

EHF Externship Report

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I completed 3 weeks of work experience at the Esther Honey Foundation Animal Clinic over my summer holidays in between my 3rd and 4th year.

I arrived in Raro at 2am on Saturday morning and started work that day, as the Clinic was understaffed with no veterinarians working that weekend. I quickly learnt the basics of clinic care and consults. I also got my first introduction to fish poisoning cases; I was to see a lot more.

On Monday, a veterinary team from America started. I learnt so much from this team, not only on how to deal with patients but also with people. Over the next 2 weeks Dr Susan LeCoq and her team from the Animal Medical Center in

Anniston Alabama, walked me through a few speys, IV line maintenance and taught me to place a catheter. I also witnessed some really cool surgeries like stitching up the pleural cavity of a 3-month-old piglet! During my last week, two veterinarians from England, Rosie Skinner and Emma Wells, came to stay. They also walked me through flank speying and castration.

Gregg, the clinic director, and Kayla, an undergrad student and professional skier, shared the house at the clinic with me. We had a lot of fun experimenting with food and caring for the animals after hours. We also went snorkeling, swimming, hiking and running when we had spare time.

During the 3 weeks at Esther Honey I had more hands-on experience than I have received in my full 3 years at vet school. I learnt things I would never have learnt at University. If you can learn to work with the equipment available to you in Rarotonga, you will never have trouble improvising in a better-equipped clinic, a very useful skill to have.

Rarotonga is a beautiful country with lovely people, always smiling. I really learnt what it meant to be on Island time. I hope to volunteer again once I have graduated.