



MEDIA CONTACT:

Jeff Pane
Marketing Communications Manager
American Association of Feline Practitioners
908-359-9351
Media@catvets.com

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Winners Selected for The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) and Merck Animal Health Scholarship

Three veterinary students were selected for academic excellence in feline healthcare

[Bridgewater, NJ; September 28, 2022] The [American Association of Feline Practitioners](#) (AAFP) and Merck Animal Health are pleased to announce the winners of Academic Excellence in Feline Healthcare Scholarship. Ruth Barrow, a second-year veterinary student at the University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine, Emma Li, a second-year veterinary student at The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine, and Sara de Wet, a third-year veterinary student at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, were each awarded a \$5,000 scholarship for their passion for feline medicine and a desire to elevate feline healthcare.

“The feline veterinary community will gain much from this next generation of practitioners,” said Heather O’Steen, CEO of the AAFP. “The AAFP is proud of the dedication and abilities shown by Ruth, Emma, and Sara. We wish them the best of luck in their promising careers and their focus on feline care.”



Ruth Barrow, University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine

Ruth Barrow has spent a large portion of her studies at the University of Georgia focused on research, with nearly six years of extensive work in human and feline medical research. Ruth has gained valuable research experience studying novel stem cell therapies for metabolic bone disorders and methods for characterizing collagen, completing her honors thesis, and achieving multiple publications. She chaired a Student AVMA Auction that raised \$22,733 in funding for student clubs and educational experiences. Ruth has the ultimate goal to become a veterinary ophthalmologist and to spend her career impacting important aspects of feline ocular research and clinical ophthalmology practice.

Emma Li attends The Ohio State University and is the first-ever student to both request and be granted a fourth-year clinical



Emma Li, The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine

emphasis in feline-specific medicine. She is involved in several different research projects relating to feline medicine, including feline infectious peritonitis studies (FIP) and a feline idiopathic cystitis (FIC) study. As the Feline Student Chapter Treasurer, Emma is responsible for managing the club's finances, and is involved in event planning and well as speaker outreach. Emma's career goal is to enter a feline-specific specialty practice and become a board-certified feline specialist by the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners.



Sara de Wet, Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine

Sara de Wet was five years into a career in public health when she spent a day at a feline-only practice and found her true calling. Now attending the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, Sara is determined to specialize in feline medicine from general practice and spread that knowledge among the entire veterinary community. Sara works with groups like Operation Catnip of Richmond to manage stray and feral cats and improve public relations with cat colonies. She intends to be in general practice for at least five years and then become a board-certified feline specialist by the American Board of Veterinary Practitioners. A passionate educator, Sara plans to use her experiences to educate colleagues and speak at local feline events.

Veterinary students interested in advancing their feline health care can visit the AAFP [Student Center](#). Access to the Student Center is free for veterinary students. It includes a directory of externships, complimentary access to webinars, an exclusive student-only newsletter (AAFP Student Connection), a Toolkit that outlines the latest feline resources from the AAFP, and more.

We would like to thank Merck Animal Health for their support which allowed the AAFP to create these scholarship opportunities.

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About the American Association of Feline Practitioners

The [American Association of Feline Practitioners \(AAFP\)](#) supports its members and improves the health and welfare of cats by supporting high standards of practice, continuing education, and evidence-based medicine. 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](#) 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](#) now provides this education to individual veterinary professionals. [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.