



# THE KODIAK TAILS

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SAVING LIVES, ONE DOG AT A TIME

APRIL 2022



## **Lean on Us: Great Dane Beats Heartworms with Help from KodiakCare**

True to their name, heartworms infest the heart and surrounding blood vessels, blocking blood flow to the lungs. Dogs infested with these spaghetti-like parasites can be saved, but the proper treatment takes months and it's especially costly for larger breeds.

That spelled trouble for Picasso, a Great Dane rescued by the Lawson family of Chicago, who faced a big, unexpected bill when the University of Illinois veterinary clinic diagnosed the mosquito-borne ailment.

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Fortunately, KodiakCare intervened, and now the 130-pound pup is heartworm-free and getting even bigger as his appetite returns.

“The cost of the medicine is weight-based. It was a big financial hit for us,” said John Lawson, Picasso’s owner. “It was not something we were prepared to pay for out of our budget. You really helped us out. Thank you.”

Picasso badly needed a fresh start. He spent his first year of life mostly chained to a pole in Arkansas, malnourished, unvaccinated and unneutered. It’s unlikely he ever saw a vet.

Picasso was rescued and taken to a foster home. When the Lawsons heard about his plight, they drove over 600 miles to meet him, and it was love at first sight.

The Lawsons had owned Great Danes before, and they were prepared for a hefty vet bill to cover the care Picasso had been missing, as well as an additional surgical procedure to protect him against a stomach condition common in the breed. The heartworm diagnosis came on top of those expenses.

To kill the parasites, the towering pooch received multiple deep-muscle injections of an melarsomine agent, along with pain medication and sedation.

“We had to keep him hospitalized and calm to ensure that he did not have any adverse reactions,” recalled Dr. Alyssa Kritzman, a U of I vet who helped to supervise Picasso’s care. “Without this treatment, Picasso would have been at constant risk for a heart attack, and now he gets to build a new life with his new family.”

Picasso’s treatment is now complete, and there’s no sign of permanent heart damage, Lawson said. He’s getting along with the Lawson’s two children and their other dog, Scully, and “wants to be in whatever room we’re in.”

He’s also doing a trick that the family remembers from their previous Great Danes: He walks up and leans against friendly humans who happen to be standing nearby. “The Dane Lean,” Lawson calls it. “You kind of have to brace yourself.”



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## **2022 Mutt Madness Surpasses Goal,**

### **Raises Incredible Funds for Dogs and Families in Need!**

KodiakCare is excited to announce our 2022 Mutt Madness Champion is Alfie, the two-year-old Australian Cattle dog mix, coached by his loving owner, Ashley Bullard.

Alfie is a rescue dog from Nashville, Tennessee. He was returned twice to an adoption center by previous adopters because of his rambunctious puppy behavior. Thankfully, Ashley found him and fell in love with the energetic puppy. Giving Alfie a home in Maine with lots of outdoor activities, she also gave him the patience and training he needed. She says Alfie loves the snow and water, but is obsessed with sticks.

For Ashley, Alfie has meant the world to her for the past two years. She was drawn to Mutt Madness and the mission of KodiakCare because she knows how lucky she is to have pet insurance and the means to save Alfie if ever confronted with a medical emergency. “If I ever lost Alfie, it would just destroy me. I can’t imagine what families who don’t have the means to save their pet have to go through. I can’t imagine being in that situation.” Ashley and Alfie raised over \$3,000 for KodiakCare, with Ashley matching donations made by family and friends. She intends to continue to contribute to KodiakCare in the future, helping more low-income families and their dogs facing medical emergencies.

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There is a lot of tail wagging happening at KodiakCare and our animal hospital partners, as Mutt Madness 2022 surpassed our goal of \$20,000, raising over \$26,000 for dogs in need! With 133 canine contenders and fur-raising contests that came down to the shot clock, thank you to all our participants for making this an incredibly successful event. Thank you to our contestants, and thank you to our donors for creating second chances and brighter futures for many dogs and their families.

From the entire KodiakCare team, our sincerest thanks to our supporters, including our presenting sponsor, Embrace Pet Insurance.

KodiakCare would also like to thank ISG, Friends of KodiakCare, The Hughes, and The Shapiro Family Fund, for funding our exciting challenges. We also send our appreciation to Dog Tag Art, Chewy, BarkBox, Fluff & Tuff, Up Country, LinearPortrait, and Cuddle Clones, for providing our amazing prizes.



**Thank You!**



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