

Amy Newfield, MS, CVT, VTS (ECC)

Amy is the owner of Veterinary Team Training where she consults with hospitals and has an online continuing education site for veterinary professionals to grow their skills and knowledge. After working in general practice for many years, Amy found her passion in emergency medicine and went on to obtain her Veterinary Technician Specialist (VTS) in Emergency and Critical Care. She has held several board positions in the Academy of Veterinary Emergency & Critical Care Technicians & Nurses including president. She went on to obtain her master's degree in management and leadership and has published the award-winning and best-selling books "Oops, I Became a Manager" and "Oops, My Team is Toxic" both focused on creating happy veterinary teams. She launched her online CE platform Vet Team Training in 2023 and likes to brag it's the largest online CE platform where only vet techs and vet nurses are the educators. She lives in Massachusetts with her wonderful furry kids where you can find her still pulling floor shifts in an emergency hospital, eating chocolate, running in the woods, competing in agility, and diving in the ocean.

Erin Spencer, M.Ed, CVT, VTS(ECC)

Erin is the chair of the legislative committee for the MVTA. She has been in the veterinary field for over 20 years in a variety of roles. She is currently the director of nursing education for Veterinary Emergency Group.

Jean Orlando, CVT, LATG, BSc

Jean Orlando is currently a Certified Veterinary Technician at Zoo New England in Boston Massachusetts. She is also certified as a Laboratory Animal Technologist through AALAS, and holds a Bachelor's of Science in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She extends her interest in conservation and wildlife as an advocate for the International Dark Sky Association, serves as Vice Chair of the Zoo New England Conservation Committee, a member of the zoo's IACUC Committee and is active with the wildlife rehabilitator community. She loves to travel, spend time camping, hiking and kayaking but also loves the arts and exploring city centers. Her greatest joy is spending time with her 2 daughters on their many adventures.

Jocelyn Strassel, MS, CVT, CDBC

Jocelyn has worked full time as a Clinical Behaviorist at the MSPCA-Angell since 2016. Jocelyn earned her BA from Connecticut College and her Master's degree in Companion Animal Behavior Analysis and Counseling from the American College of Applied Science. Her master's thesis was a research study evaluating the effects of Feliway on stress behaviors in cats in a shelter environment. Jocelyn is a Certified Dog Behavior Consultant (CDBC) through the IAABC. She is also a certified veterinary technician who spent nearly two decades working as a technician in different areas of veterinary medicine, including Critical Care, Emergency and Specialty Services.

In her current role, Jocelyn primarily sees clients and their cats and dogs for behavior consults. Her additional experience includes teaching group dog & cat training classes, conducting private training sessions with owners and their dogs and cats, and assisting with behavior problems in shelter animals. In addition to her formal education and training, Jocelyn has learned a lot from her everyday hands on work with her own adopted reactive dog, Sugar.

Julie Antonellis, BS, LVT, CVT, VTS (ECC)

Julie Antonellis received her bachelor's degree in Veterinary Technology from Quinnipiac University in 1998. Since then she has been working in the field of emergency and critical care and pursuing her love of teaching. She became a Veterinary Technician Specialist in emergency and critical care in 2001. She is passionate about the field and enjoys speaking about what she has learned through her experiences. Julie is grateful to be able to give back to the veterinary community through teaching, training and lecturing. She is devoted to helping veterinary technicians recognize their potential and elevate the level of nursing care they provide. Julie is currently the Program Director for the VCA Vet Tech Academy.

Kara Burns, MS, MEd, LVT, VTS (Nutrition)

Kara Burns is a licensed veterinary technician with a master's degree in physiology and a master's degree in counseling psychology.

Kara is the Founder and Past President of the Academy of Veterinary Nutrition Technicians. She teaches nutrition courses around the world. Kara is an independent nutritional and well-being consultant, the Director of Veterinary Nurse Development for WellHaven Pet Health and is the Editor in Chief of Today's Veterinary Nurse.

