



Antigua

Antiguan leads tech department's largest vet teaching hospital in NYC

By [Milette Millington](#)

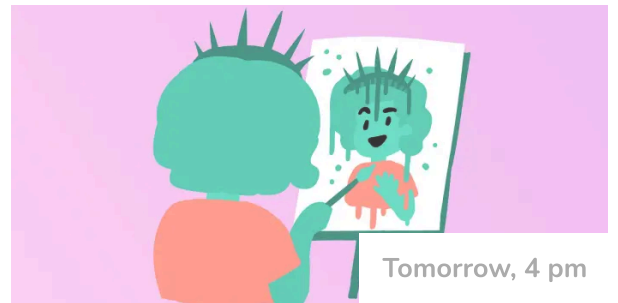
Posted on March 6, 2025



Camia Tonge, MS, LVT, VTS (SAIM), Director of Dentistry, Exotics, Interventional Radiology, Neurology, and Ophthalmology at the Schwarzman Animal Medical Center (SAMC).

CARIBBEAN EVENTS IN NYC

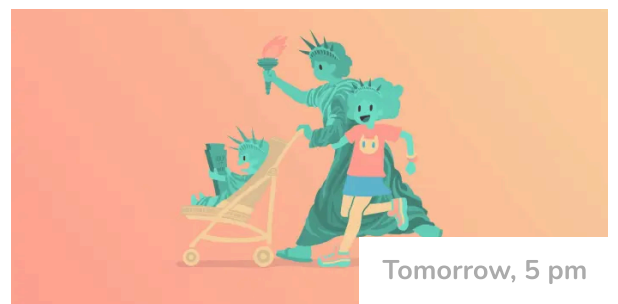
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Tomorrow, 5 pm

Pizza and a Movie Night

[53rd Street Library](#)



March 8, 3 pm



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Camia Tonge, MS, LVT, VTS (SAIM), is a first-generation immigrant from Antigua and the current director of dentistry, exotics, interventional radiology, neurology, and ophthalmology at the Schwarzman Animal Medical Center (SAMC).



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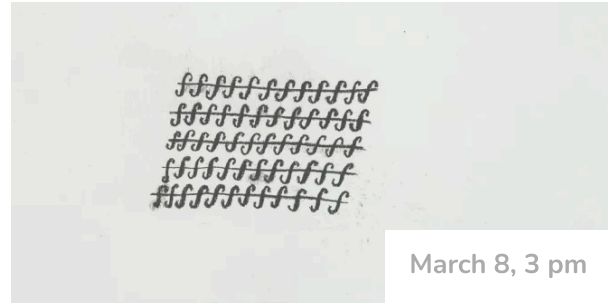
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People may be surprised to learn that Tonge enjoys spending time alone and is a big fan of Soca music. She shared how growing up in Antigua was very different from living in the US and how that experience helped shape her career.

“I was raised in a small, close-knit village where we had a bakery and a farm. We grew fruits and vegetables and raised animals. My life back home greatly influenced my love for animals. By pursuing a

Workshop Series

[Central Library, Queens Public Library](#)



March 8, 3 pm

Whitney Signs: Christine Sun Kim: All Day All Night

[The Whitney Museum of American Art](#)



March 9, 4:30 pm

Sing Out: Outcasts – Presented by AfterWork Theater

[14th Street Y](#)



March 9, 6 pm

New York Rangers vs. Columbus Blue Jackets

[Madison Square Garden](#)

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childhood while sharing my experiences and expertise with clients and those starting their careers in the field,” she said.



Tonge says her grandmother, Madrina Baltimore, has had the most significant influence on her path. “She embodies strength, love, motivation, and success, facing every challenge head-on with unwavering faith, love, and determination, “ she added.

Before getting her first position at SAMC in 2011 as a licensed veterinary technician (LVT) in Internal Medicine, Tonge participated in the veterinary program at **LaGuardia Community College**, which helped her learn the necessary skills since she had limited experience before she started.

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experience throughout the program, including externships and internships, allowed me to develop essential technical skills such as venipuncture, IV catheter placement, and various surgical and nursing techniques. I also gained valuable knowledge in client communication and education, which I utilized daily during my time at the AMC,” she stated.

In addition, Tonge was one of the first people in the tri-state area to receive a veterinary technician specialist (VTS) license in Small Animal Internal Medicine (SAIM), and according to her, this is one of the greatest accomplishments of her veterinary career. However, the process is not easy since it typically takes about 3 to 5 years to complete fully.

“I received the news during a shift in the Internal Medicine department at the AMC, and I was thrilled to celebrate this achievement with my mentors, supporters, and coworkers who



with this designation at the time filled me with pride and a profound sense of accomplishment,” Tonge explained.

In 2018, Tonge was then a clinical educator at SAMC, where she trained vet techs across hospital services to become confident LVTs. She was able to combine her passion for veterinary medicine with her love for teaching.

“During that time, I provided support and mentorship to externs, interns, and new Licensed Veterinary Technicians (LVTs) who were just starting their careers. I aimed not only to offer clinical training and support but also to serve as a mentor and role model for these new LVTs. I wanted to use



Tonge's role at SAMC has evolved over the years, positioning her to provide support and leadership to Licensed Veterinary Technicians (LVTs) at various stages of their careers. Because she has a strong passion for client education, she continues to incorporate this into her current role through ongoing education and lecturing.

“I am involved and supported, in any way I can, in numerous programs and career pathways here at the AMC. By elevating the profession and supporting LVTs, we ensure that both patients and clients benefit from the gold standard of care that credentialed technicians provide,” she continued.

Additionally, she is actively involved in associations such as the New York State Association of Veterinary Technicians (NYSAVT) and the Academy of Internal Medicine for Veterinary Technicians (AIMVT).

Tonge wants her legacy to focus on empowering and inspiring younger generations in Antigua through



“I believe that a strong foundation in education opens doors and fosters opportunities. I want to be a part of a movement that emphasizes learning as a pathway to success. Stories like mine of individuals from diverse backgrounds who have succeeded against the odds can be particularly impactful,” she stated.

Furthermore, she hopes to inspire younger generations in Antigua to dream big and work hard.

“I want them to know that their backgrounds, no matter how different, contribute to any career they choose. Ultimately, my legacy would be one of hope and empowerment, encouraging the next generation to build upon the foundations we lay today,” she said.

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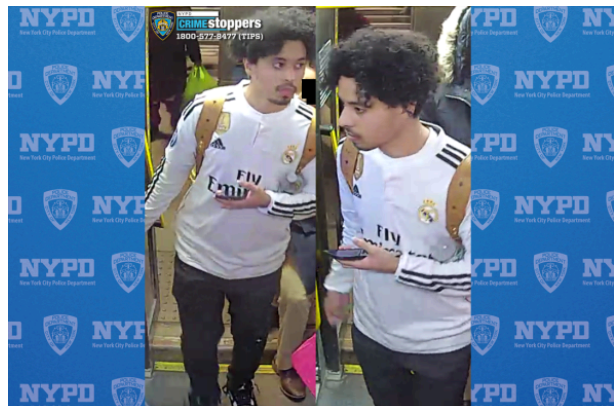
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