



# Tufts at Tech, the Purrfect Program to Help Youth Enter Veterinary Careers



*By Philip Saal, Central MA Workforce Investment Board Intern*



*Tufts at Tech Community Veterinary Clinic Director Dr. Greg Wolfus gives a tour of the clinic to Mass. Secretary of Labor & Workforce Development Rosalin Acosta and others as part of a YouthWorks site visit. Program participants look on. Photo courtesy of Tufts University.*

Worcester Technical High School has a strong history of receiving great honors, including the 2014 National Blue Ribbon School Award and the privilege of having former President Barack Obama give the commencement speech for the 2014 graduating class. The Tufts at Tech Community Veterinary Clinic is continuing the legacy of greatness at Worcester Technical High School.

Tufts at Tech is the first high school program in the country to offer veterinary assistance program students hands-on experience working alongside college veterinary students. The students and staff care for local animals, mainly cats and dogs, for low-income residents of Worcester at a very affordable price. The clinic is a collaboration between



*Participants in the YouthWorks state-funded youth employment program at their job site, Tufts at Tech Community Veterinary Clinic; From left to right: Carlos Santiago-Ortiz, Shannon Quinlan, Lupia Marchezi and Kaejah Gonzalez. Photo courtesy of Tufts University.*

Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University and Worcester Technical High School. It is led by Director Dr. Greg Wolfus, who is also a Clinical Assistant Professor at Cummings School. He oversees the fourth-year college veterinary students who are assisted by high school students working under their guidance.

This past summer, the program was able to have students work at the clinic funded by the YouthWorks summer jobs program. This program is offered through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development and administered statewide by the Commonwealth Corporation. Locally, it is coordinated through the Central MA Workforce Investment Board and managed in Worcester by the Worcester Community Action Council. The program was selected by the MA Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development, Rosalin Acosta, as one of the first local program sites she visited.



*Massachusetts Secretary of Labor & Workforce Development Rosalin Acosta speaks with participants in the YouthWorks program at Tech Community Veterinary Clinic in Worcester. Photo courtesy of Tufts University.*

As a Class of 2017 Worcester Tech alumni, I personally know many mature, courteous, and incredibly hard working students who have completed the Tufts at Tech program. The program has prepared them for a career after their senior year of high school. Lupia Marchezi, Class of 2017, explains how the program set her up for a career in Veterinary medicine, “Tufts at Tech

helped give me the extensive animal experience that I need for veterinary school. It provided me knowledge from the field and showed me what I should expect as a veterinarian.” Another student from the class of 2017, Yamarilis Soto, describes how the program prepared her for a job in Florida and her career ahead, “During my time at Tufts at Tech as a veterinary assistant, I learned many skills that helped me get a job in the field today. Tufts at Tech taught me communication skills, responsibility, restraint, safety precautions, and team work. All things necessary in the veterinary field.”

Clearly the program has a strong impact on its students. I have even trusted my own pets, (Lucy the Greyhound and Maude the Greyhound) with this program. They were with Maude every step of the way, providing low cost medicine and treatments for her various ailments throughout her life. They have also taken great care of Lucy, who’s a younger dog. The program is a remarkable success, and thanks to it, the next generation of veterinarians is in good hands.