

Family turns to online fundraiser to help save pet

By [Kate Elizabeth Queram](#)

Kate.Queram@StarNewsOnline.com

Published: Wednesday, June 11, 2014 at 4:42 p.m.

There's a knock at the door of Lindsay Blosser's apartment, and her puggle Louis tumbles out of his crate, his curlicue tail wagging so hard that his whole back end wriggles back and forth. The 7-year-old pug-and-beagle mix looks and acts like a healthy, happy dog, but Blosser knows better. Once he ventures outside to go to the bathroom, that will change.

"It is very painful for him. He just yelps when he goes sometimes," said Blosser, a 26-year-old stay-at-home mom to 2-year-old Lucy and 1-year-old Milo. "But every other part of his day is fabulous. He wags his tail. He cuddles. He loves everything. But he can't run, and he can't exercise. He can't go to the beach. We can't take him anywhere."

Louis' pain is caused by a large mass inside his rectum, a problem that Blosser and her fiance Matt Allison first noticed in 2009 when a bit of blood appeared in the dog's stool. The mass may be benign or it could be cancerous; Louis' veterinarians won't know that, or how far it extends in his body, until they open him up to remove it. The surgery will cost between \$3,200 and \$3,800, money the couple simply don't have. But they may be able to afford the procedure, depending on the outcome of an online fundraising campaign hosted on the website of the Magic Bullet Fund, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping cash-strapped families pay for canine cancer treatments.

The fund was founded in 2005 by New York resident Laurie Kaplan, whose dog Bullet was diagnosed with lymphoma. Kaplan, then working as a medical animal writer, was able to get Bullet the chemotherapy he needed, and the dog survived for



Photo by Mike Spencer

Lindsay Blosser holds her dog Louis, who has cancer, at her home in Wilmington on Wednesday Blosser is raising money for for the cancer treatment through the Magic Bullet Fund organization.

nearly five years in remission. But Kaplan realized that not all families would be able to afford treatment for pets in similar situations.

"I started searching for a fund that provided financial assistance, and I couldn't find one," she said. "So I created this one."

Since 2005, the fund has paid roughly \$340,000 to help care for 310 dogs, raised online at a rate of between three and six dogs per month. Owners apply for assistance and must provide their most recent tax return and a bank statement to verify that treatment is actually beyond their means, and not just a financial inconvenience (for example, a family that could afford canine chemotherapy, but only at the expense of a new car). If owners qualify for assistance, their information is forwarded to a case manager, who contacts the family's veterinarian to confirm the dog's diagnosis and get a projected cost of treatment and a prognosis.

"The dog, with treatment, must have a good chance of getting an extra year of quality life," Kaplan said. "I think less than a year, I would feel like I wasn't using the money wisely."

After being approved, each dog's story is listed on the Magic Bullet Fund website with photos, a donation link and a running tally of the money raised and the amount still needed. Donations go directly to the treating veterinarians. Dogs remain on the website for 30 days, and families are encouraged to share their pet's page, though Kaplan helps raise funds by sending monthly emails to past donors.

Louis' page expires June 23. As of Wednesday morning, donors had contributed \$958 to his surgery. He still needs \$1,537. Blosser and Allison can't schedule Louis' operation until they've raised the full amount. Their veterinarian called Monday to recommend euthanasia if they can't afford the procedure.

"It's really hard for me. We're so close to our goal," Blosser said. "I just feel like Louis' life is worth more than throwing the towel in. I want him to experience this new life with our family, because he is a part of our family."

Kate Elizabeth Queram: 343-2217

On Twitter: @kate_goes_bleu

Copyright © 2014 StarNewsOnline.com — All rights reserved. Restricted use only.