

Cornell eVETSconnect

April 2015

Young alumna: Dr. Marina Tejada'10 gives them shelter

by Olivia Hall

Dr. Marina Tejada '10 was seven years old when she picked out her first dog at the shelter. The North Shore Animal League in Port Washington, New York left a big impression on the little girl.

“My mom tells me that when I went to North Shore for the first time, I said that I was going to work there,” Tejada recalled.



Photo by North Shore Animal League

Three years ago, the native of Ridgewood, New York brought her dream full circle by joining the shelter's staff.

As Senior Staff Veterinarian for Medical Services, Tejada now helps North Shore fulfill its mission as the world's largest no-kill animal rescue and adoption organization, according to its website.

“We save up to 150 animals a week from puppy mills and high-kill shelters across the country and as far away as Taiwan – animals that need some TLC and that we get ready for adoption,” she said, noting that the shelter also offers affordable services for pet owners from the Tri-State area.

Tejada herself has fallen in love with many of her canine and feline patients, five of whom have found a new home with her.

“It's a full house,” she said with a laugh. “At work they keep trying to pawn off injured animals on me, but I can't take any more.”

The young veterinarian spends her diverse work week caring for hospitalized animals, following up with recently adopted pets, performing some 40 surgeries in one day once a week, as well as completing administrative tasks.

“What’s exciting for me is that we treat complex cases like parvo, distemper, or ringworm that in a regular private practice you may not see in a lifetime,” she said. “In other shelters, unfortunately, these animals would be euthanized.”

In the long run, Tejada hopes to help her patients on a grander scale by influencing policy directly, an ambition that was sparked during her time at Cornell when she had the opportunity to participate in the AVMA’s legislative Fly-In days in Washington, D.C. On campus, she began to hone her leadership and organizational skills in numerous organizations, including VOICE, SCAVMA, and veterinary fraternity Omega Tau Sigma – an active involvement that she has continued after graduation on the Alumni Association Executive Board, as a class reunion volunteer, and as co-host of the alumni reception at this year’s Western Veterinary Conference.

“In school, being involved in the community was important not only for my education but also to get to know other students and to get familiarity with different aspects of veterinary medicine, which is such a multifaceted career,” says Tejada, whose focus was originally on wildlife medicine. “Now it’s important to me to continue to keep in touch and help make changes at Cornell, which was always my dream school. Cornell is very much a part of who I am as a veterinarian.”