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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**G**reetings! We hope your Westies are doing well. The Westie Foundation of America's Board of Directors met for its annual meeting on Wednesday, October 1, 2024, at 9 am EDT in the conference room of the Hilton Hampton Inn Exton, Exton, PA. Business included the approval of the 2026 Budget, financials, grants, and Committees' projects.



Bebe Pinter President

We welcomed new director Joanie Flynn to her first in-person meeting of the Board of Directors. I would like to personally thank Dr. Robert McCaskill, Randy Cantrell and Susie Stone for having participated on the board and Dr. McCaskill for his transition to the Advisory Council. We will also miss Jared Sporleder on the Advisory Council. We will miss their guidance. In addition, welcome Dr. McCaskill for his transition to the Advisory Council. We will also miss Jared Sporleder on the Advisory Council. During the board meeting, Directors received updates on the status of the two donor designated endowments, current grant studies and projects including but not limited to: National Institute of Health/University of Tufts (Pulmonary Fibrosis); The Rametrix Technologies, Inc. Cancer Study (Cancer); The University of Zurich Atopic Dermatitis Grant; The University of Cornell Use of DNA from the WFA Biobank for Legg Calves Perthes research; The Westie Foundation of America Biobank (WFA Biobank); and The Westie Health Book Revision 2025. In the scholarship arena, the Board celebrated the news of the first scholarship awarded through the University of California Davis WFA/Thomas and Roxanne Austin Veterinary Scholarship (page 17), the Board approved \$20,000 to award for postgrad veterinary scholarships in 2026. A meaningful research program enables the breakthrough solutions to health problems and terminal illnesses affecting our Westies. If there is a cause for which you are passionate, consider the WFA as a means of fulfilling your passion to enable Westies to live longer, healthier lives. We can provide options for consideration. Please let me know how we can help to harness your purposeful generosity.

This is a hefty, fact-filled Westie Wellness Newsletter consisting of 32 pages. We hope you find it as interesting as we did while developing it for you. In this issue, our own Dr. Kay McGuire does not disappoint in her "What's News On the Health Front" column, "How to Compare Genetic Tests". She says, "the question is whether the larger profiles are necessary for our breed..."

(Continued on page 2)

(President's Message continued from page 1)

**Take a few minutes to read “Detecting Westie Health Problems with Raman Molecular Urinalysis (RMI)”.**

An update of this project is presented by Dr. John Robertson. The concept is cancer detection in dogs and people to include other health problems. Please contact Dr. McGuire if you would like to participate after reading about the project on page 4.

**“Bindi’s Story”** has a happy ending. Deborah Borgo takes us along for the journey that happened to her Westie Bindi, and what actions Deborah took to bring Bindi home and to care for her. Aftermath: Since the writing of the article, Deb reports that Bindi has turned four years old. She has since added to an impressive list of performance titles and is now Borgo’s Bindi From Snowy River CD BN RE SE SWA SCM SEE SBE RATCHX CZ8B CGC TKI. Bindi has also ventured into the conformation ring with winning results towards her champion title.

Linda Cesare-Traub shared the personal story of her dear Davey in **“Losing Davey”**. Although you may not have heard of this disease, this story is to alert you and to make you aware. A necropsy is the best method to determine the exact cause of death. Thank you, Linda, for sharing Davey with us. Our hearts are heavy with yours.

**“Sick Sinus Syndrome in Dogs”** is written by Susie Stone, retired WFA director. Susie explains her experience with her lovely boy Gunny to obtain a pacemaker starting from diagnosis of Sick Sinus Syndrome to surgery and to long-term pacemaker care. Thank you, Susie, for sharing your and Gunny’s exceptional journey.

Valerie A. Fadok, DVM, PhD; Diplomate, ACVD, does not disappoint with her latest article **“A New Way to Deliver Allergy Immunotherapy to Your Dog”**. Dr. Fadok discusses the latest in care of allergies! Dr. Fadok is a WFA director.

**“Summary: Investigation on the Vitro Effects of Resveratrol on Peripheral Blood Mononuclear Cells Harvested from Healthy and Atopic Dogs”** is a summary of the final report of the study by Dr. Domenico Santoro, University of Florida College Veterinary Medicine. Dr. Fadok provides an overview of the findings of the study. She said, “Cells from healthy dogs tended to be healthier...” and that “It is important to realize that while these are negative results, they are still very valuable.”

