

Saving Gracie — An Angel Fund for Pets

Zeus and Gracie Seek Help For Beloved Pets in Trouble

Submitted by Diane Barney

Local pet lovers received a dog-gone unusual appeal in the mail this past holiday season.

It came from Zeus, a 3-year-old English/French bulldog who's a canine on a mission to raise funds for Saving Gracie, a Vacaville nonprofit organization that saved his life.

In the letter, he shares the terrible tale of how he ingested a Tonka truck that wreaked havoc with his intestinal system. The diagnostics would cost more than \$1,000, according to Zeus' mama, and the price quoted for the surgery was even higher.

Zeus' family couldn't afford it. His "mom" was seven months pregnant at the time, with two little ones in tow.

"My prognosis was grim and I was given 48 hours to live without an emergency life-saving surgery," writes Zeus.

After visiting multiple veterinary clinics, the family was alerted by a friend on Facebook who referred them to Saving Gracie, an Angel Fund for Pets, a 501c3 non-profit foundation that provides grants to families whose pets need emergency life-saving treatment.

"Thanks to Saving Gracie and the excellence of Pawsh Place Veterinary Center and Boutique in Vacaville, a grant was given and my surgery was a success," wrote a healthy and hearty Zeus.

Saving Gracie is inviting all pet owners to help Zeus and others like him by donating in any way they can. There are several options:

- Attend a spaghetti dinner on Saturday, March 24, at 6 p.m. at McBride Senior Center in Vacaville. Tickets are \$30 each (plus a \$2.54 fee) or a table of eight for \$240 (plus a fee of \$13.16) and can be purchased by visiting savinggracie.org. The spaghetti feed will feature the music of The Rhythm Method 4, food, drink, a silent auction, a dessert auction and more.

- Donate an item or gift basket for silent auction at the event.

- Make a tax deductible donation of any amount to Saving Gracie.



Saving Gracie is the brainchild of Vacaville resident Lisa Hilas, who says the love of a dog made a difficult childhood bearable.

In talking with local veterinarian Dr. Celina Hatt one night, Lisa asked, "What's the hardest thing about being a veterinarian?" and the answer surprised her.

"She told me it was having to put down young animals that could be saved but for finances. I was so saddened by this; it really struck me. Why should one baby live and another die because of money?" asks Lisa. "Not on my watch."

The furry face of the organization is Gracie, Lisa's almost 5-year-old

miniature Australian Shepherd. Fortunately, Gracie hasn't needed emergency care, says Lisa.

When an animal does need help, Dr. Hatt and her team at Pawsh Place Veterinary Center serve as advisers, evaluating each medical case when a family applies for a grant.

Lisa considers Saving Gracie as her love song to the community she adopted when she married and moved to Vacaville in 2008.

"We know families are struggling to make ends meet, and when their beloved pet is in trouble, there aren't many options," said Lisa. "We're trying to give them hope."