

[MUSIC BED STARTS]

[Dr. Carter]: The thing about emergency medicine - I will see you right now for the emergency, take care of the problem, and then I don't ever see you again. The thing about everyday practice, I see you over and over and over again. You come in this year for vaccines and next year for vaccines. You come in this year for allergies, you come in next year for allergies. So I can develop that long term relationship with people. And I like both aspects of emergency medicine as well as an everyday practice.

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[SFX ONE]

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From WHJE, this is First Responders 411, getting you the inside scoop on first responders in and around Carmel.

[SFX TWO]

I'm Tatum Prati.

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[Tatum]: I've been working at Carter Veterinary Medical Center since March of 2017. I mop, vacuum, clean cages, walk dogs, feed dogs and cats, and give them medicine. The animals are there for various reasons from getting neutered to having their nails trimmed. But they are also there for emergency procedures. Animals have been brought in because of dog fights, getting hit by cars, and for several other reasons. I know hardly anything about the specifics of procedures that go on there. That's why I talked to my boss about his experiences with emergency medicine.

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[Dr. Carter]: My name's Doctor David Carter, Veterinarian at the Carter Veterinary Medical Center. I've been practicing for 35 years. Been in this facility for 27 years. I started my practice in veterinary medicine in a small animal practice, dog and cat. Wednesday nights, I started working with emergency medicine. So during the day, I worked as an everyday, what you might call general practice, small animal medicine surgery. And on Wednesday nights then, I went into and did emergency medicine. And I worked pretty much six at night to eight o'clock the next morning.

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[Dr. Carter]: The reason I became a veterinarian was because I like people, I like science, I like animals, and I like to teach. And I think those are all aspects of a veterinarian. The thing about veterinary medicine, it is a people business that deals with animals. The animals are owned by people, so I have to connect with the people. And then I can do the science. Then I can work with the animals. And I see a veterinarian as being a special kind of teacher. I have to take this scientific information, and I have to be able to tell you and teach you what's wrong, why it's wrong, what we're doing, why we're gonna do what we're gonna do, what we should expect, what to see if we don't see that, what are gonna be the consequences of what we're gonna do, and what could we look forward to in the future.

[Tatum]: What made him decide to go into emergency medicine?

[Dr. Carter]: I had an interest in emergencies. They're fun. You've got just a few minutes to make a connection with the people. And then you start working on the dog. You have to think quickly, you have to make decisions quickly, it's kind of fast-paced, you get the adrenaline going, it's fun, there's nothing routine about emergency medicine. And I do get some emergencies in an

everyday practice. So I still get a little bit of that. But that's really what I found interesting about emergency medicine - the variety.

[Tatum]: Blake Hamby is a student at Harrison College working towards being a veterinary technician. He is currently a veterinary assistant at Carter Vet. Like Dr. Carter, he enjoys emergencies.

[Blake]: They're exciting. I like to be moving around, always busy. So emergencies where I can run around and really help. I am thinking about after here, maybe, or while I work here, do part time in an emergency clinic just to get the experience because I like it so much.

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[Dr. Carter]: What types of emergencies come in on an emergency? It's the exact same thing as what you find in a human emergency room. You'll have all kinds of injuries, trauma, burn patients. You have cardiac arrest, heart attacks, strokes, shock, frostbite, fractures, broken legs. Dogs eat things, so you have poisonings, you have foreign bodies. You have all kinds of cuts and dog fights. You'll have birthing where a dog's pregnant and they can't give birth. And so now you have to do c-sections and birth babies, quote unquote. You have metabolic conditions where a dog's been diabetic, and now he's having a reaction to his insulin. You have all kinds of head injuries, electrocution. Just all kinds of the same kind of problems you have with people, you have with dogs. And that makes it kind of fun too because you have to be well-versed in all those different areas. And you never know what's gonna walk in the door when you deal with emergencies.

