

Pets & Vets



These local veterinarians are committed to treating each pet like a part of your family, regardless of species. The top-notch vets and caregivers here go the extra mile to make sure your animal gets comprehensive care, from kitty adoptions to Healing Touch for pups, antibiotics to applied kinesiology. The local heroes in these pages win appreciation for their unparalleled devotion to the community's animals in need; you'll rest easy even in the most trying times with your pets in their able hands.

CAT DEPOT



CAT DEPOT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHELLEY THAYER IS INSPIRED—BY HER STAFF, VOLUNTEERS, THE PUBLIC AND MOST OF ALL BY HELPING KITTIES IN NEED. “Right now we have about 102 foster care families taking care of around 140 kittens—these people are so inspiring to me,” she says. “Especially the ones who are giving up a bedroom or bathroom to help a kitten and mother be safe. It’s uplifting.” Thayer and her team are on a mission to change the destiny of the over 30,000 homeless cats that live in Sarasota County. Through adoption opportunities, lifetime cat care, the affordable Rose Durham Clinic and resources for the public, Cat Depot brings the plight of Florida kitties to the forefront, keeping the public informed and aware. “I hear so many stories of good samaritans—people that can’t turn the other way and walk by,” says Thayer. “People are tuned-in; there is so much empathy, kindness and concern.” Cat Depot works in conjunction with other area rescue groups to help every cat in distress. Yet they go above and beyond by staying open seven days a week, even on Sundays and Mondays when no other organization throughout Sarasota and Manatee keeps doors open. “We stay open because we know that we are needed,” says Thayer. Cat Depot takes those rescued cats and opts out of the culture of euthanasia, even if there’s not enough space “We made a pact four years ago—no kitten is euthanized in Sarasota for lack of space,” says Thayer. “We all work together. It takes dedication.”

Cat Depot’s mission is to save lives, find loving homes and provide the resources and education to improve the destiny of homeless cats. Cat Depot, a non-profit, no-kill, free-roaming center, is recognized for its progressive design and commitment to helping homeless, abandoned and injured cats and kittens. In 2015, Cat Depot rescued 1,430 felines and assisted with local and national rescues, and dedicated efforts have resulted in increased adoption numbers every year for the last five years. The Community Cat Program was developed to educate the public about free-roaming cats, supply food for community cats and personal pets, offer resources for free and low-cost medical care, loan traps and offer transportation assistance, provide free and low cost spay/neuter surgeries and place adoptable cats and kittens into loving homes. In 2014, the Rose Durham Cat Care Clinic, a small yet highly functional discount clinic, opened in an effort to care for sick and injured cats and their distressed owners.

BEAR CREEK VETERINARY ALTERNATIVES, INC.



BEAR CREEK VETERINARY ALTERNATIVES, INC. COMBINES THE BEST OF EAST AND WEST. Dr G. (as he is affectionately called) practiced as an animal emergency physician for 20 years, worked in two specialty clinics in Chicago, is an expert in herbal therapies and has been using acupuncture for his patients for 23 years. He and his wife are both Healing Touch for Animals® (HTA) practitioners. “Dr G. has such a rich, deep background to pull from,” says wife and Bear Creek Veterinary Alternatives, Inc. (BCVA) co-owner Susan Blake Gonzalez. An integrative practice, BCVA’s patients are treated using a combination of traditional and holistic medicines. With holistic options “you have a big toolkit of things that work,” says Blake Gonzalez, and the approach is based on treating the whole animal, not just the symptoms. They look at each animal’s emotional, spiritual and physical state to choose what course of action is best. Energy work is a major part of their practice including HTA, a method that uses energy and intention to balance the chakra system. The energy field can be thrown out of balance by stress or physical trauma. “Animals try to balance out our stress because they love us unconditionally,” says Blake Gonzalez. “They end up taking that on, which can create illness.” The practice also uses essential oils and flower essences to address imbalances, as well as fine-tuning diet. At BCVA, your pet gets treated with their emotions in mind, and isn’t seen as merely a body with symptoms.

The BCVA philosophy is rooted in the ancient belief that all things are interconnected including our physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health and that of our animal companions. Their holistic approach to veterinary care combines 25 years of conventional medicine practice along with emergency care experience, and holistic medicine including energy medicine. Services include acupuncture, HTA, laser, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), herbal treatments, prolotherapy, homeopathy, glandular therapy, homotoxycology and nutritional therapy alongside conventional medicine when needed. Their holistic approach to healing takes into account the spiritual and emotional state and the body’s condition as a whole. As a family-owned, holistic practice wellness for animals and their people is the focus.