



Lassie's Pet Vet

Kid Reporter gets a lesson in pet care

By Rachel Tucker

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Lassie is not your ordinary pet. The famous collie has appeared in books, TV shows, and movies for nearly 70 years! Now she has a new TV show all about pet care.

I recently paid a visit to pet vet and TV show host Dr. Jeff Werber, Lassie's veterinarian. "Dr. Jeff" works at the Century Veterinary Group in Culver City, California. During our time together, Dr. Jeff shared details about life as a veterinarian and about one of the world's most famous dogs.

When I arrived at the clinic, Dr. Jeff led me to his office for our interview. Dr. Jeff is Lassie's new veterinarian. She has a local doctor for minor health concerns. But if it is anything that looks serious, she is brought to Dr. Jeff right away.

Dr. Jeff explained that the current Lassie—who is 9 years old—is actually the ninth generation of the famous collie. All of the dogs are related, he said, going back to the very first Lassie.

Dr. Jeff went on to describe the new TV series on Public Television that he will co-host with Lassie. The program, *Lassie's Pet Vet*, will be a magazine show about pets and pet care. The series will take a look at the relationship between pet and "parent" (owner), and will include segments about pet health, lifestyle, and community.

Lassie is not Dr. Jeff's first famous client. As a celebrity pet vet, Dr. Jeff has cared for the pets of some of Hollywood's biggest stars, including Ben Affleck, Julia Roberts, and Mandy Moore.

Becoming a Vet

I wanted to find out what Dr. Jeff was like before he became a vet.

"I was a smart student," he said.

When he was young, Dr. Jeff explained, his parents didn't need to ask him if his homework was finished. They knew he was a good, focused student.

He shared some tips for anyone thinking about becoming a veterinarian. According to Dr. Jeff, it is very important to do well in school. It's very helpful to get into a good college, and to try to get plenty of volunteer experience at zoos or clinics.

Dr. Jeff works with different animals in his job, but I wondered if he had a favorite animal. He told me that he loved dogs when he was little, but his first pet was actually a cat. Today, he has a growing number of dogs and cats.

After we finished our discussion, Dr. Jeff brought in two puppies. He showed me how to hear their heartbeats and find out if their lungs are clear of fluid. I got to use his stethoscope, and I could hear the puppies' quick little heartbeats. I could hear everything!

I learned a lot from Dr. Jeff during my time at Century Veterinary Group. Thanks to his new TV series, I can learn even more this summer. *Lassie's Pet Vet*—a must for animal lovers—premieres on Public



Dr. Jeff Werber teaches Kid Reporter Rachel Tucker how to listen to a puppy's heartbeat. (Photo: Courtesy Rachel Tucker)



Pet vet Dr. Jeff and Lassie, one of the world's most famous dogs. (Photo: 2007 Classic Media, Inc.)

Television in July.

Critical Thinking Question

Read today's news story, and then answer the following question.



What do you think makes a good pet owner?

Join a discussion of this question on our bulletin board.

About the Author

Rachel Tucker is a member of the Scholastic Kids Press Corps.



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