

A day in the *life* of Dr. Allison Lash

Head of Veterinary Services, Cleveland APL

“Good morning. Excuse me,” I say as I finagle my way through a sea of people and pet carriers lined up in our garage. It’s 8 a.m. on a Tuesday, and our team is welcoming and organizing families who are coming in to have their pets spayed or neutered. I count 50 carriers, making a mental note of the

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number of known surgeries we’ll be performing today. I start planning our day’s work, making sure we’re not bringing in dogs for exams when cats are in for surgery.

Yesterday, Chelsea, a short-haired, timid kitten, awoke from surgery to the sound of Duke, a 10-year-old shepherd/beagle mix, barking with delight at the site of one of his favorite APL volunteers. A joyful time for Duke, yet a frightening time for Chelsea! An hour goes by and our one surgery room is humming. The clinic hallway is neatly packed with traps and carriers, which, due to space constraints, need to sit on the floor. I take a moment to watch the well-orchestrated dance. Cats are going from the hall, to the surgery room, to recovery, and back down via

cart, to the garage where they will meet their owner at the end of the day. My attention quickly is turned to Kane, our first unforeseen case of day. This sweet, big lug has been hit by a car. Moments later Felicity, a beagle, is brought in with stab wounds on her face. You can barely see her beautiful eyes. We are triaging and providing immediate care to Kane and Felicity, when Blueberry, a hound, arrives, barely moving and in great pain from a gunshot wound and, upon examination, we learn he has heartworm disease. I look up at the clock and it’s only Noon. Four hours later I brush off cat and dog hairs from my coat as we finish our last surgery of the day. I tally the surgeries we performed—70 shelter and owned animals were spayed or neutered; five animals had dental extractions; and one dog had a leg amputation. This is on top of the 72 animals in our care who received medications today—some of them twice. I marvel at what we’ve accomplished and pause to reflect on the important work we are doing. Our community needs us. We recognize their needs—the needs of both the animals and the people we serve. I know we can do more.

Dr. Allison Lash
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