**An important press release “Westie Foundation Expands Canine Clinical Trial in Response to Worldwide Interest”** was written by Teresa Barnes, Vice President Communications. The WFA is a global, non-profit organization focused on improving the health and wellbeing of all Westies. Pulmonary Fibrosis in Westies is a terminal disease and is found in Westies living in other parts of the world.

**Another important press release “First Scholarship Awarded in New Veterinary Scholarship Program”** allows us to celebrate our valued relationships with generous benefactors and the University of California Davis Veterinary School. We thank Tom and Roxanne Austin for sharing their vision with us. Working together, the scholarship program has become a reality.

**On behalf of the Board of Directors, we wish to thank our valuable donors who have chosen and gifted the WFA as their charity during 2024.** If you would like to be included, you may contact Jim McCain, Donor Manager at [donormanager@westiefoundation.org](mailto:donormanager@westiefoundation.org) or visit our website [www.westiefoundation.org](http://www.westiefoundation.org) for assistance. In addition, I would be delighted to visit with you about what the WFA has accomplished, major projects and research underway, as well as ways you may volunteer if you are interested. My email is [president@westiefoundation.org](mailto:president@westiefoundation.org).

**“Financial Report—Fiscal Year 2024”**--Once again, we are proud that Program Services represents a robust 96% while Management (2%) and Fundraising (2%) are closely monitored. We are enormously proud of our investment subcommittee’s members who closely monitor the investment portfolio to ensure it complies with the WFA Investment Policy.

The annual study progress report **“Fecal Microbiota Transplant for Treatment of Canine Atopic Dermatitis”** written by investigators Ana Rostaher and Nina Maria Fischer, University of Zurich, Dermatology Unit, continues to reflect the promise we had hoped. The Observation Study consisted of comparative study between healthy and atopic Westies, analyzing the gut microbiota composition. Double-blinded placebo-controlled study followed that included 40 dogs. First publication was just accepted this year with additional publications and studies to follow.

**“Where Are They Now?”** by scholarship committee chair Dr. Valerie Fadok provides a progress report on past scholarship winner Chie Tamamoto-Mochizuki, DVM, PhD, Diplomate, AiCVD. She is currently an assistant professor on the veterinary faculty at the University of Tennessee. She teaches veterinary students how to diagnosis and treat skin disease in dogs and cats.

**Finally, a couple of articles are included that you may find helpful:** (1) “What is an Endowment and How Does it Help the Westie Foundation of America?” by Gary C. Sackett, WFA Treasurer and (2) “Let The IRS Help” by Thomas Barrie, WFA Director. If you have any question or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. For a little fun, don’t forget to play our “Westie Allergy Word Scramble” on page 30.

Thank you for your continued involvement and support of the WFA but most of all, your love of Westies!

**Questions? Comments? Suggestions? [www.westiefoundation.org](http://www.westiefoundation.org) 1-888-928-3843**

The opinions expressed in the articles herein are those of the authors and not necessarily of the editor or the Officers or Directors of the Westie Foundation of America, Inc. (WFA). The WFA does not sell, endorse or promote products or services discussed in the newsletter.

# What's News On the Health Front?

By Kay McGuire, DVM

## HOW TO COMPARE GENETIC TESTS

The West Highland White Terrier Club of America began recommending a few health screens for the qualification of a CHIC (Canine Health Information Center) registry. The four required health tests for Westies to earn a CHIC number are hip radiographs to screen for hip dysplasia, an ophthalmic examination to rule out inherited eye diseases, examination of the dog's patellas to rule out luxating patellas, and finally the genetic test for Craniomandibular Osteopathy (CMO).

There are several labs that offer the CMO test both individually and combined with other genetic tests. Please find a comparison below between GenSol, Embark and Wisdom panels. The question is whether the larger profiles are necessary for our breed as many of the tests on the panel are not relevant to Westies.



