



THE KODIAK TAILS

saving lives, one dog at a time

A Four-Pound Chihuahua, A Big Surgery, and a Happy Ending



When Sianna Martin drove to PAWS Chicago and fell in love with Vernon, the animal-welfare group was so delighted that it waived the usual charges and handed over the four-pound Chihuahua for free.

Vernon, you see, came with a few strings attached. He was 10 years old, and while the breed is famously tough and long-lived, he was known for being a bit on the fragile side.

Sure enough, within two weeks, Vernon was getting skin and ear infections that required regular veterinary care, special food and medicated shampoo. That was no problem for Martin, a dotting dog owner with a background in health care who was working at a pet-food retail store.

After a couple of years, however, Vernon's problems escalated. He developed a mass in his ear, which became infected. Pus would get everywhere, and Martin was spending a

fortune on dermatology treatments. When Vernon started bleeding out of the ear and "screaming" when it was touched, she said, her regular vet sent her to experts at the University of Illinois. Turned out, Vernon needed immediate, complicated surgery.

"I had to schedule the surgery ASAP, and I did not have enough credit cards for that. I was crying. I didn't know what to do. When they told me they would nominate me for the KodiakCare fund, I was so grateful." - Sianna Martin

With backing from KodiakCare, a board-certified surgeon took on the sensitive task of removing the tiny dog's ear canal down to the middle ear and replacing it with skin where the exterior hole would be. The vets also addressed drug-resistant bacteria and yeast infections that had caused extensive fur loss.

During the first attempt at anesthesia, Vernon "crashed" as his blood sugar plunged, and he needed to be revived before the procedure could take place. After another period of fasting and preparation, Vernon was successfully put under and got relief for his painful ear ailment.

Dr. Jennifer Clegg is cautiously optimistic about Vernon's long-term future. "He doesn't have any other conditions we know of," said Clegg, a vet at the University of Illinois who has helped to supervise Vernon's care. "He's otherwise healthy and, yeah, Chihuahuas live a long time. I'm hoping he has good years ahead of him."

Still, he will need ongoing, regular care and, as Clegg noted, "He's an expensive little guy."

Martin is ready to give the little guy the TLC he needs. He is her frequent companion, "going everywhere with her" in a small travel bag and enjoying life now that his ear is fixed. "He is much better off," Martin said. "Every day he wakes up, it's a good day."



A huge thank you from the entire KodiakCare team to our donors! Thanks to your generosity we raised over \$10,600 dollars --which was matched dollar for dollar-- during our end of year campaign to equal over \$21,000 for dogs!

Thank you for helping us in our mission to save lives by funding critical care for dogs of families with financial need. KodiakCare has been able to give families and their beloved pets a future thanks to our supporters. Thank you!

KodiakCare Pupdate

KodiakCare donors have saved more than 315 dogs in our first two years of existence.

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