

The Feline Veterinary Medical Association and Merck Animal Health Champion Future Leaders in Feline Medicine

The Feline VMA and Merck Animal Health announce the 2025 Scholarships for Academic Excellence in Feline Healthcare recipients.

BRANCBURG, NJ, UNITED STATES, October 9, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Organizations highlight commitment to advancing compassionate, evidence-based care for cats through mentorship, education, and professional development

The Feline Veterinary Medical Association (FelineVMA) and Merck Animal Health are delighted to announce the [2025 Scholarships for Academic Excellence in Feline Healthcare](#) recipients. This year's recipients are Holly Kessler, The Ohio State University, Class of 2027, and Claire Stratton, Colorado State University, Class of 2026. Both recipients receive a \$10,000 scholarship and a complimentary registration to the 2025 FelineVMA Annual Conference for their passion for feline medicine and a desire to elevate feline healthcare.

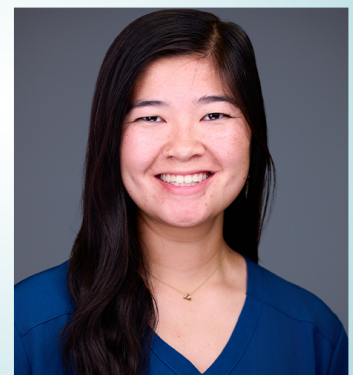
"We are proud to support the next generation of veterinarians dedicated to advancing feline health and wellbeing," said Heather O'Steen, CAE, FelineVMA CEO. "The commitment by Holly and Claire to evidence-based medicine, compassionate handling, and client education reflects the very values we champion as an organization. By fostering leaders in Cat Friendly care, we



2025 Scholarships for Academic Excellence in Feline Healthcare Recipients



Holly Kessler
The Ohio State University



Claire Stratton
Colorado State University

move closer to a future where every cat receives the respect, understanding, and high-quality veterinary attention they deserve.”

Holly Kessler

Holly’s career goal is to become a skilled feline-focused veterinarian dedicated to advancing standards of care, accessibility, and education in feline medicine. She is committed to expanding preventive care, improving feline handling, and enhancing early detection of chronic conditions, particularly in underserved settings. As a third-year veterinary student, Ms. Kessler pursues feline-focused rotations, externships, and training in low-stress handling and communication. Long term, she plans to work in a feline-centered practice, engage in professional leadership, and promote Cat Friendly environments that support both cats and caregivers.

Claire Stratton

Claire’s goal is to become an ABVP Feline Medicine Specialist. She plans to complete a small animal rotating internship for mentorship and broad clinical exposure, then work as a general practitioner in a hybrid referral hospital in Albuquerque, NM, with access to advanced diagnostics and in-house referral services. Ms. Stratton hopes this environment will allow her to manage complex feline cases, strengthen her internal medicine caseload, and meet the ABVP requirements. Claire hopes to return to academia as a clinician educator, raising the standard of feline care in general practice through evidence-based teaching and mentorship.

The FelineVMA thanks Merck Animal Health for its generous support in making these opportunities possible.

Veterinary students passionate about enhancing feline healthcare can benefit from joining the FelineVMA Student Chapter at their school, or if one does not already exist, by starting one themselves. All students are encouraged to visit the [FelineVMA Student Center](#) for more information.

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About the Feline Veterinary Medical Association

The Feline Veterinary Medical Association (FelineVMA) supports its members in improving the health and wellbeing of cats through high standards of practice, continuing education, and evidence-based medicine. Comprised of all veterinary professionals who work with cats, the FelineVMA has a rich history and a proven track record of increasing the standard of care for cats. This is achieved through the development of practice guidelines, feline-specific education and resources, and caregiver support. Home to the Cat Friendly Practice® and Cat Friendly Certificate Programs, the FelineVMA encourages veterinary professionals to re-evaluate practice strategies in an effort to advance the quality of feline medicine.

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