

LIFE-SAVING SURGERY

inspires gift to help see inside ailing wildlife

When their dog, Buzz, faced a life-threatening condition in October 2009, Richard and Stacy Hoffman drove their Scottish terrier six hours from Maryland to Cornell University Hospital for Animals, where a timely surgery saved his life. The Hoffmans are pictured here with daughter Alexandra CALS '12 holding Buzz.

Their experience inspired several donations to the Companion Animal Hospital, and as strong supporters of animal welfare they were keen to learn more about the College's commitment to animal care. The Hoffmans oversee a family foundation that funds projects supporting otherwise overlooked wildlife. When they took a tour of Cornell's Janet L. Swanson Wildlife Health Center, which provides hospitalization and medical care to sick or injured wild animals brought in by the public with the goal of releasing them back to their original habitat, they knew they had found a match.

"Some wildlife species get a lot of attention while others that might not be quite as 'sexy' fall under the radar," said Richard Hoffman. "It's important to us and to Earth's ecosystems that species don't dwindle because no one noticed or cared. We took a tour of the Center and saw the work they do helping local wildlife and training students who could someday translate that experience to a greater scale, and we wanted to give something tangible to help."

Through a gift from their foundation, the Hoffmans helped the Center purchase four pieces of imaging equipment that will provide invaluable diagnosis and treatment options for the animals treated at the Center while simultaneously building a multimedia library usable for teaching and research in wildlife medicine.

"The biggest new piece is an endo[®]HD, a totally portable, wireless, high-definition endoscopic imaging platform that can record, store, and play back images and videos taken from inside an animal's body, making it particularly useful for diagnosis and teaching," said Dr. George Kollias, Jay Hyman Professor of Wildlife Medicine and Chief of the Center. "We also purchased a small-diameter rigid endoscope for birds and small mammals that allows veterinarians to use surgical instruments to



take biopsies, retrieve ingested foreign bodies, and conduct minimally invasive surgeries."

For their tiniest patients, the Center purchased a fully functional miniature endoscope. Finally, all endoscopes were updated with new, more powerful light sources.

"We use this technology to help diagnose and treat wildlife when laboratory tests and other diagnostics don't provide definitive answers," said Dr. Kollias. "It lets us use minimally invasive techniques to visualize the organ surfaces and to take tissue samples of organs or tissues safely. The equipment is also particularly useful in species for which there is little or no published clinical laboratory data or disease description."

The Hoffmans hope their gift will help veterinarians, students, and researchers find ways to prevent future problems in wildlife and promote research to help wildlife.