

Volunteers help dog with 'puddle problem' get corrective surgery in Florida

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GRAND RAPIDS -- All the house training in the world would not have solved Maya's puddle problem.

The 16-week-old rat terrier's leaky pipes are responsible for her random ... outbursts.

"It's a mess," said 56-year-old Kay VanderBaan, of Kentwood. "Because she's little, we just kind of follow her around and clean up after her.

"She's the sweetest puppy. She just loves everyone."

Maya suffers from ectopic ureters, a urinary tract abnormality that causes urine not to empty properly into the bladder.

The puppy drips uncontrollably, and it's made her sick. Infections, rashes and bleeding are common, VanderBaan said.

VanderBaan and her daughter, 31-year-old Renee Henry, of Kentwood, fostered the pooch through Newaygo-based [Lake Haven](#), an all-volunteer, nonprofit animal rescue agency.

The dog's original owner surrendered Maya, her mother and her three siblings to the organization, citing financial concerns, director Cheryl McCloud said.

Maya's fix is neither cheap nor simple.

Unfamiliar with the procedure, area clinics would not touch it, VanderBaan said. Michigan State University's vet clinic could do it, but it would be pricey.

"We were looking for options," McCloud said. "If I couldn't have found another option, I would've ended up spending \$4,000.

"That would've resulted in us not being able to help a lot of other" animals.

Lake Haven volunteer Kathy Brown, 43, of Kentwood, looked for an alternative. She contacted Seminole, Fla.-based [Ratbone Rescues](#) Inc., a nonprofit which specializes in rat terrier rescues.

The group said one of its affiliated veterinary surgeons could help Maya, Brown said.

But transportation also was an issue.



Courtesy Photo. Renee Henry, of Kentwood, holding Maya, met Scott Peters, a Chicago-area pilot for United Airlines, at Gerald R. Ford International Airport on Friday.

So, Brown wrote to [Animal Rescue Flights](#), a group that helps connect animal shelters with pilots willing to fly pets where they need to go to get help.

Henry, her 3-year-old son, Jackson, and Maya on Friday met with Scott Peters, a Chicago-area pilot for United Airlines, at Gerald R. Ford International Airport. Peters agreed to fly the puppy to Florida for surgery and to find her a new home.

"It's a good thing she's going to get the help she needs," VanderBaan said.

Since Maya is small -- roughly five pounds -- there was no cost to board her, Henry said. She qualified as Peters' carry-on tote.

Henry plans to follow up with Ratbone on Maya's surgery.

The experience is tough on Henry and her mother, who wanted to adopt her, she said.

"It was hard," Henry said. "Very hard. We had her since she was five weeks old."

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