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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AAFP and Merck Animal Health Announce 2024 Academic Excellence
in Feline Healthcare Scholarship Recipients**

*Two recipients demonstrate their outstanding dedication to improving feline
healthcare*

BRIDGEWATER, NJ; JUNE 25, 2024 – [The American Association of Feline Practitioners](#) (AAFP), the trusted leader in feline health and wellbeing for the veterinary community and cat caregivers, and Merck Animal Health announced the 2024 Academic Excellence in Feline Healthcare Scholarship Recipients.

Madeleine Murray, a second-year student at the University of Georgia School of Veterinary Medicine, and Marianne Youngstrom, a second-year student at Washington State University School of Veterinary Medicine, were each awarded a \$10,000 scholarship for their passion for feline medicine and a desire to elevate feline healthcare.

“We congratulate these two exceptional leaders who have proven their desire to improve the care and treatment of cats,” stated Heather O’Steen, CAE, AAFP CEO. “Thanks to their dedication to improving feline healthcare now and in the future, they will inspire all those around them to provide cats with the exceptional care they deserve. Notably, both Maddy and Marianne have leadership roles with the Student Chapter of the AAFP at their respective schools, and both have completed the AAFP Cat Friendly Certificate Program. We congratulate both remarkable scholars on all their achievements thus far, and look forward to the positive impact they will have in the world of feline healthcare.”



Madeleine Murray aspires to a career in academia where she can be a clinician, researcher, and professor. She wishes to help bridge the gaps in veterinary medicine where feline patients are left behind or their needs are overlooked. As President of her school's Student Chapter of the AAFP, she led fundraising activities to help students attend the 2023 AAFP Annual Conference, and she is spearheading renovations to develop a Cat Friendly exam room and staff education project at the University of Georgia teaching hospital. As a researcher, she plans to focus on feline health, especially in areas where cats have not been well studied, starting with a study on the use of

Budesonide for cats with inflammatory bowel disease, a treatment method that has been researched in dogs and humans but not well described in cats. As a professor, she hopes to inspire new generations of veterinarians to be well-equipped to examine and treat their feline patients.



As Vice President of the Student Chapter of the AAFP at Washington State University, Marianne Youngstrom has embraced the opportunity to enhance the community's engagement with feline medicine. This role has refined her public speaking skills, facilitated networking with professionals, and allowed her to showcase her passion for feline care. She has led initiatives such as feline-focused lectures, hands-on wet labs, and campus-wide events. She plans to use her communication, organization, and collaboration skills to

advocate for feline health and enhance caregiver relationships throughout her veterinary career.

Veterinary students passionate about improving feline healthcare can benefit from joining the Student Chapter of the AAFP at their school or, if there is not already one, by launching it themselves. All students are encouraged to visit the [AAFP Student Center](#) or [contact the AAFP](#) for more information.

The AAFP thanks Merck Animal Health for their generous support in making these scholarship opportunities possible.

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About the American Association of Feline Practitioners

The [American Association of Feline Practitioners \(AAFP\)](#) supports its members in improving the health and wellbeing of cats through high standards of practice, continuing education, and evidence-based medicine. Celebrating its 50th Anniversary in 2024 as a trusted leader in the veterinary community, the AAFP has a long-standing reputation and track record for increasing the standard of care for cats through the development of practice guidelines, feline-specific education and resources, and [feline caregiver resources](#). Home to the Cat Friendly Practice® and Cat Friendly Certificate Programs, the AAFP encourages veterinary professionals of all levels to re-evaluate preconceived notions of practice strategies and advance the quality of feline medicine.