

Acupuncture Performed On Animals

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By Carolyn Seagraves

CHADDS FORD—Acupuncture is a Chinese medical treatment that has been used for more than 4,000 years to relieve muscle spasms, increase blood circulation, stimulate nerves, and release certain hormones. While the use of acupuncture may be an ancient practice, veterinarian, Dr. Rose DiLeva currently used this technique on animals in her newly remodeled facility in Chadds Ford. Since February, 2000, DiLeva had been practicing alternative and conventional veterinary medicine at the Animal Wellness Center located on Wilmington-West Chester Pike (U.S. Route 202). DiLeva offers her clients all the regular medical procedures, physicals, and vaccinations that other “conventional” veterinarians do, but she also provides a wide range of holistic services. Acupuncture is frequently used by DiLeva on dogs and cats. The procedure involves the placement of very tiny needles into specific locations on the animal’s body to encourage the process of healing. Acupuncture works the same way on animals as it does on humans. According to DiLeva, the body has channels located near the surface. “Qi” (pronounced Chee) is the flow of energy through the body along these channels. By inserting fine acupuncture needles into specific points along the body, DiLeva is able to stimulate Qi and produce changes in the body’s internal organs and functions. Acupuncture un-obstructs the flow of energy and allows the body the support it needs to heal itself. “The whole point of acupuncture is to help the body to heal itself. Just about everyone says their pets have more energy (after acupuncture treatments),” DiLeva said. “Kuma”, a 10-year-old Akita, could attest to DiLeva’s acupuncture claims. Recently, “Kuma” re-injured his knee that had previously been operated on to repair a torn anterior cruciate ligament. The 90-pound dog calmly laid on the floor for 20 minutes while DiLeva inserted tiny needles into his body’s pathways. Kuma’s owner had told DiLeva that the dog was limping and not eating—even his favorite peanut butter sandwiches. After Kuma’s acupuncture treatment, he was woofing down treats and his limp was dramatically reduced. DiLeva, who also has done acupuncture on horses, rabbits, and even a chinchilla, said, “I never was a great proponent of conventional medicine. It just masks the problem. My two specialties are Chinese Herbology and Acupuncture.” DiLeva estimates that 90 to 95 percent of all her clients bring their pets to her for some type of alternative veterinary medicine. Seventeen-year-old “Pasha”, a gray tabby cat, was diagnosed with an abdominal mass and kidney failure. “Pasha” was not expected to live for more than two weeks. “Pasha” now receives a “wet needle” treatment which injects vitamin B12 into his system. “Pasha” has been making weekly visits to DiLeva for the past six months. “Pasha” is very typical of the kind of cases we get. I want people to be open-minded. When someone says I don’t believe in acupuncture, I say, “it’s not a religion to believe in”, acupuncture is a 4,000 year old medicine,” DiLeva explained. At her Animal Wellness Center, DiLeva recognizes the importance of preventative health care, particularly as pets begin to age. She recommends a geriatric profile for all large breed dogs over 5 years old and other pets over 7 years of age. DiLeva has a deep love for animals and says her dream to become a veterinarian started when she was 13 years old. She grew up in Philadelphia with an asthmatic father and could not have pets of her own. “It made no sense, but I was 13 when I decided to be a vet and it never left my head,” DiLeva recalled. In 1987, DiLeva graduated from the University of Pennsylvania’s School of Veterinary Medicine. She has also completed post-graduate work at the University of Michigan and the University of California. DiLeva is board-certified in Veterinary Acupuncture by the International Veterinary Acupuncture Society (I.V.A.S.). In 1990, while working as the director of the West Chester Animal Emergency Clinic, she decided to branch out on her own. Originally, DiLeva started a mobile veterinary service which she continues today. Her mobile service allows clients the additional convenience of high quality care for their pets in the comfort of their own home. DiLeva knows that her clients’ pets are one of the family. They take their pets’ medical treatment very seriously and trust in her conventional and alternative knowledge. She happily reciprocates that trust and said, “If someone were to walk in and say their pet is only a dog, or it’s only a cat, I’d show them the door.”