

The Family Pet Hospital Celebrates 18 Years of Compassionate Animal Care

By DEBORAH BURKE HENDERSON,
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Even as a young girl growing up outside of Madrid, Spain, Cristina Valas, DVM, demonstrated a strong calling to care for and serve animals. Her parents' home was filled with a menagerie of small animals, including rabbits, chicken, ducks, pigeons, and cats and dogs, along with six youngsters. Valas fondly recalls her family traveling three hours south every weekend, to the area known as LaMancha, where others like her family also lived off the land and in close proximity with cows, sheep, horses and ducks.

"I lived respecting the bond between animals and humans,"

veterinary technician in Valhalla, N.Y., and then as a radiology veterinary technician at the South Shore Animal Hospital in Weymouth, Mass., Valas spent four years at Tufts Veterinary School of Medicine in Grafton, Mass., and earned her a doctoral degree in veterinary medicine.

In February 1998, Valas's dream of founding a small, family-oriented veterinary clinic came true with the opening of The Family Pet Hospital at 300 Eliot St. Her mission was to build strong, long-term relationships with clients in her community and partner with them in the shared goal of optimizing the health, happiness and longevity of their pets. Initially, the

Business spotlight

roof. The expansion also offered additional pet exam rooms, a cozy space for consultation appointments and bereavement needs, and an increased retail merchandise area.

Currently, Valas's team includes two associate veterinarians—Dr. Julie Bodkin and Dr. Jacqueline

portance and benefits of seniors and the homebound having pet companionship, she offers house calls to these folks at no cost other than the normal exam charge as if they had come into the practice.

Valas takes an integrative approach to health, maximizing comfort for animals and minimizing the use of drugs and surgery whenever possible. Through this approach, she combines her training in Western medicine with knowledge of functional nutrition and nutritional products and the use of progressive modalities, such



Dr. Cristina Valas, DVM, founder of The Family Pet Hospital, holds 6-month-old Fia, a French Bulldog, who is enjoying the hospital's daycare services. (Photo/Deborah Burke Henderson)

as cold laser and Veterinary Orthopedic Manipulation (VOM). Her approach improves the patient's outcome and decreases the length of time needed for recovery.

Since 2003, with the addition of state-of-the-art CO2 laser equipment, Valas and her team now perform all surgeries using laser. This approach results in less bleeding, less swelling and less pain for pets requiring surgery.

"Each animal is unique, and each pet becomes a part of our family and is treated as such," Valas explained.

"Our vision is to provide stellar veterinary care in a practice where pets are honored for the important role they play within the family," Valas stated. "Our veterinary staff finds great reward in contributing to the joy of pet ownership."

For more information about The Family Pet Hospital, testimonials, its array of services and current career opportunities, visit www.thefamilypethospital.com or call 508-231-1223 to make an appointment for your pet.



Savahna Amico is busy working with two daycare clients, 8-year-old Pickles, a Boston Terrier, and little Fia, the French Bulldog. Staff at The Family Pet Hospital encourage socialization and cap numbers at 10-15 small dogs per session. (Photo/Deborah Burke Henderson)

Valas said. "I wanted to heal any animal that was ailing. For as long as I can remember while growing up, I was always acting as a veterinarian. I wanted to give back and do more."

Valas's passion became her life's work. At age 17, she came to the United States to study biology with a pre-med track and a business minor at Manhattanville College in Purchase, N.Y., where she received her Bachelor of Science degree. After taking a two-year academic break to work as a

hospital occupied just 900 square feet in the Ledgemere Plaza, where she had a single pet exam room for dogs and one for cats.

Always with the thought of "what more can I do to meet our patients' needs," Valas expanded the hospital's physical footprint to 4,200 square feet last fall. New services, such as medical boarding for pets needing individualized attention, a full-service grooming salon, a dog training programs, and dog daycare with experienced instructors are now provided under one



Professional groomer, Nancy Yoder, loves working with her clients, such as 6-month-old Oreo, a miniature poodle. (Photo/Deborah Burke Henderson)

Warner (who specializes in the care of exotic animals)—and several client liaisons, who provide exceptional customer service around each family's needs; a number of veterinary technicians; a professional groomer; kennel attendant; business manager; and volunteers who are equally passionate about interfacing with animals.

Wellness plans are available for owners who might not be able to afford paying for the necessary treatment up front. With a plan, the pet receives the required treatment and care at the time of the visit, while the owner has the opportunity to pay for the services over time, if needed.

Because Valas values the im-



The recently expanded hospital now offers a bright, clean boarding space (standard or medical boarding) for up to 9 pets. (Photo/Deborah Burke Henderson)