



RLRI Canada 2026 Featured Speakers – Saskatoon, SK

Friday

Feb 13

Evening Challenge

Shane Rootes, CVM CEO

Shane Rootes serves as CEO of Christian Veterinary Mission, inspiring veterinarians worldwide to live out their calling where faith and skill meet in service. A transformational leader with more than two decades of global experience, he is passionate about advancing mission, mentorship, and impact through the veterinary profession. Shane brings over 25 years of global nonprofit leadership to the role. A visionary grounded in compassion, Shane has walked alongside communities in crisis, led cross-cultural teams, and witnessed the power of faith in action. He believes leadership begins with listening and that healing starts with presence. Whether in a remote village or a boardroom, Shane's heart beats for holistic care, courageous collaboration, and building what lasts. He's passionate about equipping others to live out their calling while guiding CVM's growth with integrity, humility, and bold vision. Now leading CVM into its next chapter of global impact, Shane remains committed to honoring the sacred mission of Christ-centered veterinary service; because love leaves a legacy, and service speaks louder than words.

Saturday

Feb 14

Dr. Jen Loewen, DVM, Diplomate ACVECC

Jen Loewen is an Associate Professor at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, specializing in emergency and critical care in small animals. She grew up in Winnipeg and did her DVM degree at the WCV. She then went to Iowa State University for a rotating internship and the University of Wisconsin-Madison for a residency before moving back to Saskatoon. In her free time she enjoys getting outside to garden, canoe and cross-country ski.

Dr. Ruth Maclean, DVM

Ruth is originally from Kelowna, BC. She obtained her B.Sc. from a St. FX University in Nova Scotia and Griffith University, Australia, and her master's degree in Equine behaviour at the University of Pelotas in Southern Brazil. She graduated from the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in 2024 and currently practices as a mixed animal Veterinarian outside of Regina, Saskatchewan.

Dr. Debbie Hoffele, DVM

Debbie graduated from Ontario Veterinary College and has worked full time, part time and as a locum in small animal practice in Ontario and Nova Scotia. Debbie and her husband, Stephen, who is a professor at Brock University, currently live in Fonthill, Ontario. She has been involved with CVM in various capacities and is also a member of the missions committee at her local church. She has travelled to several countries for short-term missions, but India has been the country that she has made the greatest connection with.

Dr. Becky Holvik, DVM

Becky served on the CVM Canada board for 18 consecutive years, finally taking a break in 2024! With a passion for students, she makes every effort to be at their events. This is not easy as she works as a small animal veterinarian (OVC Class of 1999), runs a hobby farm, and has a family of her own to care for. She has even managed to serve in Kenya on short term mission, and represented Canada on the CVM US board for a number of years.

Dr. Robert Darren Wood, DVM, DVSc, Diplomate ACVP

Darren has been an associate professor of veterinary clinical pathology at the Ontario Veterinary College since 2002 and is a 1994 Atlantic Veterinary College graduate. He has served as a faculty mentor for the OVC Christian Fellowship student club for the last several years. He grew up attending a Baptist church in Prince Edward Island but only truly became a Christian in 2015. In his spare time, he is an engaged member of Parkwood Gardens Community Church in Guelph and Downtown Guelph Celebrate Recovery and remains active with his family which includes his wife Chantelle, 3 young adult sons, and 2 permanent-foster cats.

Pastor Bliss and Jessica Steele

Bliss Steele and Jessica live in Lancaster, South Carolina, with their son and six dogs. Bliss has worked with teenagers and adults for nearly three decades in both the church and corporate world. He is currently the Sr. Corporate Chaplain for Nutramax Laboratories in Lancaster, SC, serving their 800 employees. Bliss uses his unique experiences from growing up on the mission field traveling the world, to serving in the local church, along with his years as a dog trainer to combine biblical truths and practical application showing what it means to be in an obedient and dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.

Lisa Balzer, CVM Canada Executive Director

Lisa came to CVM Canada in 2022, from long-term missions. She and her husband and their two children lived and served in Southeast Asia for 15 years, leading development work in community radio and refugee engagement. Her professional background is in broadcasting and international development, and she recently completed a master's degree in refugee studies. Lisa's family also has deep and life-changing ties to vet medicine, which brought her to CVM. She is passionate to see students and professionals supported and encouraged in school, in the workplace, and in missions. Lisa lives in rural Saskatchewan with her husband, Steve, and their dog, Delilah. And she is a delighted granny to her son's children. Email: Lbalzer@cvm.org

Saturday Evening Challenge

Dr. Kevin Winder, DVM

Kevin spent many years trying to figure out what he wanted to do with his life. Bible college, engineering, arts, and the many voices in his head led him through an education at the U of S, an Animal Health Tech diploma at Fairview College in northern Alberta, and then his DVM at WCVM in Saskatoon in 1998. He asked, and the girl he met in Fairview agreed to marry him. By the end of their time in Saskatoon, they had a family of three, and Kevin joined a mixed-animal practice in Drayton Valley, AB. Kevin and Ingrid remain in Drayton Valley where they can get to the grandkids quickly. He should soon have figured out what he wants to do with his life.

Sunday

February 15

Devotion

Adrian Holvik

Adrian has been married to Becky for 24 years. He is a supportive teammate 99% of the time and a grumpy blamer 1% of the time. Adrian's full-time vocation is helping Becky succeed at whatever cockamamie plan she has hatched or bailing her out of things she has been volun-chosen for. Adrian believes strongly in CVM as an organization and has always been impressed with the type of people it attracts. He has a blast at CVM events and is happy to support whenever he can. In his spare time, Adrian enjoys his job as a water resources engineer.

