



THE KODIAK TAILS

KODIAKCARE

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KodiakCare Helps Vets Cope with Stresses on the Job

Veterinarians treat illness and injury in animals, but as any vet will tell you, there's a human side to the job as well.

Pets generally come attached to people, who in some cases react poorly to bad news, ignore sound advice and raise ethical dilemmas for animal caregivers. The people problems make veterinary medicine a [high-stress occupation](#) that can take an emotional and physical toll on practitioners.

KodiakCare's mission of saving dogs is helping veterinarians as well, by providing a solution when pet owners facing unaffordable medical bills believe they have no option except humane euthanasia for animals that otherwise could be saved. For veterinarians, the extra funding from KodiakCare can mean the difference between life and death for the dog, and between joy and heartbreak for the people involved – including the vets themselves.

Dr. Megan Kelley, of Boston's Angell Animal Medical Center, is no stranger to the financial difficulties pet owners face, and the hardship on all concerned when a loving pet is euthanized because an owner cannot afford needed care.

"It chips away at the soul a little bit when there is an animal you can save but for one reason or another you can't," she said. "It hurts. It haunts you."

After years in practice, Dr. Kelley has learned to cope with the stress involved, she said. "But I still take cases home and it weighs you down."

Dr. Michaella Abugov of Angell has learned to be up-front with pet owners about the cost of treatment, even if it elicits an angry response. "People sometimes get upset at me, and all I'm trying to do is help them," she said. "It is really, really hard. It's everybody's worst day. A lot of vets do struggle with it."

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Those struggles make KodiakCare’s “gift of life” especially significant, she said. Earlier this year, for instance, Dr. Abugov was treating Kelley, a dog with an intestinal blockage caused by eating birdseed, when she realized emergency surgery was necessary.

Kelley’s owner, John Haney, could not afford the procedure and was starting to lose hope when Dr. Abugov told him, “We’ve got something for you.” KodiakCare chipped in \$2,000 to put Kelley’s surgery within reach. “She probably wouldn’t be here if I hadn’t gotten financial aid,” Haney said.

Dr. Abugov remembers feeling relieved and seeing the relief on Haney’s face as well. “He was just in awe,” she recalled. “He cried, he was so happy!”

The Covid-19 pandemic has made connecting with pet owners more challenging, noted Dr. Kiko Bracker, who co-directs Angell’s Emergency and Critical Care Service. “It’s harder to get to know someone and convince someone of the gravity of the situation remotely.”

That distance doesn’t make the decisions any easier, said Dr. Bracker, and less-experienced vets must learn to cope with inevitable disappointments. “It’s tough to know you have a fixable problem and you have to stop short,” he said. “You look for ways to help. But you have to steel yourself against it or you can’t last long.”

KodiakCare is changing the decision-making process for veterinarians at Angell Animal Medical Center. Because of the substantial amount of financial aid that KodiakCare can offer, many previously unaffordable surgeries and pet care are now possible. Dr. Danielle Engel of Angell states that “we often hit a wall financially with patients. We are out of options. KodiakCare is something we can actually offer and actually use.”



ARMANI, SAVED JULY



BIGGIE SMALLS, SAVED JULY



ZOOKIE, SAVED JUNE



RONDO, SAVED JUNE



ALEX, SAVED JUNE



DIAMOND, SAVED JUNE



BELLA, SAVED MAY



KELLEY, SAVED MAY

A dark blue banner with a string of colorful lights (yellow, orange, white) at the top. The text is centered and reads:

Save the Date

BIDDING FOR BARKS

KODIAKCARE'S FIRST SILENT AUCTION
OPEN ONLINE
SEPTEMBER 21 THROUGH SEPTEMBER 27

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