



*Esther Honey Clinic*

her tail. By the end of the fourth week she was able to eat and drink, however her movements were still jerky. By the end of the fifth week Daisy was well enough to return home.

The Esther Honey clinics hours were from 8 am -5 pm although the times are a little fluid. People would drop their pets off on the way to work and pick them up after work, sometimes pets would stay several days until the owner came back around to this side of the island. We would aim to have day-stay patients leave before 6 pm. Payment for services is on a donation basis and we would get donations of food both for the animals and humans, labour and money.

During my stay there were usually two veterinarians and up to five veterinary students, and of course one veterinary nurse. One week we had two general volunteers who helped with cleaning and walking the dogs. Surgeries were from 9am onwards and consultations were between 8am-9am and 1pm-3:30pm. Again these times were quite flexible and on a few occasions we were still in surgery at 6:30pm.

At the start of the day a patient round was done, this included checking catheters, flushing the lines and changing fluid bags as well as assessing the general well being of the animals then informing the veterinarians which animals they should see first. The remainder of the morning routine included feeding, cleaning cages, giving out medications, performing physiotherapy and walking the more able dogs. As with any veterinary practice, setting up of the two surgeries consisted of setting out surgical kits, gloves, any drugs that maybe needed, in addition to monitoring anaesthetics and assisting the veterinarians as required. Of course on top of this were the general tasks of admitting the day surgeries, answering the phone, the inevitable paper work and occasionally arranging for tours of the clinic for tourists that dropped in. While there was only one veterinary nurse all of the other volunteers assisted with all duties.

The clinic car was only insured for two drivers at a time, as I was the other driver while I was there I would drive into Avarua to pick up the old newspapers that we would use to line the animal cages, pick up the medical supplies, banking and shop for food.

The afternoon was for consultations, cleaning of instruments and making up of kits. This was also the time when stray dogs were sometimes brought in to the clinic to be de-sexed. When the kits were finished they were put into the old pressure cooker in the kitchen to sterilise. The evening feeding and cleaning round would start at about 4pm and everyone would pitch in to get this finished. While I was there we rehomed approximately 50 cats, 20 dogs and two goats.

My time at the Esther Honey clinic was very rewarding as well as being very enjoyable. There is always a shortage of trained veterinary nurses at the clinic with most of the volunteers being either veterinarians or veterinary students. As a result my days were always varied, running the full gambit from veterinary nursing to being a bingo fundraiser. These were interspersed with such things as assisting in amputating a pig's front leg, working with the SPCA in picking up strays for desexing, as well as spending time at the local markets promoting animal welfare while collecting donations.



*Pig leg amputation*

One of the prime attractions of volunteering at Esther Honey is its location. With a fantastic beach only 50 metres from the house it was great to be able to pop over for a quick swim in the sea, always accompanied by a couple of the resident clinic dogs (these dogs had been homeless and it would take time to find homes for them all). The locals were very friendly and welcoming and with up to seven volunteers at any one time the social life was also full on.

To find out more about the Esther Honey Foundation, the work that it does, or to either donate, or volunteer visit [www.estherhoney.org](http://www.estherhoney.org)