[Blake]: We've had a lot of emergencies come in. We get a lot of dog fights 'cause those have to be seen immediately. We've had a dog come in that was giving birth, so we helped... helped her

have her babies. We've had the same situation where that movie Marley and Me, that gastric dilatation-volvulus where their stomach flips. That's a pretty cool emergency.

[Dr. Carter]: What type of emergencies have I responded to? All of them. I responded to all of those 'cause there was time before I started practice here - like I say, I've been practicing for 35 years, 27 in this facility here. But there were several years where I actually managed an emergency clinic. And so I was actually a manager. And that was my primary job, was strictly emergency medicine. So if you do that day in and day out, you see all of these emergencies. So I've seen just about everything that you can imagine come in on emergencies.

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[Blake]: We had a dog come in. It was right before closing, and this poor dog got hit on the head with something. And it was bleeding a lot. We ended up having to do surgery on him. Whatever hit him cracked his skull, and we had to move that back. And it just made everyone feel good that we were able to help the dog, and the owner was very grateful for it.

[Dr. Carter]: I had a client who worked with exotic animals. And they had a lion cub that was born. As the cub was growing, his hips did not grow properly, and he had malformed hips. So I did hip surgery on a lion cub. That was fun, and that was really kind of interesting. And so I really enjoyed that.

[Tatum]: Despite enjoying the thrill of an emergency, there are some drawbacks.

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[Dr. Carter]: They can cut into your family time. Emergencies during regular scheduled office hours can be a little bit difficult because you got people who are scheduled with appointments, and yet you still have to take this emergency. And that can make it a little bit nerve racking. And some people don't like to wait. So that can make it a little bit difficult. But you have to do the

emergencies that come in. If it's after hours, well then that takes away time from the family. So veterinary medicine can be long hours which is probably the worst part of the job. Even though I like the emergencies, they can be a little bit inconvenient, quote unquote. But that's what emergencies are. Emergencies are not scheduled problems. They're emergencies.

[Blake]: They're scary. You get that adrenaline rush, but it's part of why I like this job so much is you get to right on the spot, help the client calm down and help the animal get better, and at least make them as comfortable as possible until a doctor arrives and can help them. Even after the emergency's done, I like to take care of the animals and just see their progress and see how they walk in in such bad shape. And then in a week or however long, they walk out perfectly normal and happy.

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[Tatum]: Of course Dr. Carter knows what he is doing and always does his best, but sometimes things don't go according to plan.

[Dr. Carter]: You use principles of surgery and principles of medicine. But not everything always responds according to the way that the book says it should respond. You don't have total control over everything. When a dog or cat is under anesthesia, there's a risk that they might not wake up.

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[Dr. Carter]: So you follow protocols, you follow your procedures. And we have very little problems. But there's only so much that you can control, and you're relying on the body. And when you rely on the body to heal, the body to respond, sometimes it responds the way you want and sometimes it doesn't. Saying that, veterinary medicine deals with more death and dying than any other medical field. There's not a day go by when I don't euthanize a dog or a cat. There's not

a day go by when I don't talk to a client about end-of-life situations and death and dying. So it is something that we as veterinarians deal with daily. Really, it's a big part of what I do everyday. It's a big part of what every veterinarian does.

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[Tatum]: I've been at the clinic when Dr. Carter euthanizes dogs and cats. And I've heard him talk to people about euthanizing their pets. And it's sad.

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[Tatum]: But like he said, it's part of the job. And there are so many other things that make it worthwhile, like saving a life during an emergency procedure. So despite when things sometimes go wrong or something sad happens, Dr. Carter continues to enjoy his career as a veterinarian.

[Dr. Carter]: Veterinary medicine's been very good to me in my 35 years. And it has met my needs, and it continues to meet my needs. So I've been very satisfied through the years. It's been a good fit. It's been a good career for me. I really enjoyed it.

[Tatum]: This has been Tatum Prati for WHJE. More stories like this can be found at [whje.com](http://whje.com).

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