

## Alaska – Serving and Seeing God’s Hand

*By Dr. Hannah Meinders*

I am a recent graduate of St. Matthew’s University School of Veterinary Medicine (February 2025) and work in a mixed animal practice in Stonewall, Manitoba. Throughout my vet school years and even before I got into vet school, I wanted to be able to use the gifts that God gave me to help animals and people around the world.



In August, my first opportunity to serve on a short-term trip with Christian Veterinary Mission was realized, as I joined the mission to Hoonah, Alaska. This is the second year that a trip to Hoonah has been organized through CVM. Hoonah has a population of about 950 people. Their closest vet care is in Juneau or Sitka where they would need to either take a ferry or fly their pet in, which is not cheap.



We travelled as a group of 13 veterinarians and technicians as well as one non-vet. We provided spay and neuter services as well as vaccines for the pets. In total we were able to see 101 dogs and 51 cats in the span of a week. We did 56 surgeries and the rest were vaccines and general physical exams over the 7 days we were there.

Every morning as a group we took time to read God’s word, learning more about each other and how each of us had become a follower of Jesus. This helped bring the team closer together during our short time on the trip. On Sunday, we had the opportunity to worship with the community, giving us more ways to continue to interact with them. We also hosted a Vacation Bible School for the kids in the community one evening where we shared about how Jesus washes us of our sins.

When community members would bring their animals to us, we offered them the opportunity to share prayer requests. We had the chance to speak with them one-on-one while an exam was performed on their pet or while they wait for their pet to wake up from surgery. Team members who were on the team the previous year saw community members they prayed for last year, and the work God had done in their lives over the last year.



God's hand was evident everywhere on this trip. The community of people were so grateful to us for providing veterinary care for their animals. They hosted us so well - with an abundance of good food, they taught us about traditions in their community, and also took us whale and bear watching. We were also invited to a crab feast and had a thank you BBQ from the community on our last day. It was incredible to see God's creation in a different way. The people in Hoonah are happy even with their limited access to materials. They get to live off the land and live in



God's beautiful creation seeing the incredible work that He has done.

It was an honour to be able to serve the community of Hoonah and to be involved/meet the people there.

I hope to do many more trips like this in the future to continue to give back the gifts that God has given me.