

April 10, 2026

# VET TECH FRIDAYS

*Knowledge, News, and Updates*



## Meet the Faculty **Dr. Joy Ritz, BS, DVM**

Dr. Joy Ritz is a dedicated leader with extensive veterinary experience and a strong commitment to education. As Program Manager at Vet Tech Institute of Indiana, she strives to support students and guide them toward success in the veterinary field.

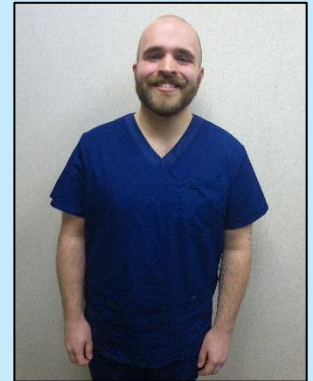
Dr. Ritz earned a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture with an emphasis in Animal Science, as well as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree from Purdue University. She spent 17 years as a small animal general practitioner on the south side of Indianapolis before joining Vet Tech Institute of Indiana as a veterinary technology instructor in 2016. She was soon promoted to Program Manager in 2017.

Outside of her professional role, Dr. Ritz enjoys spending time with her family, which includes her husband, two sons, three cats, and two dogs. In her free time, she is an active member of her church's worship team.

## Student of the Week **Connor Johnson**

This week, we are proud to recognize Connor Johnson as our Student of the Week!

From the very start of his time at Vet Tech Institute of Indiana, Connor has stood out for his positive attitude, kindness, and genuine curiosity. Instructors consistently describe him as an engaged and attentive student who brings a thoughtful presence to the classroom. From orientation day forward, Connor has demonstrated strong active listening skills, always making eye contact, nodding along, and showing a genuine interest in the material being presented.



Connor's instructors note that his character truly shines. He is quick to hold the door for others, greet classmates and staff, and approach every interaction with kindness and respect. These may seem like small gestures, but they reflect the type of professional and compassionate individual he is becoming. In a field where compassion, teamwork, and communication are just as important as clinical skill, these qualities will serve him incredibly well.

Academically, Connor brings an impressive level of curiosity to his studies. With a background in human medicine, he often looks for ways to connect new veterinary concepts to his existing knowledge. His questions are thoughtful and insightful, always posed respectfully and with a genuine desire to deepen his understanding. In Medical Terminology, he stands out for his engagement and for asking questions that spark deeper discussion.

Connor exemplifies what it means to be both a dedicated student and a kind community member. We are excited to continue watching him grow and thrive in the program, and we have no doubt that his passion and character will take him far in the veterinary field.

Congratulations, Connor!

*Student Voices*

**Riley Packard**

**11DV25**



Hey! My name is Riley, and I'm part of the 11DV25 cohort. Ever since I started at VTI, I've loved every moment! From class, to studying with friends, to even kennel, the experience has been amazing.

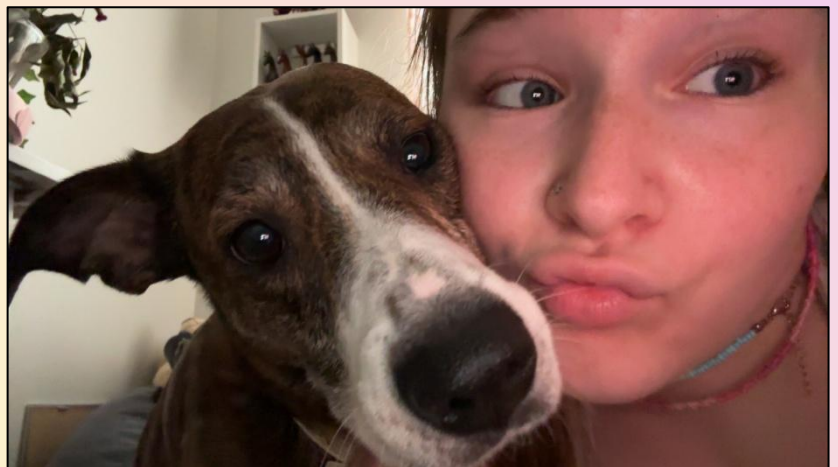
My advice to other students is that when times get tough, remember why you are here and use that motivation to keep pushing forward. The workload can be challenging, but if you stay organized, keep up with assignments, and manage your time well, it all balances out. Don't be afraid to ask questions, your instructors are here for a reason! They truly want to see us succeed.

So far, my favorite class has been Animal Technology because it gives you the opportunity to practice hands-on skills and work directly with animals. It's incredibly rewarding to take what you've learned in lecture and apply it in real life.

After graduation, I hope to work in an emergency/ICU clinic and eventually with the veterinary program at Disney's Animal Kingdom, caring for a wide variety of safari animals.



Don't forget to set goals for yourself.



You've got this!

