Helping Penne

Premier started as Premier Cats and Kittens focusing on feline needing assistance in Solano County. In the last couple of years, they added small dogs to their rescue efforts. We bring in small dogs from the shelter in Fairfield, come from assistance and owners surrendering. Sierra, a small red Chihuahua, came to us pregnant as an owner surrender when they were no longer able to care for her. Soon after her arrival, she had two tiny puppies, Prince and Zilla, born on July 31, 2015. Penne weighed 3.5 oz. and Zilla weighed 5 oz. Sierra was a great mom.

It was obvious from birth there was something wrong with one of Penne’s legs. Her right front leg was smaller and shorter than her left leg and had almost no hair. About two weeks, we took her to our vet who confirmed the deformity and suggested we watch it and decided what we would need to do as she got bigger. She did not demonstrate any pain associated with the leg so there was no rush. She is a spunky little girl and more outgoing than her sister. She seemed to take her disability in stride.

As she grew, the right leg also grew, but remained shorter than her left leg. Initially, amputation was discussed, but was three months later, we watched how Penne used the leg to walk, even run, and determined that amputation was not be necessary. At this point, we started looking into other options.

We began raising funds to help her care, knowing this was going to be an expensive journey. Gemonco endowed it is possible for us to make an appointment at Integrative Medicine at UC Davis. The Integrative Medicine Service is part of the William R. Pritchard Veterinary Medicine Teaching Hospital (VTH) at UC Davis. They provide physical rehabilitation, acupuncture, pain management, and palliative care for animals. They also develop devices to help with mobility and increase lifespan of the patient using orthotics and prosthetics.

Penne went for her appointment and enjoyed all the attention while the team worked with her. They did X-rays and found that the bone in the leg was normal up to the elbow joint. This ensured that amputation would not be necessary and an orthotic might be the best option. An orthotic is a brace that will help make up for the difference in the length of her legs and help keep the spine aligned. An estimate and treatment plan was created and we went home to consider the options. The estimate was $1,700-$2,500, which is a lot of money in any circumstance, but especially so for our small nonprofit. The VTH and the integrative medicine service generously donated funds to help create the orthotic for Penne. This funding is only possible through generous donations to our program. With their help and that of our kind supporters, we had raised all but $400 for her treatment so we decided to proceed with the plan.

Penne recovered from her second appointment so the team could work with her to strengthen the muscles in her leg, take pictures and measurements for her orthotic. They also made a cast of her leg that would be used to build the orthotic.

A few weeks later, her orthotic arrived and Penne returned to be fitted and try it on. She did very well for her first time wearing the device and was even able to walk around. Penne’s application will hopefully enable her to exercise and play like a normal puppy while protecting her malformed limb. Now that she has the orthotic, it will take time and physical rehabilitation to teach her to use the orthotic properly, like someone getting their first pair of shoes. She has taken to the orthotic rather quickly and was running by the weekend, so things are looking up for our Miss Penne. Once she is full grown, she will need another orthotic made for her.

You can contribute to her medical care by PayPal, premissionalmedicalrobotics.com, or by visiting Premier Boutique at 345 Main Street. The nonprofit gift shop is staffed by volunteers and the proceeds go back into our rescue efforts. Penne will be available for adoption this spring, but they had more success with her at the vet at UC Davis Integrative Medicine. Come and meet her and other adoptable animals at Petco in Vacaville from 11 am – 3 pm on Saturdays and 12 – 3 pm on Sundays.

Penne’s treatment team: Jamie L. Poynter, DVM, DACVECC, CCRP, Technicians Cathy Bohr, RVT, CCRP, and Kristie Vinke. Samantha Hest, and 4th year veterinary student, class of 2015.

You can contribute to Penne’s care via PayPal at premiumanimalrescue@gmail.com or at a donation to Premier Animal Rescue PO Box 1663 Vacaville, CA 95689. You can reach them by phone at 707-382-4601.

Premier Boutique is located at 345 Main Street in Vacaville.

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