Kay McGuire, DMV, MS

	GENSOL	EMBARK	WISDOM	OROVET
• Fully customizable breed Specific health & coat panels	Y	N	N	N
• Non customizable health only Panels	N	N	N	N
• Non customizable coat-only Panels	N	N	N	Y
• Results available within 48 hrs after sample arrives	Y	N	N	N
• Individual tests available	Y	N	N	Y
• Single test under \$30	Y	N	N	N
• Test all conditions irrespective of Breed	N	Y	Y	Y
• Only test breed relevant condition	Y	N	N	N

Once the genetic test is complete, a form on the OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) webpage can be printed and mailed with a \$15 recording fee to OFA for inclusion in the on-line database. If the CMO test is performed at GenSol, they have a form to complete and with the addition of the \$15 recording fee, will be forwarded to OFA.

# Detecting Westie Health Problems with Raman Molecular Urinalysis (RMU)

## An update on progress – June 2025

*John Robertson VMD PhD*

Detecting health problems and providing effective treatment for these problems is a top concern for all Westie owners. A multiyear project, aimed at developing a new method for health screening and disease management is underway, sponsored by the Westie Foundation of America.

This project is led by Dr. John Robertson, one of the original authors of the Westie Health E-Book and a lifelong advocate for Westie health. When he recently retired from Virginia Tech, he founded a company, Rametrix Technologies Inc. ([www.rametrixtech.com](http://www.rametrixtech.com)) that focuses on developing a urine-based screen for detecting health problems and seeing if treatments are working.



The screen is called Raman Molecular Urinalysis (RMU). RMU has been applied not only to cancer detection in dogs and people, but to other health problems, including kidney failure and diabetes. RMU works by detecting the molecular composition of urine (thousands of different molecules) using Raman spectroscopy and spectral pattern recognition ('fingerprinting'). Urine samples can be analyzed within 15 minutes of collection. Spectral patterns ('fingerprints') can be compared to thousands of other fingerprints in the sample database of urine from clinically healthy dogs and dogs with health problems.

Scientific papers describing RMU use can be found at (<https://rametrixtech.com/resources/>).

In order to detect health problems, it is critically important to have many (hundreds) of urine specimens from clinically healthy dogs. Kay McGuire and Bebe Pinter, working with members of John's Team, have collected over 100 urine samples from healthy dogs and dozens of urine specimens from Westies with health problems. We collectively know we need to hit a 'magic number' (for computational analysis) of urine samples from 250 clinically healthy dogs and at least 250 dogs with health problems (any health problem – cancer, allergy/atopy, IPF, etc.) to validate the test for Westies. John already has secured samples from clinically healthy Bernese Mountain Dogs (a breed with a huge cancer problem – soft tissue sarcoma, lymphoma) and Golden Retrievers (another breed with huge cancer problems – lymphoma, hemangiosarcoma) for comparison with Westies and samples from other breeds.

Working with members of the WFA, John and his Rametrix Team would like to collect urine from more Westies. John developed a mail-in kit for owners that was available by late July 2025. WFA is sponsoring the collection of the first 250 clinically healthy dog screens and 250 screens for dogs with health problems – so there will be no cost to owners submitting samples on the current project. Once fully validated, WFA and Rametrix Technologies Inc. have an agreement to provide screening for dogs at a minimal cost (about the cost of a standard urinalysis at a veterinary clinic).

Reach out to Kay McGuire and John ([robertsonj@rametrixtech.com](mailto:robertsonj@rametrixtech.com)) if you have questions and would like to be involved.



## Bindi's Story

By Deb Borgo

Bindi went missing on October 11, 2022

# LOST **White** DOG

## Have You Seen Bindi?

Went Missing Tuesday, October 11th



**Shy & Frightened...  
Please Do Not Chase.**

**Very Shy ~ WHITE ~ Female  
West Highland White Terrier**

Please CALL/TEXT if you have seen her or have ANY information.

**Phone Number**

**REWARD**  
for her SAFE recovery or return



She apparently saw a squirrel in the back and went through the screen on the porch. Neighbors saw her and alerted me, but by the time I got to her last known location she had vanished.

