is much more than just a day job — it's his life. In his 12 years as a veterinarian, Morgan has proven time and again just how passionate he is about his work. Not only is he a finalist in the 2008 Thank Your Vet contest, but Morgan was also a runner-up in Hartz Mountain Corporation's Veterinarian of the Year contest in 2005 and he was named Practitioner of the Year by the American Veterinary Medical Association that same year.

Morgan has been the sole practitioner and owner of Georgetown Veterinary Hospital since 2002. From his first day there, it was clear to his patients that Morgan would uphold the practice's stellar reputation — and he has.

Reed and Sonntag can attest to Morgan's unparalleled dedication. When their Golden Retriever Connor needed surgery, Morgan took Connor home with him afterward so that he could watch over him day and night until the puppy was well enough to return home. Reed and Sonntag's other dogs have received the same extraordinary care, as have countless other pets through Morgan's participation in charities such as Guide Dogs for the Blind and the Washington Humane Society, among others.

Morgan's most memorable client was an elderly Polish man who was held at a Nazi concentration camp during World War II. While there, he befriended a stray cat who gave him the hope he needed to survive the horrors of internment. The client credited this cat with saving his life, and decided to repay him after he gained his freedom by taking in any and all stray cats he came across. Morgan, in turn, credits this client with teaching him humility and the importance of helping others.

Morgan started out as a dolphin and sea lion trainer, but felt that veterinary work would be more satisfying and decided to change his career. Each and every day, Morgan says, he must bring his "A" game to work, and he loves it. Every day is different, and Morgan finds great joy in helping not only pets, but their humans, as well.

T. Lamar Walker, DVM
Southeast Finalist
Highland Animal Hospital
Augusta, Ga.
Nominated by Pat Burt

T. Lamar Walker, DVM, of Highland Animal Hospital in Augusta, Ga., was nominated in the 2008 Thank Your Vet for a Healthy Pet contest by Pat Burt, one of his clients. She has taken her pets to Walker for years.

"He is the most dedicated veterinarian that I have ever known," Burt says. "He has been there for me when my animals have been in crises. He has pulled my animals through when other vets have given up on them. He always makes me feel welcome and that I am not overreacting when my animals have been ill. I have been guilty of running to his clinic without an appointment if I felt my pet needed him."

Walker has been a practicing veterinarian since 1981, and in those 27 years, he has done a lot to help the people and pets of his Georgia community. Amid a hectic schedule of appointments, Walker finds the time to help out with rabies and microchip clinics for the local humane societies in Georgia.

He also is very active in other aspects of his community, and has given his time and talents to help construct Georgia's first disaster relief protocol. He has served as a Boy Scout Headmaster and leader, and rehabilitates wildlife — and is the only licensed vet in the area that does this. As if that weren't enough, Walker has also been the director-judge for the area's science fair for the last 18 years. All this love, compassion, and sense of service to his community is apparent in his practice.

“Dr. Walker forms a bond with not only the pets who come in to see him, but also with the pet owners like me,” Burt says. “There is no other vet around that is as good with people and with their pets.”

Lisa Willis, DVM
Southwest Finalist
Great Oaks Animal Hospital
Round Rock, Texas
Nominated by Sally Rau McIntosh on behalf of Greyhound Pets of America, Central Texas chapter

For over a decade, Lisa Willis, DVM, has been working with the Central Texas chapter of Greyhound Pets of America in their effort to find loving homes for adoptive Greyhounds.

When Willis’ predecessor as the primary veterinarian for GPA Central Texas passed away, Willis had big shoes to fill. In the ensuing years, she has done so with great compassion and skill. Willis has generously dedicated countless hours to GPA Central Texas and helped with issues like aggression, unexpected puppies, and cancer. She never hesitates to provide advice on this unique breed. “She knows more about Greyhounds than anyone else I have come in contact with,” says McIntosh, who serves as GPA Central Texas placement coordinator.

Willis has also given generous discounts to the nonprofit and never hesitates to find a more cost-effective treatment if possible. “She recognizes her limits and will willingly consult with or refer to specialists when it is appropriate to do so,” McIntosh says.

McIntosh estimates that Willis has provided medical attention to more than 1,000 Greyhounds, and in doing so, given those dogs a new lease on life. Willis will exhaust every avenue to help an animal, even if the prognosis is grim. “She does not like to give up on a dog who still has possibilities,” McIntosh says. “We both cried when one particular Greyhound had to be put down. Willis told me, ‘I feel so bad for those [Greyhounds] who never had a home.’” Even with a busy practice, she still finds time to help similar adoption groups, and her ultimate goal is always to find adoptive animals find the right home.

David Bainbridge, DVM
Midwest Finalist
Morris Veterinary Hospital
Morris, Ill.
Nominated by Sara J. Grosso

Whether or not David Bainbridge, DVM, wins the Thank Your Vet for a Healthy Pet contest, his nominator, Sara J. Grosso, a client of the Morris, Ill., veterinarian, wanted to take the opportunity “to let him know that, to me, he really, really is the world’s greatest vet.”

According to Grosso, Bainbridge’s quality of veterinary care is equaled only by his warm yet expert approach with his clients. “He can make folks feel at ease with his great bedside manner and wonderful sense of humor,” Grosso said. “But when it comes to anything serious, he becomes the highly professional doctor.”

Grosso also applauds Bainbridge’s ability to empathize with his clients when difficult decisions must be made, such as when a pet must be euthanized. “When it is time for your ‘furry baby’ to not suffer anymore, he becomes a man of compassion and cries along with you, which will endear him to you forever.”

An upstanding citizen, Bainbridge also provided full care for the Grundy County Sheriff Department’s canine officer, German Shepherd Dog Britt, whom he helped the department purchase. The previous canine officer was also a patient of Bainbridge’s and is now retired from duty.

Bainbridge’s dedication to helping animals extends outside the office to the great outdoors. As a state and federally licensed wildlife rehabilitator, Bainbridge treats and rehabilitates various animals that inhabit Grundy County including Arctic geese, heron, foxes, hawks, parrots, and raccoons, several of which near Bainbridge and his own pets.

- Read about the 2008 national winner, Rachel S. Boltz -

- Read about the 2007 national winner, James L. Cook -