PennVet
University of Pennsylvania

Your Compassion in Action

The impact of donor generosity through countless stories

Your compassionate support sustains our ability to excel in animal healthcare. These stories offer a glimpse into some of the ways that donor support and a deep, shared compassion for animals have made a difference.

Thank you for the transformative impact you make possible!

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Inspired by these stories? You can make an impact on veterinary medicine, the lives of beloved animals, and the people who care for them by clicking here.

A COMPANION IN DIFFICULT TIMES IS GIVEN HER OWN NEW LEASE ON LIFE

When Libby entered Charles Gill's life at eight-and-a-half years old, she quickly became much more than a companion. During his battle with end-stage liver disease, Libby gave him a reason to get out of bed each day. Charles shared, "I genuinely don't think I would have made it to transplant without her."

Years later, Libby faced a health battle of her own.

After she was diagnosed with aggressive oral melanoma, Charles feared he had only weeks left with the dog who had helped him through some of his most challenging moments. At Penn Vet, radiation therapy and immunotherapy halted the cancer's progression, allowing Libby to continue enjoying the life she loved.

After years of medical treatment and care, Charles was unable to afford another major procedure on a rapidly growing tumor on Libby's leg, threatening her quality of life. He reflected, "After all that she had been through, we were completely drained. Making ends meet, and not regretting anything we'd spent on our girl…but we were unable to spend more."

Through the generosity of Penn Vet donors, Libby was able to undergo surgery to fully remove the tumor. The procedure healed beautifully, with no recurrence, allowing her to return to full strength even at age 13.

"It's given her more time to remain active, comfortable, and happy. She's been a miracle, and in the five years she has been ours, she's proven to be the gentlest and most loving dog I've ever known. Every day we have with her is priceless."

—CHARLES GILL
a grateful client

Kaitlyn Windfeldt-Marino, V'29, featured with her horse Riley, shares just how impactful scholarship support is for students like her.

"Funding an advanced graduate degree can be extremely stressful. The generosity of compassionate donors makes graduating and paying off my education a closer reality. I am elated to have been given both the opportunity to study veterinary medicine at Penn Vet and the scholarship support to help me stay in school and graduate with minimal debt. I am excited to be empowered by the many opportunities at Penn Vet this year and to use my time here to drive myself towards a successful career in equine medicine, through which I can serve my community and live my passion."

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COMPASSION AND SPECIALIZED EXPERTISE AT RYAN HOSPITAL HELP A FAMILY'S NEWEST MEMBER

Ralph and Brenna Primavera were thrilled to welcome the newest member of their family, Capri Primavera. What came next was something no cat parent should ever have to experience: the threat of losing her so soon after bringing her home.

"When we adopted Capri from the shelter, we knew almost immediately that she was meant to be ours," they shared. "We fell in love with her sweet personality and especially her incredibly loud purr. We were overjoyed to bring our new kitten home, but within a few weeks, we noticed that something wasn't right. Her belly seemed unusually bloated, and she began vomiting frequently."

At only 12 weeks old, Capri was diagnosed with severe bilateral hydronephrosis and blockages in both of her ureters. Her kidneys had become severely enlarged and filled with fluid, and Ralph and Brenna were told that she might have only a few weeks to a month to live. "It was devastating news," they said, "but **we were not ready to give up on her**."

They were referred to the Penn Vet's Ryan Veterinary Hospital, where a team of specialists believed there was a chance to save Capri's life. Dr. Burneko, Dr. Mastorakis, Dr. Jo Na Youn, Dr. Advitha, and the entire surgical, radiology, internal medicine, and veterinary hospital teams took on Capri's incredibly challenging case. Her ureters were only about the width of a sewing thread, making the procedure extraordinarily delicate. **After extensive planning, the doctors performed a complex, life-saving reconstruction of her ureters.**

Living an hour and a half away from Philadelphia made Capri's two-week recovery especially difficult, but **"the care and compassion we received from the Penn team gave us comfort when we needed it most," Ralph and Brenna reflected.** "We received daily updates directly from the doctors about Capri's bloodwork, ultrasound results, how she was feeling, and the team's plans for her recovery."

Capri is now living the normal kitten life they were told she might never have. She loves playing peek-a-boo, jumping around like an acrobat, antagonizing her older brother Saint with whom she's become incredibly close, and cuddling with her family and everyone she meets. "We are endlessly grateful that we did not have to say goodbye to Capri that summer," Ralph and Brenna shared. "Her story is a testament to what is possible when extraordinary veterinary expertise, perseverance, and hope come together. We will forever be grateful to the UPenn Veterinary Hospital team for giving our little girl her second chance at life."

A NEW BOLTON CENTER TEAM'S BEAT-THE-ODDS SURGERY MEANS SURVIVAL FOR A SPECIAL HORSE

For Monty, a 10-year-old thoroughbred, the odds were about as bad as they get.

"Less than 10 percent" – those were the survival odds the gray gelding's owners remembered being told by several veterinary surgeons, shortly after they found him bleeding and holding up his front left leg in a paddock at Meadow Spring Farm

Monty had a compound radial fracture, with the radius bone protruding from his skin.

Monty was whisked to Penn Vet's New Bolton Center that evening. The next day, a veterinary team of three surgeons performed a complex, five-hour operation on Monty's broken leg, not like any other attempted before, including experimental materials followed by a recovery system unique to New Bolton Center, and more than two months in a body sling.

Today, Monty is back home at Meadow Spring Farm, standing on all four legs, regaining his strength and range of motion. Soon, his owners say, he'll be ready to return to pasture on his own again.

Monty's survival is a testament to the love and determination of Monty's owners, the teamwork and ingenuity of the New Bolton Center clinicians, but also one very special horse.