Mr. Moo, a 9-month-old mixed-breed dog with a cleft palate, underwent surgery May 14 at Michigan State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Bryden Stanley, the college’s chief of surgery for small animals, teamed with MSU College of Human Medicine Associate Professor John Girotto, a pediatric plastic surgeon specializing in craniofacial surgery, for the operation. (Submitted by Greg Kohuth, MSU Communications)

**LANSDING**

**Little dog with cleft palate helped by human, veterinary surgeons**

By Sue Thoms
stomals@gmail.com

Mr. Moo, a little dog with a cleft palate, has inspired a unique partnership between veterinary and human medicine.

A pediatric surgeon assisted a veterinary specialist in an operation on the 9-month-old mixed-breed dog using a technique recently developed to treat cleft palates in children.

The results may benefit kids and puppies alike.

“Mr. Moo was particularly difficult because he actually had absolutely no soft palate at all,” said Dr. Bryden Stanley, the head of surgery for small animals at Michigan State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine, explained in a video about the operation.

A specialist in soft tissue surgery in animals, Stanley sought assistance from Dr. John Girotto, an associate professor in MSU’s College of Human Medicine and a pediatric plastic surgeon at Helen DeVos Children’s Hospital in Grand Rapids.

In the operation May 14, he used new techniques developed at the children’s hospital for repairing and lengthening the soft palate.

The operation was deemed a success, and Mr. Moo is doing well, said Kristen Flory, spokeswoman for the College of Veterinary Medicine.

Long term, the operation may benefit children because dogs grow so much faster than humans, the doctors said.

“We could look at the changes in dogs who had human-based palate surgery and see how they grow and expand,” Girotto said. “That’s a project that in our hospital takes 20 years, but at the veterinary school could be evaluated in four or five years.”

Combining human and veterinary medicine, MSU College of Human Medicine Professor John Girotto and Dr. Bryden Stanley, chief of surgery, small animal, at the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine, worked together on cleft palate surgery for Mr. Moo. (Submitted by Greg Kohuth, MSU Communications)

Mr. Moo waits for his operation to begin May 14 at MSU’s College of Veterinary Medicine. (Submitted by Greg Kohuth, MSU Communications)