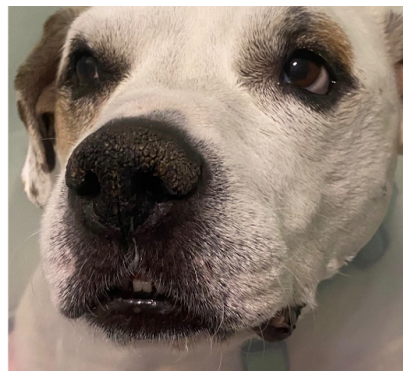




KODIAKCARE

THE KODIAK TAILS

JUNE 2020



KodiakCare Helps Save a Life

A new non-profit founded to help dog owners with veterinary bills comes to the aid of Kelley

As an experienced pet owner, John Haney knew that dogs eat practically everything. But he never dreamed that Kelley, his 9-year-old American bulldog mix, would almost die of an intestinal blockage after consuming birdseed.

Kelley is recovering at home after life-saving surgery that would not have been possible without financial support from KodiakCare, a new nonprofit that fills the gap between the cost of veterinary treatment and the amount dog owners can afford to pay. Haney is among the many dog owners who face an awful choice between taking on unaffordable medical bills and euthanizing or surrendering pets who otherwise could be saved.

The bill for Kelley's surgery and expert care at Angell Medical Center in Boston came to \$5,079, with part waived by Angell, part covered by Haney and a friend, and the rest paid for by KodiakCare. "I didn't want to put her down. I wanted to do whatever I could," said Haney, a grocery-store clerk in Boston. "She probably wouldn't be here if I hadn't gotten financial aid. Ten cents worth of birdseed cost over five grand!"

kodiakcare.org



KodiakCare was inspired by a beloved Bernese Mountain Dog who received life-saving medical care at Angell, just like Kelley.

“We decided to honor Kodiak’s life by helping families facing their own canine medical challenges, but who don’t have the financial means to extend the lives of their dogs,” said Glenn Shapiro, an insurance executive who co-founded the organization with his wife, Nancy, in early 2020. “Kelley is the first of many dogs that KodiakCare will help as we live up to our motto: ‘Saving Lives, One Dog at a Time.’ ”

The assistance from KodiakCare solved a problem for the veterinarians at Angell. “It’s a really hard dilemma: A dog needs to go to surgery, and we don’t have the money,” said Dr. Michaela Abugov, an associate vet at Angell who treated Kelley. “I always try to talk owners through all the options they have. People sometimes get upset at me, and all I’m trying to do is help. It’s everybody’s worst day.”

Intestinal blockages such as Kelley’s are among the most common animal emergencies, caused by pets eating everything from corn cobs, acorns and leaves to hair ties and socks. Once the blockages are surgically removed, the outlook for recovery is generally good, if appropriate care is available.

Kelley was hospitalized for four days at Angell, as Abugov and other vets tried to clear the blockage with IV fluids and other methods short of surgery. Haney deposited \$600 initially, then was asked to provide an additional \$3,500, which he could not afford.

“I had to come to the realization that maybe she’s not going to make it,” he said. The prospect was heartbreaking: Haney had rescued Kelley from an abusive home when she was just four months old, and the pair had become inseparable as the dog grew into a healthy 80-pounder. “She follows me everywhere. Even into the shower,” Haney said. “She’s the only one I’ve got.”

KodiakCare acted quickly to provide the needed funds for Kelley’s surgery, and her veterinarian was just as relieved as her owner. “It’s really nice to have that gift of life,” Abugov said.

Kelley is getting better by the day, and Haney has taken action to avoid a repeat of the birdseed incident, in the hope of giving his dog another five or six years of healthy life. “I’ve moved my birdfeeders into the front of the yard where she’s not allowed,” he said. “I Kelley-proofed everything!”



kodiakcare.org

