



Cats, dogs, birds and hamsters are among Dr. Andrew Greller's patients at South Texas Veterinary Ophthalmology.

Ophthalmologist is partial to pet projects

BY NANCY M. PREYOR-JOHNSON

The patients waiting in Dr. Andrew Greller's office to be treated for eye conditions aren't the usual variety you would see in an average eye-care clinic.

A few bark, lay on the floor and wag their tails. Some preen their feathers.

Greller and his staff help patients of the four-legged variety and those covered in feathers at South Texas Veterinary Ophthalmology.

Up to 30 cats and dogs per weekday visit South Texas Veterinary Ophthalmology, which Greller purchased last year.

His purchase of the business was a deal that split a second previously affiliated location in Houston that is now separately owned and operated by the previous business owner, Dr. Marc Rainbow.

While the majority of the animals he treats are of the dog and cat variety, he also treats mice, hamsters, pigs, rabbits and more.

Seeing the needs

Greller has become a favorite among his clients and staff.

"He has this uncanny ability to be able to read clients and help them understand," says Lesle Belling, his practice manager. "He's one of the kindest people I know, and that's the truth. Everyone who is in contact with him think so — from the pet owners and technicians, to the receptionists and others."

The office is located within the Veterinary Referral and Emergency Center, located in Stone Oak. Just half of the patients come from Bexar County; others make the drive from South Texas, as far north as Austin and as far south as Mexico.

Greller, who is board certified, says that currently, there are only 352 board-certified

veterinary ophthalmologists within the U.S. and just a couple in San Antonio.

The 39-year-old grew up in New Jersey and got his start in the field studying wildlife biology and environmental science at the University of Michigan. He went on to complete veterinary school and later became board certified in veterinary ophthalmology.

His entrance into South Texas Veterinary Ophthalmology came in 2009 when he joined the practice as an associate. He calls the move excellent timing.

"It was an amazing opportunity," Greller says. "Not only were my wife and I welcoming our first child, but San Antonio is the city where my wife was born and raised and where my in-laws still live. I am proud to call this city home. Now, the chance to own the business is perfect timing as well," he says.

Greller's practice focuses on diagnosing and treating eye conditions of all animals, while emphasizing preventative medicine and the overall health and wellness of his patients.

'DR. GRELLER IS KIND, CARING, CONCERNED. HE HAS EMPATHY.'

Marilyn Train
Client, South Texas
Veterinary Ophthalmology

VET: It's not unusual for patients at ophthalmology practice to bark and wag their tails

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The specialized care he provides can be expensive, ranging from an examination and diagnostics starting at \$150, up to cataract surgery in both eyes with artificial lenses and follow-up care for \$3,500 or more.

But many clients see their pets as part of their families and do what they need to do to help their animals, Greller says.

Marilyn Train, 66, the owner of Yorkshire Terriers, has grown so impressed with Greller over the past six or seven years, that she joined another pet owner to nominate Greller for the inaugural San Antonio Area Foundation's "Pick of the Litter" contest, which recognizes outstanding veterinarians in the San Antonio area. He won.

Like many of Greller's clients, Train calls her pets — four Yorkies — her children. One of her Yorkies, who's 12 years old, suffers from a degenerative eye condition.

"Dr. Greller is kind, caring, concerned. He has empathy. He does this because he loves our pets and he loves what he does," Train says. "I have had dogs for 50 years, and I have gone to quite a few vets, so I know the ones who really care and the others who are there because it's a job."

'Paws-itive' impact

Indeed, Greller focuses much of his time on making a positive community impact. He gives free examinations to Guide Dogs of Texas where he is a board member, as well as to the military working dogs at Lackland U.S. Air Force Base. And, he assists SeaWorld-San Antonio

Dr. Andrew Greller has handled eye care for everything from a mouse to a 3,000-pound white rhino.



LYNDSEY JOHNSON / SABJ

and the San Antonio Zoo with their ophthalmology cases.

Those affiliations led him to treat a beluga whale and a replace the cornea of a 3,000-pound white rhino.

Geller isn't content to keep the status quo. The practice has grown since 2009 and he envisions making greater strides in the future.

"My goal is to add an associate veterinary ophthalmologist in the next 12 months and expand to open a satellite office in the next

three years. I have a goal of doubling our staff and current gross revenues in six years."

Greller says that growth is one of his biggest challenges as he continues to provide top-quality care without compromise.

"My solution is to introduce technology that streamlines communication with clients and referring veterinarians," he says.

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South Texas Veterinary Ophthalmology

Year founded: 2004

Principals: Dr. Andrew Greller and two silent partners, Andy Anderson and Fred Williams
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