*Faculty Superlatives*

[Click This Link](#)

Or

Scan the QR Code Below  
To Answer the Questions

[CLICK TO PLAY!](#)

[CLICK TO PLAY!](#)



1. Most likely to survive the zombie apocalypse
2. Most likely to have a zoo in their backyard
3. Most likely to give you a hug on a rough day
4. Most intimidating at first...but secretly a softie
5. Most likely to rescue every animal they meet
6. Most likely to win the lottery and not tell anyone
7. Most likely to be “in the zone” and not notice you waving at them
8. Most likely to make a joke and laugh at themselves
9. Who has the cutest animals?
10. Who is the best dressed?
11. Most likely to talk to animals like they’re people
12. Most likely to befriend the “spicy” cat
13. Most likely to give extra credit
14. Most likely to lock themselves out of their car
15. Most likely to accidentally go viral on social media

A huge **THANK YOU** to some of our 07DV25 students for coming up with such a fun idea and these great questions!

**Amira Jones, Emalee Goss, Jaquelyn Sallee, Jessica Flores, and Libby Ladd**

**Results will be revealed in next week’s newsletter!**

Photos Around Campus

Mrs. Kleiman's dog, Henley helped out in Anesthesia class this week! She took a nap in Mrs. Crocker's lap while Ray Wilson practiced getting her blood pressure.



07DV25 students Lexi McCormick and Mia Myers along with 03DV26 student Elizabeth Short enjoy spending time together during the housing event.



07DV25 students Isabel Lee, Ge'Niaya McDowney, Halle Sanders, and Keyerra Harris pose with their patient of the day, a chicken!

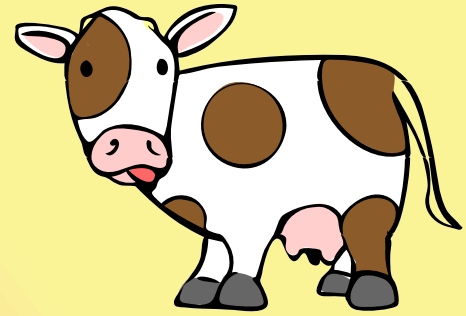
Smiles all around from 03DV25 students Jane Guest and Lexi Lloyd and 11DV25 student Maddie Neal.



11DV25 student Malachi Tomlin shows off his pancake masterpiece at the pancakes-for-dinner event.



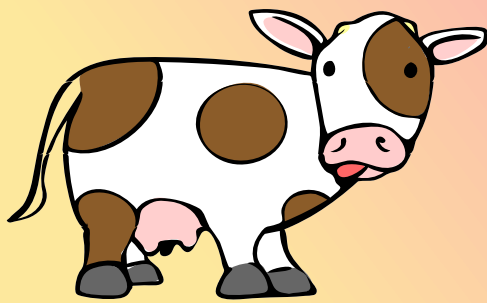
Photos Around Campus



**HANDS-ON LEARNING ALL WEEK LONG! \***

**THESE 03DV25 STUDENTS COMPLETED A FULL PHYSICAL EXAM, OPERATED THE CATTLE CHUTE, PRACTICED SAFE RESTRAINT TECHNIQUES, DREW BLOOD, AND ADMINISTERED ORAL CAPSULES.**

**FARM LIFE \***



*Photos Around Campus*



Megan the duck made her feelings known, honking nonstop until she was picked up! Once she saw Oswald being held right beside her, she finally settled down, safe and reassured in the hands of Mrs. Kleiman and Mrs. Crocker.



Mrs. Hix and Mrs. Long spending some time with two of Mrs. Hix's newest additions, adorable baby chicks!



Mrs. Schuster holding her beautiful (and sweet) Silkie chicken, Barbara.

Fun Fact: Silkies have black skin, bones, and even internal organs, a rare trait called fibromelanosis.



Mrs. Long spending some extra time getting to know one of the newest little additions, a tiny baby chick!

Underrated Animals  
**The Volcano Snail**

Meet one of the most unbelievable creatures on Earth: the volcano snail, also known as the *Chrysomallon squamiferum*. Living nearly 2 miles below the ocean's surface near hydrothermal vents, this snail survives in total darkness, crushing pressure, and water hot enough to rival a volcano. And somehow...it thrives. The vents are hot enough to melt metal, but the volcano snail survives by living just outside the danger zone, close enough to benefit, but not close enough to cook.



What makes this animal truly incredible is its built-in armor. The volcano snail is the only known creature on Earth that incorporates



metal into its body. Its shell is reinforced with iron minerals, and its foot is covered in protective, scale-like plates. It's basically nature's version of a tank.

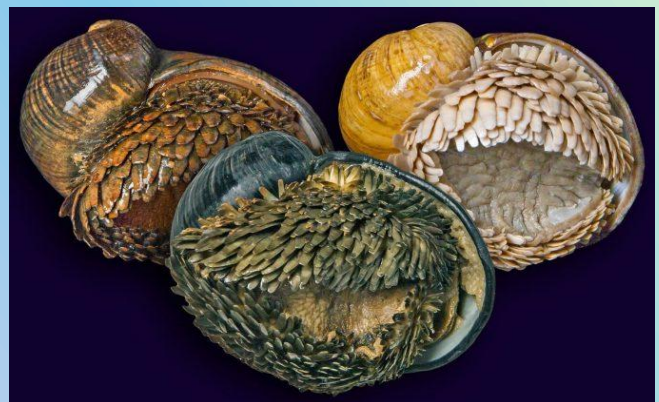
Even more fascinating, the volcano snail doesn't eat the way most animals do. Instead, it relies on symbiotic bacteria that live inside its body. These bacteria use chemicals from the vents to produce nutrients, essentially feeding the snail from within. No sunlight. No plants. Just chemistry.

