

Ad Astra Bursary Statement

This year I was fortunate enough to be awarded an additional bursary, courtesy of the Ad Astra Committee, in order to volunteer in Thailand and Sri Lanka as a veterinary student in spay and neuter programmes. The additional funding went towards the purchase of flights to get over to Thailand and from there to Sri Lanka and home. During the two weeks that I spent in Thailand, I volunteered with Dr. Sidt, a Thai veterinarian that worked in the Samui Dogs and Cats Home. Here I was exposed to multiple surgeries a day where I learnt the basics and got to approach the surgeries in steps, learning how to find the reproductive tract first, followed by how to stitch up the abdomen in a three layer closure and finally how to tie off the pedicles and the uterine base. By the end of the two weeks, I was performing spays on both female dogs and cats, as well as getting to practice my male castrations in cats. In Sri Lanka, I spent two weeks with Dr. Ganga in the Global Vet Clinic where I utilised the skills that I had learned in Thailand each day and was able to confidently complete up to five spays a day by my second week there. Not only was this an incredible experience that helped me further my veterinary abilities, I was exposed to two very different cultures as well as got the experience of solo-travelling. I cannot thank Ad Astra enough, I had the most amazing four weeks volunteering. I met amazing veterinarians, veterinary students and fellow travellers along my route and have made friends that I hope to know for many years to come. It was an exhilarating, albeit terrifying, experience but I have returned more confident, happier and excited about my future as a veterinarian, as well as planning my next trip back to Asia!



Dr. Ganga and I on my last day in Sri Lanka during my finally bitch spay (taken with permission). This dog was one of the community dogs, helping to reduce the stray population.



A cat spay that I performed at the Samui Dogs and Cats home before she was adopted by a family on the other side of the island (picture taken with permission)



Feeding the stray dogs on the local pier and supplying them with water in Thailand