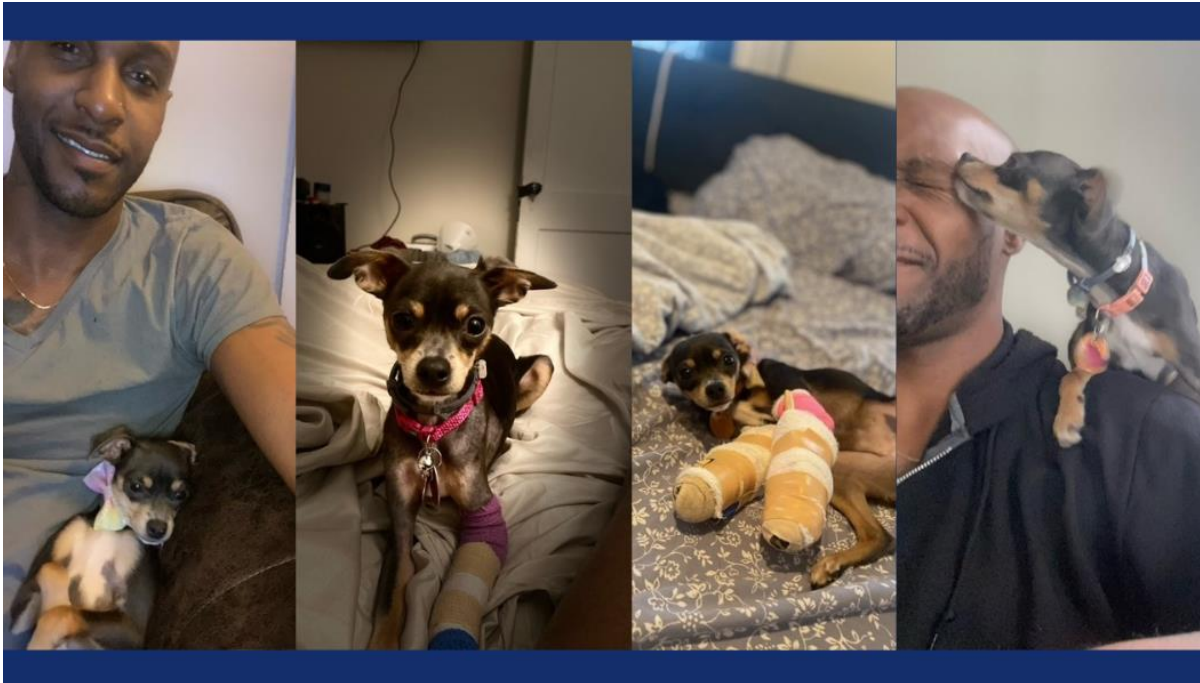




## THE KODIAK TAILS

saving lives, one dog at a time

### One Leg, Two Legs, *Three* Legs: Sweet, Little Pepper Overcomes Bad Breaks



Pepper's ordeal started when she took a routine leap off the backyard steps, as she'd done a thousand times before. She landed badly on the asphalt, breaking her front leg.

An emergency veterinary clinic put her in a bulky splint, and while Pepper was recuperating on the couch, she took another leap. Off balance, she again landed badly and broke the other front leg.

"She broke both her legs in a matter of three days," said her owner, Brandon Smart, a truck driver in Connecticut. "It's been a rough road for my Pepper girl."

Treating Pepper's first break had depleted Smart's savings, he said, and using credit

cards to pay for emergency treatment of the second break put him in a “financial spot.”

When he heard that Pepper needed surgery on both legs to set them properly, at an estimated cost of \$17,000, he turned to the Connecticut Humane Society, thinking he would have to surrender the dog. “I couldn’t care for her with my finances, and I hoped that someone else could.”

Fortunately for Pepper and her owner, Connecticut Humane helped to arrange a lower-cost surgery, relying on financial aid from KodiakCare. “I’m so grateful to you guys,” Smart said. “Without you, I would have lost her.”

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***- “I’m so grateful to you guys. Without you, I would have lost her.” - Brandon Smart***

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Pepper found her way to Town and Country Veterinary Associates in Vernon, Conn., where Dr. Gayle Block is known for providing care to needy pets across the area. She laments how rising costs have made even basic care like spaying and neutering or flea-and-tick treatments unaffordable for many pet owners.

Block recalls seeing Pepper still walking on her broken legs when she arrived at the clinic -- and still friendly despite what must have been serious pain. Pepper is a tiny Chihuahua-Italian Greyhound puppy, and between her young age and the long, thin legs characteristic of her breed, she was especially vulnerable to fractures, Block said.

Town and Country sent her X-rays to an orthopedic surgeon, who traveled to the clinic and performed the repairs, inserting screws and plates. After about six weeks, Pepper returned with one leg healing correctly, but the other re-injured. Another surgery was needed to replace the screws and plate on the left leg, with both the orthopedic surgeon and Block donating their time, she said.

Throughout the three-surgery ordeal, Pepper kept her friendly disposition. “Utterly amazing,” Block said. “She was happy through everything. Really, she is very sweet.”

Still not yet a year-old, Pepper has recovered, according to her owner, and travels everywhere with him, including to every state on the East Coast. She usually rides in a special satchel he carries along, he said, making friends wherever she goes.

“Her name is Pepper for a reason,” Smart said. “She is still the hyper, little, happy puppy. She’s stuck with me now!”

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