

Thank Your Vet for a Healthy Pet 2007 Finalists

DOG FANCY and CAT FANCY are pleased to announce the regional finalists in the 2007 Thank Your Vet for a Healthy Pet contest.

Bob Encinosa, DVM – Southeast finalist
Boyette Animal Hospital
Riverview, Fla.
Nominator: Mary Beth Cammilleri

To Dr. Bob Encinosa, veterinarian at the Boyette Animal Hospital in Riverview, Fla., being selected as the Southeast finalist for Merial's Thank Your Vet for a Healthy Pet contest came as a surprise and an honor.

Mary Beth Cammilleri, a former client of Encinosa's, nominated him for the above-and-beyond care he gave her dog Max who suffered from cancer.

"One particularly bad Saturday, Dr. Bob volunteered to meet us at his clinic that night to administer medications to give Max some relief," she wrote in his nomination. He treated Max again the next day and "enabled Max to enjoy a relatively pain-free weekend instead of one of suffering."

Max's condition worsened and he was eventually put to sleep. Encinosa and his staff sent a sympathy card to Cammilleri along with an acknowledgement that he had made a donation in memory of Max to a local nonprofit organization that works to improve the lives of homeless animals.

Encinosa is also spearheading the establishment of a nonprofit organization and facility called the Continuing Pet Care Center, modeled after the Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine's Stevenson Companion Animal Life-Care Center. The Continuing Pet Care Center will take in and care for pets upon their owners' death.

In addition to leading this facility's establishment, Encinosa educates children and gives presentations and tours about veterinary medicine and paleontology, "the two coolest things to talk to kids about," he says.

Encinosa does not consider his level of involvement extraordinary: "Most veterinarians have big hearts and enjoy what they do," he says. "We learn early on where efforts are best spent because we experience these things on a daily basis."

Thomas R. Nickerson, DVM – West finalist
Trinity Animal Hospital
Weaverville, Calif.
Nominator: Cherie Bradley

When Cherie Bradley nominated her local veterinarian for the Thank Your Vet for a Healthy Pet contest, she simply said: "He is the best vet in America."

Dr. Thomas R. Nickerson from Trinity Animal Hospital in Weaverville, Calif., first began treating Bradley's cat, Cricket, when the small orange-and-white feline was just 3 years old. He saw the cat through liver infections, kidney biopsies, and an E. coli infection. When Cricket was about to pass away nine years later, Dr. Stone left dinner guests and cried as he helped her leave this world.

"Daily, Dr. Stone shows compassion and caring for the animals and clients he works with," Bradley says. "Driving long distances at least once a week to serve those unable to travel to his office. As the only full-time veterinarian in a large county, he treats all animals [and] is willing to give not only his time but also his heart to the community."

Dr. Nickerson is active in the local rotary club and community theater, and participates in school assemblies, talks to local organizations, and works with local animal shelters to provide care where needed.

In October 2007, Dr. Nickerson broke ground on a 4,000-square-foot animal hospital, which he hopes will be completed before winter; his current building, where he has practiced for more than 15 years, is 1,600 square feet. The ground-breaking ceremony was attended by members of his staff and his Dachshund, Matthew. In the future, he hopes to take on partners.

James Thomas, VMD – Northeast finalist
Eagle Veterinary Clinic
Havertown, Pa.
Nominator: Doris B. Woodside

James Thomas of Eagle Veterinary Clinic has been providing medical services to the animals in and around Havertown, Pa., for the last 43 years. Including those of Doris B. Woodside, a longtime client, friend, and his nominator for this year's Thank Your Vet for a Healthy Vet contest. This year's northeast regional finalist, Thomas says he was aware that he was being nominated, but surprised to learn that he had made it to the final round.

Initially motivated by an interest in medicine, Thomas decided to veer his career path in the direction of veterinary medicine in response to his love of animals. In addition to Thomas' regular clientele, which includes several dogs and anywhere from 40 to 60 cats each month, Thomas also provides care to the animals at Pet Adoption and Lifecare Society (PALS), the rescue group he and his wife Kay work closely with.

From everyday animal care to handling serious ailments and even adopting a cat that no one else wanted, Thomas credits his four decades of success to simply, "wanting to go to work." Whether it's during the regular work day, after hours, or a holiday, Thomas has proven his dedication time and time again to his animal patients and their owners.

"Their compassion and their generosity are second to none," says a bulletin put out by PALS.

And Woodside agrees. "To me, Jim and Kay are not only great as caretakers, but also as true friends," she says. "I hope they can continue as caretakers to PALS and all other animals in need."

Tim R. Stone, DVM – Southwest finalist
Rittiman Road Animal Hospital
San Antonio, Texas
Nominator: Kathleen Hoffman

Tim R. Stone of Rittiman Road Animal Hospital in San Antonio, Texas, was nominated in the Thank Your Vet for a Healthy Pet contest by Kathleen Hoffman, founder of the San Antonio Pug Rescue. He has been seeing her Pugs ever since she can remember.

"He has always taken wonderful care of my Pugs," she said. "About two years ago, I asked him if he would be interested in treating rescued Pugs that required medical attention. He said he would be happy to, even at a discount."

Dr. Stone has been a veterinarian since he graduated from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., in 1971. "I always wanted to do something with animals," he said. After starting his career in wildlife management, he ended up turning to medicine.

Upon being nominated, the Texas doctor says he was "massively surprised. I just felt humble and grateful." In addition to his daily work with animals at the hospital, Dr. Stone has a small flock of animals at home, which includes a Labrador Retriever, several cats, and some guineas. "Seeing animals get well, seeing a happy ending" is how he explains the best part of his job.

"I have learned a lot from Dr. Stone," Hoffman says. "He cured my Pugs, and while I was wiping away my tears from fear of losing a Pug, he comforted me as well. Dr. Stone is a busy man, with a wonderful staff, and a very large practice that always manages to 'fit' me in when I have a rescued Pug that is in need of care. One of the most important things I learned from Dr. Stone is that along with good veterinarian care, love surely goes a long way."

- Read about the 2007 Thank Your Vet national winner -

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