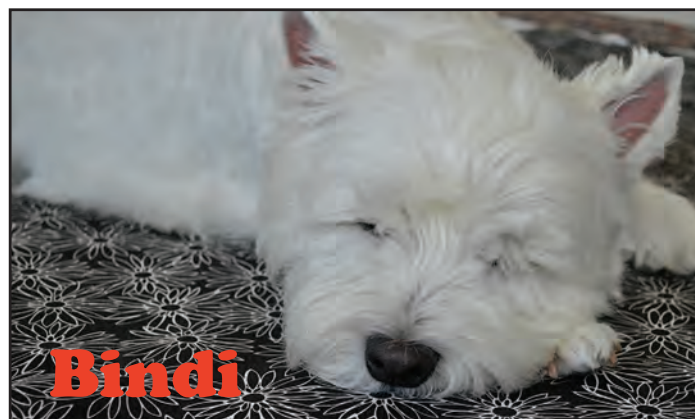
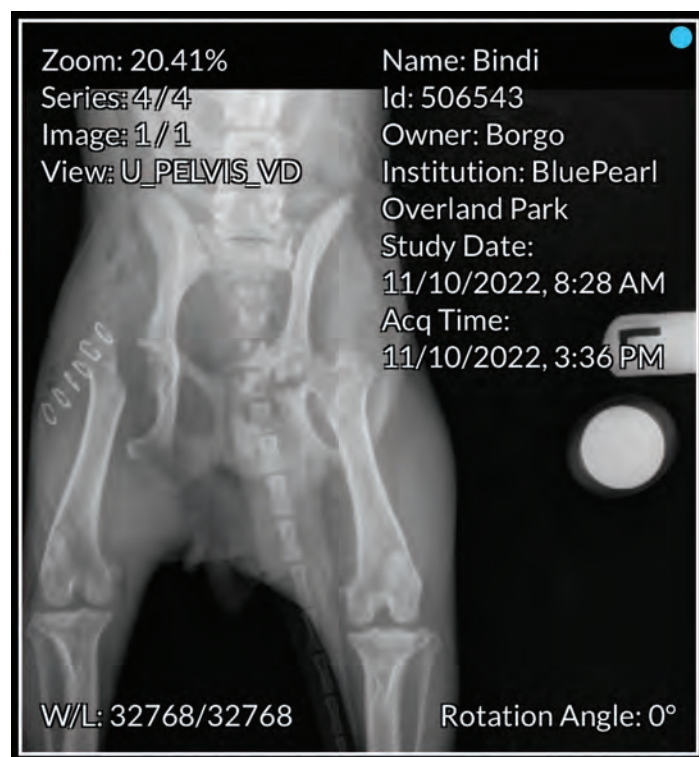
My biggest mistake was not starting a large scale search sooner, assuming she would stay the area. I immediately made up signs but they were much too small. The last time I had a dog get out I was in an urban area with a lot of foot traffic, and it was someone I handed the flyer to, walking a dog that eventually spotted her. Don't assume that because they're small they can't cover a lot of ground. Even in the urban area within a few hours, my other dog had traveled over 3 miles, but I was able to recover her in 8 hours.

After not hearing anything or catching sight of her while driving the area every day, I eventually hired a professional Petfinder. I was fortunate in that my friends both locally and on Facebook supported me financially as well as emotionally, so that I was able to do that. She got me organized. She knew how to establish a "brand" so that anyone even seeing the signs from a distance immediately recognized the dog and how to get in touch with me. The key to a good sign is a minimum of 11" x 17" laminated poster. Use a high contrast profile picture of the whole dog since that is what they will see if they see them at a distance.

Be generic in the description... "small white dog or terrier" instead of Westie. (*Many people don't know one breed from another*) The phone number must be very large. I posted on as many Facebook lost dog pages as I thought would cover the area where she might be or may have been taken, as well as all the vets, shelters, and groomers that someone may have taken her to. Also if there

(Continued on page 6)

(Bindi's Story continued from page 5)



is a local radio or TV station put together an announcement for them as well. The Petfinder, designed the signs and sent them to an Office Depot near me to be printed and laminated as well as making Google maps showing the best places to hang them. She also had me put together a scent article in case that was needed for tracking. I used her Scentwork harness (which had hair stuck to the inside) along with several squares of gauze wrapped up in it and placed in a Ziploc bag. You also need to assemble a support team not only for moral support, because the fear and depression can totally immobilize you, but also to help hang signs and assist the tractor if that need arises.

