

Not Your Typical Veterinary Welfare Organisation

By Imogen Tarita - Cluny Animal Trust



Picture this – it’s a typical South African hot summer morning, and as Daisy (our very own mobile theatre) pulls up with her striking blue and purple logos along with Rosie (our red runabout), the team gets out to “set up shop” for the day. As we set up and the dust starts to settle, we see people literally running towards us with animals in their arms, dogs on makeshift collars and leads, and others being pushed in a wheelbarrow, but before we know it we have a crowd of 50 or more people desperate to see our vets, and more people are on their way.

We’ve lost count over the almost 10 years since we started of days just like this one, but this scene typically plays out no matter where we go in the eastern Free State. The reality is that veterinary care, even at a basic level, is expensive, and for many animals the only veterinary care they receive is when we come to town.

Although the bulk of what we do revolves around sterilisations,

vaccinations, deworming and treating animals for ticks and fleas, we also perform a lot of other necessary and life-saving procedures for animals in need.

A SMALL BUT DEDICATED TEAM

Established back in 2011 by Dr Katherine Barker, the Cluny Animal Trust is a very small but dedicated team (eight people in all), and we all work tirelessly and give up a lot of our free time to help provide much-needed veterinary care and to raise funds to help us to continue our work.

Like most animal welfare organisations across SA, ours is no different. We don’t get any funding from the Government or the Lotto, and we must rely on applying for international grants and on fundraising. We raise funds through a variety of events and competitions, as well as stocking and running our Thrift Shop and our brand-new second-hand Book Store, both of which are situated in Clarens in the Free State, to help us to raise

enough money to continue our work. And at the same time, we all have regular day jobs that also need our time and attention!

EDUCATION

Along with the veterinary work and the fundraising, we also spend a lot of time educating children and pet owners about the basics of proper animal care, the importance of vaccinations, and also how to recognise illnesses (if their animals do get sick) and what treatments are needed.

We spend a lot of time in our local communities discussing the issues surrounding the chaining of dogs, poisoning, as well as the controversial issue of tail docking and the very real threat of Rabies, which is quite prolific here in the Free State.

Animal welfare in any way shape or form can be a tough job, and the reality is that sick animals and animals in need don’t understand regular working hours. We’ve all lost count of the dinners and sleep that have been interrupted by one emergency or another. People often ask us how we can do what we do. Our answer is an easy one: imagine if we didn’t do it – how many animals would suffer then!

We do need your help and support. If you’d like to find out more about how you can help us, then please contact Imogen Tarita – imogen@clunyanimaltrust.co.za or you can visit our website www.clunyanimaltrust.co.za for more info. 🐾