

0:00:00.0 Katie Berlin: Hi, welcome back to Central Line. I'm your host, Katie Berlin, and we're here with another special onsite episode at AAHA Con 2023 here in San Diego in our makeshift podcast studio, which happens to be like on the 32nd floor of this amazing building looking out over the harbor. And I can't stand it. It's so beautiful, even though it's a little rainy today in San Diego. But we have a guest here that I've been wanting to meet in person for some time. We've met over Zoom a few times, and I was just, I'm really impressed by you and your partner Tyler's just dedication at such an early stage in your veterinary career. So I'm very glad we're getting the chance to meet in person. Dr. Esmeralda Cano, welcome to Central Line.

0:00:48.0 Esmeralda Cano: Thank you, Katie. Honestly, when you sent that email, I was like oh, wow. I was like this is an important person.

0:00:57.6 Katie Berlin: Yeah. I'm not an important person. I just know. I'm not an important person, but I think you are doing really important things and you and Dr. Tyler Primavera have started a small business. Can you talk a little bit about that?

0:01:11.6 Esmeralda Cano: Yeah. So Vetspacito it's a...

0:01:14.7 Katie Berlin: It's the best name. I just have to say that again. Vetspacito is the best name. I can't get it out of my head.

0:01:20.2 Esmeralda Cano: This is all Tyler. Tyler has been really the main spear in really leading Vetspacito to where it's at right now. Currently Vetspacito's goal is to really bridge that gap in language barrier. We're focusing on the Spanish being community. Our goal is to really have resources for vet med professionals. This includes staff, CSRs, receptionists, technicians, assistants, and our veterinarians like myself. And so, I mean, I'm fortunate that I speak English and Spanish. I grew up in a predominantly Latino community. My parents immigrated from Mexico. They unfortunately don't speak English. So for them it was a very big struggle taking our pet to the... Providing those veterinary care resources. And so when I was growing up, I did a lot of the translating as a little kid, and I still do it now.

0:02:12.0 Esmeralda Cano: And so sometimes what we see often is that we have either family members ' children translating in the rooms. And we're hoping that they're able to translate big medical terminologies, like from veterinarian to the child, to the parents. And so sometimes that's a very difficult job as a 12 year old, even sometimes younger. And so what we're trying to do is really, we have these educational videos. It's a package that includes primarily general practice, dentistry, heartworm prevention, vaccines, microchip, everything that has to do with general practice because we really wanna, a lot of the issues come is that they don't know what's actually going on. Like at that preventative care stage. They don't... Not enough resources in Spanish mainly. And so our videos are meant to help them really understand what dental care is, why it's important to spay and neuter, why vaccines deworming, fecal, heartworm prevention is important.

0:03:07.7 Esmeralda Cano: And so like that we can avoid those later down the road emergency calls. And so yeah, we have educational packages that focus on those top general practice themes. And we do have other, we had created previous a mix of GP and ER videos. But we've kind of condensed to mainly GP as of now. But we still have those other ER videos in our packages as well as free brochures that you can visit our website for. They're very colorful and beautiful, though. We worked very hard on, so I hope that, top one, they're free. And we actually also have an intake form

that is both in English and Spanish for people to utilize in their hospitals. 'cause sometimes we're having them fill these things out and they don't really know what to write down.

0:03:54.0 Esmeralda Cano: And I mean, they do have that basic knowledge. So I think it's important that we really try to educate our community, especially if you're one of those veterinary professionals that's working in these communities. It's so important to have that staff. And even if you don't know Spanish, you can always have supporting staff that can be able to do those translation services for you. It's just so important for them to be able to come in, feel like they can connect with the people that they're going to the vet with. Yeah.

0:04:22.8 Katie Berlin: Yeah. So much of that resonates with me because I actually had my first job in a veterinary clinic in Los Angeles, which is where you're from. And very close to us right now. And I lived in LA for a couple of years while I was sort of going through classes to apply to vet school and this's a long story, but my first jobs in vet clinics were in LA and so many of the clients did not speak any English at all. And we had assistants luckily on staff who were bilingual and could translate for us, but without them, it would've been a lost cause. Like we would not, because I had definitely no veterinary relevant Spanish. It was like where's the bathroom was not gonna be that helpful.

