

Llama, ducks and horses, oh my!

October 03, 2014 10:00 AM Alicia Duplessis Jasmin
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Students enjoy petting a llama on the Tulane University uptown campus as part of the Puppy Days and Petting Zoo Stress Relief event sponsored by the Tulane Academic Success Center on Wednesday (Oct. 1). (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

When first-year chemical engineering graduate student Jeremy Wright started his day on the Tulane University uptown campus, he didn't expect to cross paths with a llama named Llorenzo, a miniature horse named Lucky and sibling ducks named Daphne and Dorris.

But they and other animals were on campus Wednesday (Oct. 1) as part of the

Puppy Days and Petting Zoo Stress Relief event sponsored by the [Tulane Academic Success Center](#).

For three semesters, the center has been calling on the [Louisiana SPCA](#) and [Rowdy's Rascals Petting Zoo](#) to bring puppies and farm animals for students to pet as a mechanism for relieving stress before exams.

"We started bringing in the puppies first and they were a hit," said Brittany Summit, manager of the Academic Success Center. "I later found out about the petting zoo, and we've been inviting them ever since."

In addition to the stress relief provided to students, the Louisiana SPCA's participation also benefits the puppies.

"Being here allows these shelter dogs an opportunity to socialize with people instead of being locked in their kennels," said Beth Murov, an SPCA volunteer. The dogs are available for adoption.

Despite a stray rain shower as the event began, dozens of students made their way to the Academic Quad, many with puzzled faces.

One student asked, "Why are there goats and a donkey here?" Others didn't think twice about getting a once-in-a-blue-moon chance to take a selfie with a baby llama.

As for Wright, he says it was nice to stumble upon the event after class.

"I can imagine that this would help relieve stress because this is a lot of fun," said Wright, who most enjoyed holding Dorris, the eldest of the sibling ducks. "This definitely isn't something I get to do in my daily life."

The next Puppy Days and Petting Zoo Stress Relief event will take place Wednesday, Dec. 3, from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. in front of the [environmental sciences building](#).

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