Double check your chip number and make sure it is registered with all your current information and give that to the vets and shelters asking them to please scan any new dogs fitting their description that might be brought in. Put signs on your car on both sides and the back. Staple your laminated signs to 3 inch wooden stakes and then zip tie the stakes to poles or stop signs making sure they are at eye level to a driver. (*Do not wrap signs around poles as they're unreadable*) Do not underestimate the importance of blanketing the area with signs. In the end it was the signs we had hung and the ones on my car that proved the most successful in her recovery.

If you are in a more rural area, ask around if there are any trail cams where you can possibly leave food. If you're getting sightings that indicate they are staying in one area you can also possibly trap them. She also sent a form on how to take information from a person sighting the dog.

Important on taking a sighting: Have them describe the animal that they saw. Color, eyes, tail, approximate size... where they would come on their leg (shin, knee, thigh?) what street, cross street, or landmark they were near, the time of the day, what they were doing, and which direction they were traveling.

(Bindi's Story continued on page 7)



(Bindi's Story continued from page 6)

No matter how many times you ask people not to chase, they will and unfortunately the dogs become so fearful they won't come even to you. I knew to sit on the ground or even lie down and toss treats to lure her closer, but even when I finally saw her myself I couldn't get close enough to do that.

Never give up. I didn't get my first sighting in until 11 days after she went missing, 6 miles from home. The tracking dogs picked up her scent the next day and trailed her into a remote accessible area. We immediately put up more signs and the next sighting was five days after that slightly closer to home. Then after another 4 days later and multiple sightings on the last day a mile away.

On Halloween day, the very last day, it was the help of several people living in my area who had seen the signs along the road and on my car who helped me corral her. Although the recommendation is not to chase, it was the only way we finally were able to catch her.

I took her immediately to the vet but should have had x-rays done at that time. She had lost a third of her body weight. I had attributed her weakness to that, but when she was still having trouble keeping her feet under her a couple of days later, I took her back. We found that she had a fracture in her pelvis and a dislocated hip (most likely a week or more old) that required surgery. It took four months of rehabilitation, but she came back strong. In the nine months remaining in 2023 she earned 12 new titles in Rally, Barn Hunt, Scentwork, and Earthdog. I guess she learned to hunt while she was gone. The titles I am most proud of are her junior Earthdog title and her Master Barn Hunt.

It was the worst three-week nightmare that I have ever been through. Fortunately for me, I got a miracle. So never, ever give up! Reach out to your friends and community and let them support you. They got me through it, and I have my baby back.

*Forever grateful,  
Deb Borgo*



**Bindi**



*“When Bindi's new friends all agreed it was time for her to go home, they threw her a going away party.”*

# Losing Davey: A Pet Owner Shares Westie's Mystery Illness to Raise Awareness of Deadly Condition

*By Teresa Barnes, VP Communications*

A fun-loving Westie with a promising future in canine competition lost his life to a mysterious condition before his fourth birthday. Davey was an active young dog trained in agility, barn hunt, nose work, fast cat, tricks and rally. He loved long walks and chasing tennis balls and doing scent work when he wasn't training.

Davey's sudden and severe illness earlier this year came as a complete shock to his owner, Linda Cesare-Traub. As she sought help for her dog, she watched in horror as he inexplicably declined.

Davey's symptoms started with a head tilt in early February. Cesare-Traub described the tilt as more extreme than a typical tilt he'd make when he was trying to understand something.

She contacted a friend who was an animal chiropractor. The doctor evaluated him on February 7th and found cerebellar-like symptoms in the dog's rear. The dog's attempts to sit or extend his spine exacerbated his symptom. When he was presented with a treat and attempted to take it from a hand, with his vision distorted, he missed it by moving too far to the left. He'd lost partial or full vision in his right eye. He lacked other symptoms sometimes consistent with neurologic conditions including pain, palpation and symptoms like rapid horizontal eye movement (called nystagmus),

The initial diagnosis was a misalignment in his upper cervical vertebrae and his first lumbar vertebrae as well as a joint issue with his right temporal mandibular (jaw).

