Give veterinary technicians a problem, and they might just find a solution. As the number of veterinary conferences has diminished this spring, four technicians partnered and decided to create their own virtual event, from scratch. They did it totally on their own, and it’s called Vet Team Global Stream Conference 2020.

While there was industry sponsorship, industry had nothing to do with putting the event together. And it was also accomplished without backing from established conference like WVC or VMX. Naysayers said “it’s impossible, forget it.” “I’m glad people said that, just made us more determined,” says Becke Mossor, RVT.

Ernie Ward, DVMA, a conference speaker, just laughed, “Anyone who said it was impossible doesn’t know what veterinary technicians are really capable of and has never met these four women.”

Monique Feyrecilde, BA, LVT, VTS (Behavior), Jade Velasquez, LVT/practice manager and Julie Legred, CVT round out the fearsome foursome of technicians who came together.

“I texted Monique with this idea to fill the void for us” recalls Mossor, who is also the executive director of the Human Animal Bond Association. “We’re educators who want to educate, who need to educate, and to fill the void for those yearning for CE. It’s amazing; Monique didn’t even call me crazy when I said, ‘Let’s do a virtual conference.’”

The frenzied text messages instantly grew into reality, The Vet Team Global Stream Conference 2020 was held May 16-17.

And check out this all-star lineup of speakers: Temple Grandin, PhD, author/professor of animal science at Colorado State University; Susan Friedman, PhD, psychology professor at Utah State University a pioneer the application of Applied Behavior Analysis, and Fear Free founder Marty Becker, DVM were featured speakers. Others included many more high profile and popular speakers including Kara Burns, MS, M.Ed., LVT, VTS (Nutrition); Tasha McNerney, BS, CVT, CVPP, VTS (anesthesia and analgesia); Andy Roark, DVM, MS; Valarie Tynes, DVM, DACVB and many others.

“People were so supportive, our list of speakers freaked me out – in a good way,” says Feyrecilde. “Experienced and amazing people who just wanted to help us. Temple Grandin actually left me a voice mail; she

2020 VET STREAM GLOBAL STREAM: From dream to reality in six weeks
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was fantastic and super excited. I was a Susan Friedman fan girl, and we became friends. She said tell me how I can help. And she did.

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Mossor says, “I’m pinching myself; it’s freaking crazy. I think our secret was believing in ourselves, a lot of coffee and very little sleep.”

“A part of our goal is about accessibility,” says Legred, who also serves as the executive director of the Winn Feline Foundation. “The reality is that many veterinary team members don’t have a CE budget, the ability to get the time off or are able to—or whatever the reason—attend major conferences or even regional conferences. I feel good about the opportunity we were able to provide.”

Ward adds, “It’s easy enough in this profession to feel isolated in your little world of what’s happening at your practice or in your city. Under the best of circumstances, you can feel left out not benefiting by these great social opportunities that conferences offer. If you’re in a small clinic in the middle of Nebraska, maybe your boss can’t send you to Florida (for VMX) or Nevada (for WVC). And even if you attend, who you connect is luck and proximity. It’s arguably easier to connect online.”

“Let’s be real, so many team members would never have the access to hear these incredible speakers,” Mossor adds. “They really are the A-team.”

Kelsey Beth Carpenter, RVT even performed a conference concert.

Velasquez says, “When we put all this together, we chose not to partner with a VMX or industry—we were determined to do this on our own. I hope this demonstrates what technicians are capable of and what we have to offer. I hope this solidifies the message that as a profession we’re all in this together.”

Velasquez adds, “At this time, it’s easy to focus on the negative. So many of us—not only technicians—all of us in the profession may feel especially vulnerable now. I needed to do something positive for myself and for others.”

“COVID may have pushed us to do this—but our passion has brought us to an entirely new place,” Mossor adds. “And the response has been near overwhelming.”

When asked if the four techs plan on making the Vet Team Global Stream Conference an annual event, Feyrecilde doesn’t hesitate, “Heck yes. If we can pull off what we did in six weeks, imagine what we can do in 52 weeks.”

About Steve Dale

Steve Dale, CABC, has been a member of the Winn Feline Foundation Board of Directors for thirteen years. Steve is a founding member of the CATalyst Council, and serves on the Board of Directors of the Human Animal Bond Association. He’s a contributor to several books including The Cat: Clinical Medicine and Management, edited by Dr. Susan Little; and Treatment and Care of the Veterinary Geriatric Patient, edited by Dr. Mary Gardner and Dr. Dani McVety; and he edited Decoding Your Dog, authored by members of the American College of Veterinary Behaviorists. Steve is the host of three radio talk shows, and he speaks at veterinary and animal welfare conferences around the world. His website is www.stevedalepetworld.com.