To survive in such an extreme environment, the volcano snail even has an enlarged heart, helping it circulate oxygen efficiently in low-oxygen conditions.

Like many deep-sea species, its life begins with a free-floating larval stage, drifting through the ocean before eventually settling near a hydrothermal vent, if it survives the journey. Once it finds the right environment, it transforms, developing its signature iron-reinforced shell and scales and beginning its unique relationship with bacteria. There is no parental care at any stage, meaning each snail is entirely on its own from the very beginning.

Unfortunately, this incredible species is now considered endangered, as deep-sea mining threatens the fragile ecosystems where it lives.

The volcano snail is a perfect reminder that some of the most extraordinary life on Earth exists in places we rarely see... and that nature is far more creative than we can imagine.



**TLDR:** A deep-sea snail that lives near hydrothermal vents and protects itself with iron armor while surviving off bacteria instead of food.

- The only known animal that builds iron into its shell and scales
- Doesn't eat food, gets nutrients from bacteria living inside its body
- Has an oversized heart to survive in low-oxygen environments

# FOR THE KIDS (FTK) - ZOO CREW -

CONCESSIONS @ INDIANAPOLIS ZOO

**WORK  
WHEN YOU WANT!**

Students working FTK  
**CONCESSIONS** -  
Everyone loves it!

**NO LONG-TERM  
COMMITMENT!**

## - WHAT THIS IS: -



Serve Burgers & Pretzels



Scoop Ice Cream & Dippin' Dots

Work Fun Concession Stands

- MINIMUM PROGRAM DONATION:  
**\$75/DAY**

## - WHY PEOPLE LOVE IT:

- ✓ Pick Events YOU Want
- ✓ Evenings & Weekends
- ✓ Super Flexible Schedule!



## THE VIBE:

- ✓ Fun & Fast!
- ✓

**EASY MONEY!**

SCAN HERE TO  
SIGN UP!



FortheKidsinc5@gmail.com

FortheKidsinc5@gmail.com

# INDIANAPOLIS 500!!!

## CONCESSIONS CREW NEEDED!

Fast Cars. Fast Money. Big Impact!



LOOKING FOR **50** VOLUNTEERS!

Average program support  
~\$250 per volunteer!

POUR BEER &  
SERVE NACHOS!



SHIFT: 5AM - 5PM • SUNDAY, MAY 24<sup>TH</sup> • INDIANAPOLIS MOTOR SPEEDWAY

- SERVE FOOD & DRINKS •  Fuel the Fans
- Fuel the Fans •  Have a Blast!

**Secure the Bag!**  
Pour Beer. Serve Nachos.  
Watch Races!



SCAN TO SIGN UP!  
\* Limited spots available!

**SIGN UP NOW!**

No Experience Necessary • Just Bring the Energy!

# NEWSLETTER PHOTO SUBMISSION

We are looking to include more student life photos in our weekly newsletter, and we would love your help.

## How to Participate:

→ Please make sure you receive permission from all students in the photo before submitting it.

→ Please include the names of the students in the picture if you can, but if not, I can figure them out.

→ You can email photos to me at any time at [amiller@vettechinstitute.edu](mailto:amiller@vettechinstitute.edu)



### Important reminder:

Photos must NOT include any Vet Tech Institute animals. This is very important for our animal partnership policies.

### Good photo ideas:

- Studying with classmates
- Hanging out in the student lounge
- Working on homework together
- Housing/apartment life
- Campus events
- Group selfies with classmates
- Fun moments between classes



# VTI STUDENT VOICES

We are excited to introduce a new section in our newsletter featuring YOU!

Students are invited to submit:

A short article (200-400 words)

An optional photo of yourself

Not sure what to write about? Here are some ideas:

A reflection about your experience

Advice for other students

Why you chose veterinary technology

A challenge you've overcome in the program

What has surprised you most so far

A meaningful moment in kennel or class

Study tips or time management strategies

What motivates you to keep going on tough days

Your goals after graduation

What being part of VTI means to you

If selected, your submission will be featured in the newsletter,  
and you will receive a small thank-you gift as a token of appreciation.

Submit your entry by emailing Ashley Miller at [amiller@vettechinstitute.edu](mailto:amiller@vettechinstitute.edu).

Please include your name and cohort with your submission.

All submissions should be respectful, appropriate, and school-related.

Please note that submissions may be lightly edited for clarity, length, and professionalism.

No need to be a "perfect writer" - we just want to hear your voice and your experience.

Being featured is also a great addition to your resume or professional portfolio.

Let your voice be heard! We can't wait to hear your story.

