THE VETERINARIAN FROM DOWN THE STREET

“I’D LIKE TO THINK WE WERE PART OF HELPING H STREET TRANSITION FROM WHAT IT WAS TO WHAT IT’S ABOUT TO BECOME.”
—Dr. Matt Antkowiak ’97

When Dr. Matt Antkowiak ’97, (pictured left) opened a veterinary clinic in Washington, D.C. nearly four years ago, H Street was an unlikely location. “It was a transitional neighborhood at best,” the native of Buffalo, N.Y., says about the section of Capitol Hill known as the Atlas District. But Antkowiak wanted to become more fully part of the community from where he had been commuting for over a decade to work as an ER veterinarian at VCA SouthPaws Veterinary Specialists & Emergency Center in Fairfax, Va. His neighbors, in turn, welcomed the first veterinary clinic in the area with open arms. “We were one of the first daytime, walk-in businesses that wasn’t a bar to thrive on the street,” he says.

In the meantime, six full-time veterinarians and 30 staff members populate the 4,000 square-foot, full-service hospital, which is painted in bright colors and offers five cozy, stress-reducing exam rooms. The “Cornell Room” (Antkowiak’s friend and business partner, veterinarian Christopher Miller, has a competing “Auburn University Room”) is decked out in Cornell paraphernalia and mementos, including an “autobiography” in which a nine-year-old Antkowiak envisions his future life as a veterinarian. While the avid traveler and athlete, who describes his personality as “kinetic,” took detours into journalism and acting in college, he has come full circle to not only live his youthful dream but make it part of the future of a now flourishing neighborhood. “I’d like to think we were part of helping H Street transition from what it was to what it’s about to become,” Antkowiak says.