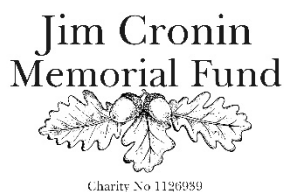


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# STACEY'S REPORT

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## Vet Nurse Educational Grant with the Jim Cronin Memorial Fund



Following the introduction of Educational Grants from the Jim Cronin Memorial Fund, I was keen to apply in the hope that I could participate in a course organised by the Chapman Zoo Consultancy. This course, the first of its kind, would focus on the veterinary care of primates in captivity and was specifically aimed at Veterinary Staff working in Zoos, wildlife parks and rescue centres across the UK. As the resident Vet Nurse at Monkey World, I was keen to attend and as soon as the funding had been agreed, I signed up straight away.

The main focus of the course was to promote a holistic approach to healthcare and preventative healthcare via data collection and the operant conditioning skills needed to achieve this.

Approaching healthcare holistically has been advised for many years in the veterinary industry and it's something that is already firmly in place at Monkey World. Providing primates with the correct diet, exercise, housing and mental stimulation, in most cases, will be all the care you need to give to maintain optimum health.

Preventative hands-off healthcare is another area I was pleased to see that we excelled in at the park. We already had a system in place to carry out regular faecal checks, urine checks as well as regular checks of primates on either long-term medication or with long term conditions. Far too often veterinary care is centred only on individuals who have medical issues, however the course stressed the importance of a proactive approach not only to those primates with medical issues but also to the primates in your care who have a good state of health. Regular non-invasive health checks, monitoring and data collected from these primates would of course mean that any subsequent health issue can be picked up earlier and dealt with far quicker.

When it came to the hands on approach to health care, monitoring and collecting data, I was really pleased to see that we already had a lot of areas covered at the park, particularly as the large majority of our rescued monkeys and apes are able, willing and more importantly happy to present certain body parts at the mesh using operant conditioning techniques. This enables both me and the primate care staff the opportunity to safely use, thermometers, stethoscopes and other medical equipment when necessary.

Regularly recording a primate's weight was also highlighted as being essential for good patient monitoring. Loss in body weight and condition can sometimes be the first indicator that a primate is unwell and in addition to this, having an accurate weight on a primate is essential to ensure you are providing the correct dose of medication if required.

It was really good to be able to talk to the other veterinary staff on the course and learn about the methods and techniques that they are using. To find out that a large number of them were successfully carrying out conscious ECGs, using blood sampling and blood pressure sleeves on their great apes is an enormous step forward. More importantly it allows us the opportunity to not only diagnose but also to treat our primates without the need for an anaesthetic or sedation.

Attending this course has not only confirmed to me that we are already doing the large majority of things that were being discussed throughout the course at the park but it has also highlighted a number of new ways that I can help improve the standard of healthcare our primates receive with a holistic and proactive approach.

Thank you to the Jim Cronin Memorial Fund for providing the funding for me to attend this course, I really enjoyed it and I'm keen to put what I have learnt into practice at Monkey World.