

The Dr. Ness Memorial Teddy Bear Hospital

"I consider my soul to be that of an animal advocate. Our world is a better place because of our relationship to other members of our earth." - Dr. Milton Ness



The Edmonton Valley Zoo's Surgical Suite, developed by Dr. Milton Ness, opened in 2012. He was instrumental in developing the first veterinary program and hospital at the Edmonton Valley Zoo. As the facility came together, Dr. Ness was excited to share his passion with other animal lovers. Early participation in Dreamnight at the Zoo was a way to include families and share this visionary facility. During the first Dreamnight event, a child visitor became excited by the fact that the animals were loved and cared for in the same manner that he had received care at the Stollery Children's Hospital. The child's warmth and passion resonated with Dr. Ness and inspired him to develop a new program for all those who stopped by the Edmonton Valley Zoo Animal Hospital.

Dr. Ness had read about the International Teddy Bear Hospitals in Europe, whose aims were to reduce childhood anxiety and fears relating to medical environments, procedures and healthcare professionals. His vision was to have children experience the parallels of animal and human care in a safe and healthy environment. He planned for a fun event where children could live through the experience by bringing in a Teddy Bear for "repair" or receive a gently loved stuffy to keep. Inspired by Dr. Ness's vision, the Teddy Bear Hospital was born and is now a permanent part of the Edmonton Valley Zoo's Dreamnight at the Zoo.

In preparation for this event, each year, veterinarians and veterinary support staff all around the City of Edmonton collect donations of teddy bears from schools, their staff, family and clients. Many volunteer their time to help plan and/or sew mock foreign body surgery dogs for use in the Teddy Bear Hospital Surgery Room. Others volunteer on site with interactive stations where children can find treasures inside their surgical patients, bandage their newly adopted teddy bears, participate in a scoop the poop race and learn about the care and treatment of the pets they have at home!

The first Teddy Bear Hospital that was held at Dreamnight at the zoo was in June of 2014. Unfortunately, Dr. Ness did not live to see his dream come to fruition. Thankfully, the Edmonton Association of Small Animal Veterinarians and the Edmonton Valley Zoo combined their efforts to help realize Dr. Ness' dream. The wonderful work of these organizations has allowed the Dr. Milton Ness Memorial Teddy Bear Hospital to grow over the last five years. Through these efforts, Dr. Milton Ness' memory, teaching and compassion live on.

Doctor Ness was a leader in animal health and welfare. He was passionate about his profession in veterinary medicine. Dr. Ness lived a lifetime of caring and advocating for animals.

- *Developed the first Veterinary Program and Veterinary Hospital at the Edmonton Valley Zoo*
- *Adjunct Clinical Faculty of the University of Calgary School of Medicine*
- *Owner and Manager of Ottewell and Capilano Animal Clinics (1988-2014)*
- *Board Member and Chairman of Edmonton S.P.C.A (1993-1999)*
- *Instructor in Animal Health Technology at Northern Alberta Institute of Technology*
- *Recipient of Communications Award from the Alberta Veterinary Medical Assoc. 2012*
- *Recipient of Mayors Award 2012*
- *Teacher, mentor and loved to share knowledge*

In loving memory.