

Unemployed dog donations

How to save a Life

On Monday the 17th I arrived home to the usual chocolate kisses and wagging tail of my beloved chocolate lab Yojo. I noticed that he had a case of the hiccups which was causing him to move a little slower. Odd I thought, and kept a close eye on him for the next hour in which time he started to gag on occasion. Yojo and I had gone for an early morning hike so I did a firm body pat down and looked for anything unusual. He did not wince, whine or cry but enjoyed the attention wagging his tail the entire time. I fed him dinner and he was not interested in eating and noticed that foam was developing around his mouth. I called the vet and they advised me to get him there as quickly as possible and to drive safe. Yojo walked out to the car and got in on his own. As I am driving he is pacing the back seat and foaming more profusely letting out blood curdling cries at which time I am seriously worried. I continue to keep talking to him telling him that he is going to be alright. After breaking several traffic laws we safely arrive at the California Veterinary Specialists in Carlsbad. I open the back door and as Yojo is getting out he does a face plant on the sidewalk. At this point I carefully picked up my Yojo and ran in! The staff seeing my scared panicked face drop what they were doing and had me bring him straight back into the emergency room. Monday 10:30 pm.

Upon inspecting him they determined that air is leaking into his chest cavity and head slowly suffocating him. At this point there is speculation as to where the leak could be coming from, the trachea or the lungs. Is it possible that he ate something that tore a hole in his throat somewhere? They began with an IV catheter to anesthetize him and proceeded with an endotracheal tube (down his throat) to establish an open airway. Basically Yojo is now on life support and they are breathing for him. In addition, they used needles to pull out 6.5 liters of air that had accumulated in his chest cavity. I am out of my mind pacing the reception area waiting for an eternity for any word.

The bills are adding up quickly as every procedure is recommended I continue to throw my credit card down as time is of the essence. The doctor comes out and tells me that my sweet Yojo was less than moments from death when we arrived and that they are recommending an emergency surgery. It was explained to me that due to the prolonged hypoxia there was potential that some of his organ (brain, liver, kidneys, bowel etc.) could have been damaged and that even if he survives the costly surgery he may have other complications including brain damage. My heart dropped as I fought back tears! Yes...do the surgery no matter how much it costs...this is my boy!

Tuesday 12:30 am Yojo goes in for emergency surgery to perform a tracheotomy so that he can breathe and an exploratory incision in his neck about 6 inches long to try and locate a tear. In addition they inserted a chest tube on his right side to allow for the release of the air that was causing his lungs to collapse and slowly suffocate. At 4:00 am they inform me that they found no tear in this throat and that they need to do more testing to identify the source of the leak.

I am allowed to stand next to Yojo and pet his soft little ears in the ER for hours as they wait to get back the results of the tests. It is heart breaking to see him in such a state, a tube running down his throat, holes in his throat and chest, wires running all over the place and still no clue as to how he can be saved. I had to step outside several times to compose myself as I wanted to be there for him but did not want to add to the chaos in the ER by breaking down.

They performed a CT scan and a tracheoscopy with still no certainty as to the source of the problem; however the CT scan revealed an area of suspicion in his lungs. The Doctors now recommend another surgery in which they saw open his chest and examine his lungs. I am now presented with an estimate ranging from \$14,413.60 - \$19,367.65 with the possibility that my precious Yojo may still come out of this with brain damage.

The idea of living without his chocolate kisses and wagging tail in the morning waking me up is numbing to my soul. I have no choice...this is my boy! He is young and strong and our love is deep.

At 3:30 pm I kiss my boy's soft head and whisper in his ear "be strong", perhaps for the last time, as he lies unconscious on the operating table...my eyes well up with tears and my brave boy has proceeds to have his chest sawed open in hopes of saving his life.

Just as Yojo is going in for surgery I get a call from my roommate informing me that a neighbor had stopped by saying that he saw Yojo get hit by a car Monday night. Immediately I inform the doctors who are with him hoping that it may help them on their exploratory surgery. Why someone would wait 24 hours to pass on this vital information I will never understand. If only I would have known and got him to the hospital sooner! Would the risk of brain damage have been less?

After pacing for hours while waiting to hear how the surgery went the doctor emerges from the ER to report that Yojo had a punctured lung and they had to remove 10 percent. It was all up to Yojo now! They thought it best that I go home and get some rest as Yojo recovered and that I could see him briefly in the morning.

When I arrived in the morning Yojo was undergoing yet another surgery as the emergency tracheotomy hole was allowing air to get back into his chest cavity and head. Poor little guy. They had to go in and close the hole in his throat. Hours later I am allowed to see him for the first time since his series of surgeries. When I walk into the ER Yojo is in an oxygen cage and awake! He recognizes me immediately and proceeds to whine through every breath which breaks my heart. For this reason I am permitted to visit for short periods of time so that he can rest. According to the nurses he does not do this when I am not around.

As I approach the opening of his oxygen cage, slowly wagging his tail he tries to get up as if to say "I am ready to go home now dad!" I sit on the floor in the opening of his cage and shower him with gentle kisses as he very groggedly raises his head and gives me half a kiss to my face. His tongue does not go completely back into his mouth but hangs out of his closed mouth about half an inch. With tears in my eyes I gently put it

back for him. Yojo is in pain whining with each breath but is still very alert and his eyes follow anyone walking in front of his cage and he responds to other animals cries as if he could help.

I spend the next 7 days bringing home cooked chicken and rice three times a day as he is not a fan of the hospital food. Unfortunately I am only allowed to stay for short periods as he still gets worked up and whines. I even try crawling into his cage with him to see if he will lay down and sleep with his head on daddies lap which he normally does at home. Slowly, day by day he gets stronger and stronger and continues to think he is going home every time I open his cage.

After 8 days in the hospital and \$14,166.49 dollars later he is home and in good spirits! The hardest part is keeping him low key as he wants to go hiking and swimming in the ocean as we normally do.

I am so grateful to all the many friends and family who prayed for him. After an emotional week I have my special boy back and the chocolate kisses are plentiful.

This is hard for me but I have chosen to swallow my pride and ask for help. I have been unemployed for 7 months and have no idea how I will pay for this bill and am asking for donations through Labrador Harbor.

[Click here to MAKE A DONATION](#) button at the bottom of this page to donate directly to Yojo today! PAYPAL NOTE: Please indicate Yojo's name in the "comments" field on your PayPal payment.

<http://www.labradorharbor.org/labsinneed.html#paypal>

Thank you all for your thoughts and prayers!

With much Love...
Yojo's Dad