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TO: Malvern Daily Record
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Hot Spring County 4-H Spay/Neuter Clinic By: Rachel Bearden

Saturday, January 11th, Hot Spring County 4-H members had the opportunity to assist with over 50 spay and neuter surgeries, courtesy of Providence Veterinary Care in Malvern.

The Hot Spring County 4-H Veterinary Science program is for 4-Hers 14-19 years old. These members complete a three year curriculum, shadowing hours, attend camps and field trips, all focusing on the veterinary industry. Dr. Chris Nelson has been a major partner to the success of this program for the last four years.

4-H members have spent many sessions preparing their skills, working with Dr. Nelson and his staff, and becoming familiar with veterinary procedure protocols. This clinic was open to the public to have their dogs and cats spayed and neutered at a discounted rate. Dr. Nelson says, "it is important for the veterinary science students to get hands on experience as well as the importance of serving the community."

Under the supervision of Dr. Chris Nelson, Dr. Rob Rucker, and Courtney Ray, CVT, 4-Hers had the opportunity to learn how to prepare the pet for anesthesia, administer vaccines, draw blood, assist with surgery, monitor post operation, and work with clients. 4-Her Eva Berryhill said she "learned more about the responsibilities of a veterinary assistant. [She] enjoys working with animals and having a part in helping them live a healthier life."

This is a very unique opportunity for our 4-H members. The 4-H motto is "learn by doing", and this clinic is the perfect example of how the 4-H program works. Many youth would not have the opportunity to learn many of the skills this clinic offers. As these youth prepare for veterinary school, this is the type of activity that has the potential to set them apart from other applicants. Dr. Nelson says, "4-H allows our kids to be involved in the agricultural process. Without that kind of opportunity most kids would never understand the importance of agriculture to our livelihood."

This 4-H Club meets the first Monday of each month at the Hot Spring County 4-H Center in Malvern. Anyone interested in the program should call the Extension Office at 501-332-5267 and speak to Rachel Bearden.

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Courtney Ray, CVT, Jack Berryhill, and Savannah Saunders assist Emma Kyzer with inserting an IV catheter.

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Tabitha Norwood learning about anesthesia from Dr. Chris Nelson.

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Jack Berryhill and Isabella Welch learning how to draw vaccines for pets.

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