

Bellwether

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Cover Story

New Animal Bloodmobile Unveiled

The new Animal Bloodmobile was unveiled at VHUP on May 7. It was made possible by a generous gift from the Wurster Family Foundation. Bogie, a Labrador retriever owned by members of the Wurster family, was a VHUP patient whose life was saved by numerous blood transfusions.

The new vehicle is impressive with a length of 24 ft., a width of 8 ft. 4 inches and a weight of 7 tons. The Animal Bloodmobile, custom-built to the specifications of the Penn Animal Blood Bank team, consists of a Ford chassis with a V-10 engine and a custom-built body. The vehicle is equipped with a hydraulic exam table, a scale, a holding cage, sink and ample counter space for equipment. There are seats for three people. The new vehicle has storage space, including a compartment accessible from the exterior for dog food that is given to the donor's owners.

The new bloodmobile will be used for blood drives organized by breeders, dog clubs and veterinarians in the Delaware Valley. These drives are held two or three times a week. Blood is collected from 10 to 15 dogs that are brought by their owners. The donation takes just a few minutes and the dogs don't mind the collection. They are rewarded with a treat of meaty dog food and lots of pats on the head. The blood is brought



Bill Wurster "launches" the Animal Bloodmobile.



Bloodmobile interior.



back to VHUP where it is processed and separated into its components such as red blood cells, plasma and clotting factors. One unit of blood helps more than one patient. The blood and blood products are typed and matched to ensure compatibility between donor and patient.

VHUP's blood donor program has the motto "Pets Helping Pets" and began in 1987 to meet the need of the hospital's critically ill patients. The Penn Animal Blood Bank has grown tremendously over the years; since its beginning more than 3,000 dogs have participated. Currently close to 1,000 dogs from the Delaware Valley are active donors. It is the largest voluntary canine blood donor program in the nation.

The bloodmobile is a vital part of the hospital's lifesaving treatments for patients. Each day, more than 10 blood transfusions are administered to VHUP's patients.

To donate blood, a dog must be good-tempered, at least one year of age, weigh at least 50 lbs., be in excellent health and have current vaccination status. Those interested in having their dog donate blood should contact the Penn Animal Blood Bank at 215-573-7222.

Dean Kelly presents Bill Wurster with a plaque of Bogie to be placed in the Bloodmobile.



Bogie and Bill and Angela Wurster during the ceremony.

[University of Pennsylvania](http://www.vet.upenn.edu/schoolresources/communications/publications/bellwether/54/animal_bloodmobile.html) : [School of Veterinary Medicine](http://www.vet.upenn.edu/schoolresources/communications/publications/bellwether/54/animal_bloodmobile.html) : [Communications Office](http://www.vet.upenn.edu/schoolresources/communications/publications/bellwether/54/animal_bloodmobile.html)

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