0:05:04.3 Katie Berlin: And I don't know what we would've done without those assistants. And as I've worked in other areas that are not so heavily Spanish speaking, it's been kind of eye-opening to see how few people actually possess that skill or even just the desire to learn it outside of areas where that's as so representative of the population. But there are plenty of Spanish speaking clients in other areas and they're not being served. So what do you see as being one of the most essential ways that veterinary professionals now can start to bridge that gap?

0:05:42.6 Esmeralda Cano: Yeah. Well the first thing, Vetspacito. Like I said, we have really great educational videos, packages that you can visit our website at vetspacito.com. We also also have brochures and intake forms. And the other thing is, if you truly... I know Tyler, my co-founder for Vetspacito, he's actually taken it upon himself to learn Spanish. 'cause after working in like a very heavy Spanish speaking population, he realized the need. And so he's private tutors for... I mean, obviously you don't have to go that extra mile, but even learning a word a day that has helped. I have a colleague that we work on a word a day. I always tell people Spanish soap operas. I have friends that actually watch soap operas, and that's how they've learned Spanish. Just hanging out like meeting the culture.

0:06:34.6 Esmeralda Cano: If you actually work within that community, get to know the community that you work for, dive into their culture, into their tradition so you can understand a little bit of where they're coming from. Oftentimes I think we tend to misunderstand them. And that's because we assume things that are not. And I think whether it's financial things, whether it's their culture, we misrepresent them. And it's just... A lot of it is just that they don't know. They weren't provided these resources like we were. My family had to come to this country to provide me a better education and that really like set the foundation for me. And so oftentimes, like they didn't realize that dogs needed vaccines. And so I through my childhood, I demonstrated to my parents that taking care of an animal, it's way different than what they were used to.

0:07:29.2 Esmeralda Cano: And so I was able to teach them that great lesson. And so as veterinarians, that's what we can do. We can teach them great lessons so they can teach their

children and so forth. Increase the education within the community as well as hiring veterinary staff that if you don't have veterinarians that speak Spanish, have veterinary staff, like we mentioned, the staff is a tremendous, like they spearhead everything in clinics that lack the veterinarians that speak Spanish.

0:07:57.1 Esmeralda Cano: I used to work as a vet assistant before becoming a vet for three years. And people thought I was a doctor and I'm like I am not. I am only an assistant. And the fact that I established relationships with them they would call before they would come in just to make sure that they had someone that spoke Spanish, because that's how comfortable they were. So if you provide them with those resources in your clinic, they will come even if you don't speak Spanish because you're making them comfortable and wanting to seek that veterinary care.

0:08:26.9 Katie Berlin: Yeah I love all that. And I love that they would call like looking basically for you. They were looking for you and you were getting that experience before you ever became a doctor. And that you were not just an assistant, you were an assistant, but assistants are no less important. And it made me think like we're talking now more about like ways to support your team members. Not that continuing education and professional growth opportunities are important for everybody on the veterinary team, not just veterinarians. And this would be a great way if you have a team member who really wants to spearhead this but isn't fluent in another language who could maybe then take it upon themselves to learn enough to communicate with clients that speak that language. So if you live in an area that's like heavily, you know Spanish speaking or Korean speaking or whatever how can you serve that population better? It doesn't have to be you. It could be someone on your team who's always wanted to do that. And they see that need too. So I love that. And it gives you a really good perspective as a doctor now looking at the team around you and seeing who really wants that, who has that as a strength and who might want to learn it.

