

An Extra Thankful Thanksgiving

Thanksgiving started off in the usual fashion- slept just a tad later, anticipating a delicious meal, then watching the National Dog Show (and some football too). We decided to stay home and have dinner with our neighbors as the holidays tend to be busy for the ambulance- don't emergencies always seem to happen on holidays?



The call came in around 11:00 AM. Sean called and he was crying. He and his wife's 5 year old, 5 pound Yorkie was in critical condition at a Veterinary Emergency Hospital in Winter Haven, Florida. She had been there 2 days and wasn't getting any better and needed emergency surgery. Their dog, Yoda, had an almost completely collapsed trachea and could not be off of oxygen for even minutes. They were referred to The Veterinary Hospital at Florida's College of Veterinary Medicine in Gainesville because they do that specialized type of surgery.

Knowing that they had to find a service that could transport Yoda on oxygen, Sean began researching to try to find an animal ambulance. Because Vet Care Express Animal Ambulance is the only service of its kind in Florida, Sean contacted us. Because of the distance and Yoda's fragile condition, I was concerned for her chances to survive such a long transport. While speaking further with Sean, I learned that they were from Atlanta and were here visiting their son for the holiday when Yoda became ill. Realizing this, I asked if they had reached out to a closer Specialty and Emergency Veterinary Hospital, called Blue Pearl in Tampa. Although Winter Haven is out of our normal service area, I told them that if Blue Pearl could do the surgery, we would go to Winter Haven, pick up Yoda and transport her in a specially designed oxygen box to Tampa. Although it was still going to be a critical transport, I was much more confident that she could make the trip with no complications.

Within an hour, arrangements were made and we were on our way to Winter Haven. We met Sean and his wife, Anne, there. With great care and careful coordination, we got Yoda acclimated and settled in for the 1 1/2 hour trip. We monitored her closely and updated Sean and Anne along the way with her status. She did very well along the way, did not get anxious and we arrived safely at Blue Pearl with no complications. Yoda was evaluated, had surgery that evening to insert a stent, and was released the next day.

Two days later, the whole family was back in Atlanta with Yoda on her way to making a full recovery. Sean and Anne were so grateful that we were able to help them in this situation- using the ambulance really was Yoda's only chance for survival and as Sean said- they just couldn't bear even the thought of having to put their 5 year old dog down. In Sean's words, "thank you for giving us our dog back."

We are so thankful to be able to help in this kind of situation - it just reminded all of us again of all of the things that we have to be thankful for. For us at Vet Care Express Animal Ambulance, this was our most thankful Thanksgiving yet!