

2022 ABVTA Technologist of the Year Award for Leilani Mustillo

I came across a quote the other day that really struck me. It stated, "Just because life gives you a cactus, doesn't mean you have to sit on it." Veterinary medicine has been handing out cactus's left right and center as of late, and there are some who seem to continually sit, and those leaders among us whom grab that cactus, place it on a shelf to admire, and learn to work around it.

Leilani Mustillo is one of those leaders.

After graduating from Olds College in 2009, Leilani's resume is as impressive as they get. She quickly worked her way up the ladder at the CARE center. She started in the ER and ICU, became the RVT supervisor, and eventual medical care manager. It was while serving this role that Leilani started to notice systemic problems in veterinary medicine. As a manager she was having trouble recruiting for full time positions, and staffing was a constant issue. Using her natural curiosity and ability to connect with people, she began asking and interviewing people to find out what was causing RVT's to leave the industry. Through the years, significant investments have gone to the question of why the attrition rate of RVT's is so drastic, but not many solutions have been offered. This is because although many people are willing to ask the question, very few are listening to the answers. This is not the case with Leilani.

She did not just listen to these problems, she produced a solution, and that solution is Animal Health Link. I have witnessed firsthand this company doing more for RVT's in one calendar year than any other singular effort made in industry in my lifetime. AHL is a game changer, it is providing meaningful employment for so many who would have otherwise left veterinary medicine behind.

Animal Health link would not be what it is without Leilani at the helm. This is the reason myself and approximately fifteen other RVT's nominated her for this award. It is because of her capacity to lead, her determination to constantly improve herself and those around her. Her compassion for her employees, coworkers, students, clients, and patients. She has an insatiable hunger for knowledge, Leilani is naturally very humble. She never assumes she knows more than someone else, and always gives you the benefit of the doubt without judgement. She is uncompromising when it comes to patient care and client education. Her diligence is unparalleled, and she is never satisfied with "good enough."

As an association we could not have a better representative for our profession. Leilani is an innovator, a leader, and a mentor. Please join me in congratulating the 2022 recipient of the Alberta Veterinary Technologist Association RVT of the year, Leilani Mustillo