Cesare-Traub took Davey to see his primary veterinarian on the same day where he again was examined for his symptoms. The veterinarian diagnosed vertigo caused by an inner ear infection, though she admitted the condition wasn't typically seen in dogs Davey's age and instead in much older dogs. Davey was prescribed an over-the-counter drug called Bonine, a class of antihistamine that doesn't cause drowsiness and despite taking doses for several days. His condition saw no improvement.

Davey was no longer able to do steps or jump. He was reluctant to stand for extended periods of time and occasionally stumbled and swayed.

The next two prescribed drugs provided for Davey were prescription drug, Metacam, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication and the antibiotic Doxycycline to treat a possible tick-borne illness called Anaplasmosis, a condition he was treated for a year earlier, as well. He was also given Gabapentin for pain but couldn't tolerate the drug. Returning to the veterinary chiropractor for another evaluation, Davey

presented with a hunched back and lowered tail and a reluctance to lift his head which led him to repeatedly bump into things in the office. As a result, the doctor encouraged Cesare-Traub to take Davey to an emergency clinic to see a neurologist.

It was February 14th - Valentine's Day, The emergency clinic completed blood work described as unremarkable and radiographs (x-rays) that suggested a possible intervertebral disc disease because of recognition of narrowed intervertebral disc spaces.

Five days later, the neurologist saw Davey. His differential diagnosis at that time was: herniated disc disease, ruling out meningomyelitis/meningoencephalitis (inflammation), spinal tumor/brain tumor, spinal stroke, trauma, Atlanta-axial subluxation, or syringohydromyelia.

## Davey



Through it all, Davey's appetite was good, but Cesare-Traub had to hold his food bowl for him to eat. Surprisingly, Davey enjoyed a weekend of feeling well and playing that was met with a sigh of relief from Cesare-Traub. He was scheduled for a spinal tap and MRI on Tuesday, February 25th to further investigate his neurologic symptoms.

In the early morning on that Tuesday, Cesare-Traub found Davey in bad shape, crashing with symptoms. She rushed him to the emergency hospital, but by the time they arrived, it was too late.

Just 30 days had passed from Davey's onset of initial symptoms to his death. He'd been seen by the veterinary chiropractor three times, his primary vet once, and the doctors at the veterinary hospital twice before his scheduled MRI and spinal tap.

An autopsy report stated little Davey died from granulomatous meningoencephalomyelitis (GME), an autoimmune meningitis of unknown cause.

GME is a non-infectious, inflammatory disease characterized by focal or disseminated granulomatous inflammation within the brain and/or spinal cord. The cause of the disease is a mystery but believed to be linked to the immune system. Heavy duty drugs may have given Davey a little more time, Cesare-Traub said, but likely with much suffering.

"I miss him terribly, but I am also relieved that he did not suffer more than he might have," Cesare-Traub said. "Sadly, I have heard of two other dogs who live in the same area that died the same way. I hope and pray, if you are reading this; that you will never experience anything so dreadful. Hug your dogs, play, and enjoy the blessed time we have with them."

# Meet The New Board of Director **JOANIE FLYNN**



Joanie Flynn's 45-year career was centered in marketing, with special focus on brand marketing, audience targeting, and product and program management. Before retiring in early 2023 she held marketing leadership positions at four hotel companies and one convention and visitor's bureau since receiving her MBA at UCLA Anderson School of Management.

Joanie works to establish a bond and a relationship where the brand comes to life to the target customer. She often partnered with Operations to align their needs with customer motivations and behaviors. She takes a holistic, constant learning and continuous improvement approach.

Joanie and her husband Norbert Schranz are the proud owners of 11-year-old GCH CH MKC Margie Munro Song of the Pixies [Pixie] and 6-year-old Margie Munro Rockin' the House [Pebbles], one of Pixie's puppies from a litter of six. Joanie grew up with Standard Schnauzers, but her sister, Nickie Flynn, acquired a Westie after she got married. And we have all been Westie lovers ever since. Nickie delved into the breed, its health history, its behaviors, and temperament, and studied and listened to many of the breed's greats to start her Margie Munro Westie brand and breeding.

