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Artistic alum serves Costa Rican clinic



Dr. Robin Truelove Stronk, DVM '75 spent her tropical getaway in Costa Rica volunteering her veterinary skills to help a community in need. In February 2011 she took part in a low-cost spay and neuter clinic in Esterillos Oeste, Costa Rica. Along with a colleague, Dr. Rich Righter, they neutered 40 animals in one day.

"These animals are all owned by poor families and the stray and unwanted animal situation is heartbreaking," said Stronk. "We worked in an open school building on the beach on folding tables from the local church with only the light coming through the windows. We moved our surgery tables following the sun. Owners sat in little school chairs and quietly watched the surgery."

When owners presented their animals, the veterinary duo held an informal screening process to ensure proper care after the surgery.

"One of the requirements was that they agree to keep the animal under close observation for several days post-op and that they provide transportation home," said Stronk. "Virtually nobody has cars so they use what we would call 'Yankee ingenuity'."



After owning her own practice in Vermont for 24 years, Stronk sold her business to a corporation and worked for them for a few more years before taking a new path.

"I have switched to exercising my right brain and now work as an animal artist," said Stronk. "So I am essentially the 'Artist Formerly Known as Veterinarian.' The spay clinic made me feel young again! It was probably one of the most challenging, rewarding days of my career. I can't wait to repeat it this coming year."



Stronk's animal art has been featured in several places, including the cover of the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, and her new book, a collection of illustrated veterinary memoirs, *Vet Noir - It's not the Pets - It's the People Who Make Me Crazy*. Check out her artwork at <http://www.truelovearts.com/>.