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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

EVERYCAT HEALTH FOUNDATION AND THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF FELINE PRACTITIONERS  
ANNOUNCE 2021 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

**[Wyckoff, NJ; Bridgewater, NJ; May 26, 2021]** The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) and EveryCat Health Foundation are pleased to announce the recipients of their 2021 joint scholarships for feline clinical practice and feline clinical research scientist. Two veterinary students were each awarded a \$2,500 scholarship to support their continuing educations and advancement of feline medicine. Each student was selected based on academic achievement, financial need, leadership, and a dedication to feline veterinary medicine.



With a strong interest in feline medicine, Melanie Bizzarro, a junior from the Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine, was awarded the 2021 feline clinical practice scholarship. Melanie's excitement for cats started long before veterinary school when she worked in an all feline animal shelter. Since she began veterinary school, Melanie has spent time focusing on community cats and homeless kittens, starting a feline rescue, and began providing medical care to underprivileged cats. Many of Melanie's comments in her application showed her dedication to pursue a career focusing on feline medicine. "Felines are such unique and complex creatures. They are often neglected and sometimes even forgot about." She goes on explaining her goals for the future. "I hope to find a job in a shelter with a strong focus on cats or a feline-specific shelter. I hope to provide affordable, high-quality medical care to individuals within the community, increase welfare for cats within shelters, and provide quality care to community cats. I hope to help be a part of this change and increase welfare, medical care, and surgical care for cats in shelters and community cats."

Receiving the 2021 clinical research scientist scholarship is Christine Haake, a junior from University of California Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. Christine is dedicated to feline medicine and her research efforts include investigating the etiology of feline infectious peritonitis (FIP). Having lost her own cat to FIP, Christine became inspired to pursue a more nuanced understanding of FIP pathogenesis. “It was my relationship with an adopted cat and experience volunteering at the shelter that ultimately blossomed into my goal of becoming a veterinarian.” Her long-term goal is to become board-certified in internal medicine, specializing in feline infectious diseases. Christine has a desire to establish an independent research program at a school of veterinary medicine. “I hope to be a leader in the interdisciplinary and collaborative approach to studying and treating infectious diseases in cats.” She has spent time volunteering and is the president of the radiology club, wet lab coordinator for the surgery club, foster and coordinator for the Orphan Kitten Project, and representative to the SCVMA.



EveryCat Health Foundation and the AAFP are proud to support these exceptional students on their journey to elevate feline medicine and welfare. The two joint \$2,500 scholarships offered will provide students with a helpful resource to further their education and passion. “Melanie and Christine demonstrate a drive to elevate feline medicine and research. Their passion is evident in their work and we’re excited to see what they bring to the future of feline care,” expressed Heather O’Steen, CAE and CEO of the AAFP. Jackie Ott Jaakola, Executive Director of EveryCat Health Foundation offers, “We are honored to support the efforts of these exceptional students with a particular interest in feline health, as together we advance groundbreaking research to help all cats throughout the world.”

To find more information about educational opportunities, resources available to students, and various feline-specific toolkits, please visit the [AAFP](#) and [EveryCat Health Foundation](#) websites.

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### **About EveryCat Health Foundation**

EveryCat Health Foundation, a non-profit organization established in 1968, advances feline health by supporting groundbreaking research and education. Its work worldwide has funded nearly \$8 million in cat health research at more than 30 partner institutions. Efforts are made possible through the generosity of dedicated donors and collaborators. Studies supported by EveryCat Health Foundation help veterinarians by providing research that improves treatment of common feline health problems and helps prevent many diseases. Grants are awarded at least twice yearly with the help of the foundation’s expert review panel. For further information or to support feline health research, please visit [www.everycat.org](http://www.everycat.org).

### **About the American Association of Feline Practitioners**

The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) improves the health and welfare of cats by supporting high standards of practice, continuing education, and evidence-based medicine ([catvets.com](http://catvets.com)). As a trusted leader in the veterinary community, the AAFP has a long-standing reputation



and track record for facilitating high standards, including guidelines for practice excellence and educational resources. Over the years, the AAFP has encouraged veterinary professionals to continuously re-evaluate preconceived notions of practice strategies in an effort to advance the quality of feline medicine practiced. Launched in 2012, the Cat Friendly Practice® (CFP) Program ([catvets.com/cfp](http://catvets.com/cfp)) was created to improve the treatment, handling, and overall healthcare provided to cats. Its purpose is to equip veterinary practices, teams, and individuals with the tools and resources to reduce stress associated with the visit and elevate the standard of care provided to cats. Launched in 2020, the Cat Friendly Certificate Program ([catvets.com/certificate](http://catvets.com/certificate)) now provides this education to individual veterinary professionals. [Catfriendly.com](http://catfriendly.com), or Cat Friendly Homes, is the AAFP's cat caregiver educational resource which is powered by feline veterinarians and includes a monthly newsletter, The Cat Column.