She is a member of many national, international, and state associations and holds positions on many boards in the profession: Western Veterinary Conference Technician Education Manager; NAVTA Past President; EveryCat Health Foundation (formerly Winn Feline Foundation); and the first technician to be President of the Pet Nutrition Alliance, to name a few.

She has authored ~200 articles, textbooks, and textbook chapters and is an internationally invited speaker, focusing on topics of nutrition, leadership, and technician utilization.

Ms. Burns was recently named the The Bridge Club 2024 Industry ICON Award recipient – the first veterinary technician to be recognized as The Bridge Club ICON. Ms. Burns has been featured on the cover of the Veterinary Technician Journal and the NAVTA Journal and most recently has been featured in PetVet Magazine. She was named the North American Veterinary Conference Technician Speaker of the Year in 2013, 2016, and in 2021. She was granted an honorary VTS (Internal Medicine) in 2011. She was also granted an honorary VTS (Dentistry) in 2012. She is the 2010 NAVTA Veterinary Technician of the Year, as well as the 2011 Dr. Franklin Loew Lecturer.

Karen Hart, CVPM, CCFP

Karen Hart is a Certified Veterinary Practice Manager in northern Vermont. With a degree in Engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, she believes in the power of data and analytics to help shape systems that support people and animals. She is passionate about using creativity and connection to build a sustainable future, focusing on practice culture, team wellbeing, advancement of veterinary professionals, and operational efficiency.

Leah Contreras, RVT, CVT

I am originally from Santa Monica, CA, and have been in the veterinary field since graduating high school. I started off as a high-volume spay and neuter surgical assistant at various shelters in Los Angeles.

After three years, I wanted to try out specialty/emergency medicine, and accepted a position as a radiology assistant at ASEC and transferred to the surgical department after a year. In 2016, I became a registered veterinary technician. Over the next five years, I worked primarily as a surgical technician and cross-trained in the ECC/ICU department. In the fall of 2019, I decided to move states to work exclusively as an anesthesia technician at a university teaching hospital. I primarily taught fourth-year veterinary students during their small and large animal anesthesia rotation and ran a variety of anesthetic cases. After a year of university training, I decided to go back to private practice and moved to Boston where I eventually took the position as the lead anesthesia technicians. I was able to create and implement my own anesthesia training program to mentor up and coming veterinary staff on elevated standards in anesthesia. My professional interests include cardiothoracic anesthesia, critical cases and local/regional anesthesia. Outside of work, I love to swim and do bitesport with my Rottweiler, Drago, or watch TV with my Siberian cat Obi.

Lorelei D'Avolio, CVT, VTS (Clinical Practice- Exotics)

Lorelei received a BA in journalism from Boston University, and then after moving to New York, a BS in Veterinary Technology from Mercy College becoming a licensed veterinary technician in 2001. She always had a special interest in exotic animals, and her career has developed through building and managing New York City's only stand-alone exotic pet hospital where she worked for over 17 years. She also is passionate about education and has contributed to the field as an educator by teaching at vet tech schools, lecturing at national veterinary symposiums, providing multiple RACE approved web-based educational programs, and contributing to a variety of textbook chapters and journal articles. Lorelei is a charter member of the Academy of Veterinary Technicians in Clinical Practice (AVTCP) and a Certified Veterinary Practice Manager. She is the AVTCP Director and enjoys committee work, currently sitting as the Chair of AVTCP's Credentialing Committee as well as serving on a variety of other advisory boards. She is the current Assistant Director of Nursing at Cape Cod Vet Specialists where she is also launching a new zoological companion animal department.

Rosie Villers-LaRocque, CVT

Rosie graduated from the Veterinary Technician program at North Shore Community College in 2008. She has been a veterinary technician since 2006 and an ophthalmology technician since 2011. Rosie currently is the medical team manager and a veterinary technician at New England Veterinary Ophthalmology in Manchester NH. Rosie has a true love for chihuahuas and even has a "chihuahua pouch" at work for carrying around her smaller in-patients.

In her spare time, Rosie likes spending time with her husband, 2 kids, and chihuahua. They enjoy the beach, being outside in warm weather, and family movie nights.