I attended shows when I was able and learned about the breed as well. I helped out with a West Highland White Terrier Club of America research project, and the WFA learned about me and where I had lent a hand in the past. I was asked to help out with a WFA research project, and assisted the Board with social media and marketing issues for more than a year. I was nominated and elected to the WFA Board of Directors when there was an opening on the board. I am delighted to help the WFA grow its marketing and research expertise to strengthen the breed, broaden awareness, and enhance the health of all Westies.

# SICK SINUS SYNDROME IN DOGS

By Susie Stone

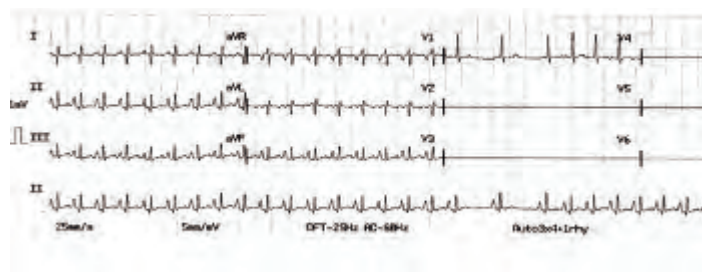
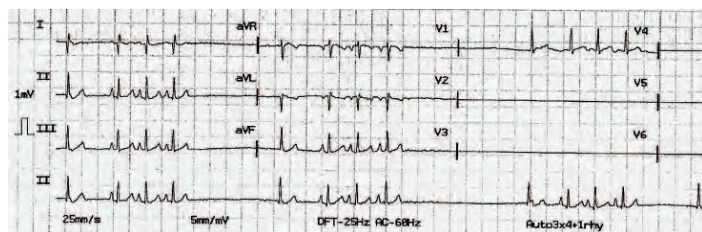
## Meet Gunny: Stonebriar Master Gunner CGC RATCHX CZ8Br ME SWN SWA

**B**orn in 2009 to parents Ch Camcrest Master Card x Ch Camcrest Pure Platinum, Gunny lived as a beloved pet until he began performance events at age 5. He was hyper focused on any activities he tried and is presently very much engaged in scentwork. But last year at age 11, in a pre-op appointment, my veterinarian noticed a heartbeat problem and postponed his date with anesthesia until it could be researched a little more. The first test was an EKG with the results showing that his heart would give a normal beat, but then not beat for a long time. The next test was an atropine challenge test, where atropine is administered and the EKG repeated. “His results are pictured below.” The first graph shows Gunny’s heartbeat. The second graph shows where atropine is at work, forcing a normal heartbeat.

After a cardiac consult, my veterinarian confirmed the problem

### DIAGNOSIS? SICK SINUS SYNDROME

Sick sinus syndrome is characterized by a heart rhythm whereby the sinus node (which normally initiates the beating heart) does not discharge an impulse to trigger the heart to contract. As a result the heart literally stops beating. If the heart stops for more than 8 seconds then the dog will collapse/faint.



Sometimes the heart will have another part of the heart initiate a beat to rescue the heart from complete arrest. Most of the time the sinus node will eventually start up again to do its job, but the dog has a rhythm with many long pauses. Some dogs with sick sinus syndrome have a more constant sinus bradycardia (too slow) because the sinus node has a low firing rate. Other dogs with sick sinus syndrome will have periods of excessive tachycardia (rapid rate) in addition to the pauses or bradycardia (Cornell U College of Vet Medicine). Miniature Schnauzers, Westies and Cocker Spaniels are most often diagnosed with SSS.

Thus began our odyssey. Gunny showed no typical symptoms – he was energetic, active, and gave no sign that his heart didn’t beat often enough. The existing heartbeat seemed strong – it just didn’t beat often enough. We were referred to Washington State University, and there we met the terrific vets and vet school students who administer care there. Dr Lilly Bo Nizer, a 4th year vet student, was my liaison with the cardiac surgeons, and the exams began:

- Blood Pressure
- Blood Count
- Urinalysis and Culture
- Electrocardiogram
- Thoracic Radiographs
- Echocardiogram
- Abdominal Ultrasound

(Sick Sinus Syndrome in dogs continued from page 10)

Though there were some cardiac aging issues, there was nothing to preclude surgery to implant a pacemaker. There was a type of pressure system used during the surgery to keep his heart beating, and though there seemed to be an issue with the placement of the lead in the ventricle, the surgeons did not expect any complications from it.