0:09:42.5 Esmeralda Cano: Yeah, absolutely. I recently started doing some relief work at a nonprofit. And I've realized they were really excited to bring me in for even if just a couple of days a month to really, Hey, we're gonna have a Spanish speaking doctor. They were just... 'cause it is in the main... In south central, really heavily Spanish speaking community. And like the technicians were like oh wow, I don't have to go in there and like translate for you. So it's just... It really does, it's a big impact within that community. And just to know that the... I always go in there and sometimes they're already speaking to me in Spanish before I even like start introducing myself. So it's like they already, they know and they're comfortable with just talking to me and expressing their concerns and sometimes I can't even... They don't let me go out of the room. So it really does make a difference. And anyone can make the difference whether it's you don't speak Spanish just like my Tyler, Tyler he's a big example of how no Spanish and now he's actually doing so much like he's learned so much Spanish in the last couple of months.

0:10:47.4 Katie Berlin: I love that. So question for you. We are talking a lot about team members like non veterinarian team members and veterinary technician week. This is probably gonna come out after veterinary technician week is over. But it's on my mind and on the minds of a lot of people here because we're recording this in late September. And so Vet Tech Week is coming up. And really October is like a whole month of celebrating veterinary technicians at AAHA. Because we have the first technician utilization guidelines coming out in October. And plus Vet Techs deserve to be celebrated. So I was wondering if you had a shout out to a Vet Tech in particular or to a group of Vet Techs who have really helped you in your journey so far.

0:11:30.4 Esmeralda Cano: Yeah, absolutely. My Overland Vet Clinic team, like they've been wonderful. The technicians, Lisa, Nera, Darlene my CSRs Helen, Maggie, y'all have been super helpful in these, just my transition and welcomed me into the hospital, the community there. I don't know how I would do it until like my cat friends technicians cat friendly and McKayla and Sam, like y'all really helped me and really empowered me to continue to educate on like feline better handling and better practices. 'cause our feline friends need it.

0:12:12.2 Katie Berlin: Exactly.

0:12:12.3 Esmeralda Cano: But yeah it's just... I really wanna give a huge shout out to everybody else at the Overland team. All of our technicians. Everyone has done an exceptional job in really guiding me as like a new recent grad. I've had the pleasure to just continue to grow my skills because of them.

0:12:29.4 Katie Berlin: This AAHA podcast is brought to you by CareCredit. CareCredit understands that all veterinary teams are busier than ever. To help patients get the care they need, the CareCredit Health and Pet Care credit card allows clients to access a budget friendly financing experience anytime from anywhere on their own smart device. They can learn, see if they pre-qualify, apply, and even pay if approved, all on that smart device. With just a tap, they have a friendly contactless way to pay over time for the services and treatments their pet needs, whether it be a general referring or specialty hospital as long as they accept the CareCredit credit card.

0:13:09.9 Katie Berlin: Fantastic. I think if you asked me to write down who has taught me the most in my veterinary career, it definitely would not be veterinarians. It would be the technicians. And not just about medicine and patient care so much patient care oh my gosh, so much patient care, but also just how to relate to people and how people on the team need and deserve to be treated. I feel like you have a really good appreciation for that so early in your career and I think that's wonderful. And it's gonna help your mission at Vetspacito too because the skills that you're describing are gonna help everybody do a better job at whatever it is their role is in the clinic. So thank you for being so passionate about that and knowing that right off the bat, like coming out of school gangbusters, like going for it. I just... It makes me feel really hopeful.

0:13:56.2 Esmeralda Cano: Oh, thank you Katie. I appreciate it. I'm very passionate about just bridging this language barrier gap. I'm very passionate about diversity and inclusion. Especially as a person of color, I struggled, I struggled to get here. And so all of this really motivates me and impacts me. Thank you.

0:14:22.4 Katie Berlin: Thank you for sharing that. And I hope we'll get to see a lot more of you. I think we will. You were just helping at the blendvet event today. The blendvet event.

0:14:29.9 Esmeralda Cano: Yes. And Shout out to blendvet.

0:14:32.9 Katie Berlin: Yes. They're amazing. So blendvet can always use volunteers for the pathway event. So we will post a link to them in the show notes. Also, I've linked to them many times 'cause I love them so much, has been early supporter of blendvet. So we love, we just can't get enough of them and they need all the help they can get. So thank you for helping out today. And thank you so much for coming by. You're wonderful. And I can't wait to talk to you again. And thanks to all of you for watching and listening. We'll catch you next time on Central Line.