Gunny woke from the surgery alert (and “ravenous”, say the doctors) and within a day was allowed to go home. He required a month of crate rest so the lead could set, and his one month follow up appointment went well. I measured his heartbeat often at first and then daily. (It might be time for you to become familiar with all your dogs’ heartbeats.)

These quotes about life after a pacemaker implant are from his discharge papers:

### LONG TERM PACEMAKER CARE

- **Monitoring for infection:** Pacemaker infection is a serious and potentially fatal complication of pacemaker implantation. Infection anywhere in the body (i.e. bladder, mouth, skin, etc.) must be treated promptly and aggressively. Antibiotics should also be given prior to any elective surgical and dental procedures to decrease the risk of infection.
- **Signs of pacemaker malfunction:** Please monitor for signs of weakness, collapse, lethargy as these may be signs that the pacemaker is no longer functioning properly. We may have to re-evaluate the pacemaker sooner than one month if these signs are seen.
- **No neck leads/collars/leashes:** A harness or gentle leader type of system is recommended.
- **Avoid allowing other animals to bite your pet’s neck** as this may cause damage to the pacemaker or lead.
- **Warn groomers to not shave over the area of the pacemaker** as they may damage the skin above it and increase the risk for infection.
- **No jugular blood draws:** The pacemaker is placed in the right jugular vein. NO JUGULAR VENOUS BLOOD DRAWS SHOULD BE PERFORMED ON GUNNY for the rest of his life. If the lead is punctured by a needle it may affect the ability of the pacemaker to function appropriately. Please advise all veterinarians that examine Gunny about this.
- **Thoracic Radiographs:** Radiographs should be performed with your primary care veterinarian.



## Gunny *the night before surgery*

After one year Gunny has had no visible side effects except that his furnishings disappeared and have been slow to grow back. He is active and upbeat, especially when he gets to do scentworks. At his first ‘competition’ after the surgery, a sniff-and-go practice, he outdid most of the veteran sniffers and has since earned his advanced scentworks title.

There may be a genetic component in SSS. Gunny’s mother, Ch Camcrest Pure Platinum, known as Ginger Rogers, died unexpectedly at age 8 when being spayed. This shocking death was never explained, even though her remains were sent to WSU for examination. Her genetic line has ended, and thankfully no other relatives have shown signs of sick sinus, but this certainly deserves more study.

Please get yourself a stethoscope if you don’t already have one and practice heart monitoring in your Westies!

# A New Way To Deliver Allergy Immunotherapy To Your Dog

By Valerie A. Fadok, DVM, PhD; Diplomat, ACVD



Allergy testing and immunotherapy have been part of the treatment protocol for atopic dogs for many years. Currently both intradermal testing (by veterinary dermatologists) or serum testing can be used to select environmental allergens for immunotherapy. As long as patients are managed well, either method of testing can be effective. Traditionally, immunotherapy has been given by subcutaneous injection. Our veterinary literature supports that this approach can be effective in dogs, cats, and horses; however, many animals don't like getting repeated injections and many owners don't enjoy giving them. In the early 2000's, clinical trials were developed to see if sublingual (under the tongue) allergy immunotherapy, using drops, could be effective. Happily, this approach has been successful, and sublingual drops or sprays have been available for some time.

In 2024, a group of European veterinary dermatologists published a paper on the epicutaneous (through the skin) administration of allergens as a new method for allergy immunotherapy in dogs. One in this study, the allergens were suspended in a glycerine and polyethylene glycol base and applied to the skin for 12 hours once weekly. There were 9 French bulldogs and 6 Labradors in this study, and they were examined over 6 months for their response. Itch was reduced in 73% of the dogs and skin lesions in 66% of dogs over this time period; early responses were seen within 3 months. The

most important assessment was how the owners of these dogs felt about the treatment; 94% of dog owners thought that the response in their dogs was good to excellent, and that the treatment was easy to administer.

Since that time, a company was developed to bring this approach to pets. Allibre Pet Allergy Care has developed a transdermal (through the skin) cream containing allergens based on testing and customized for each pet. This cream is applied to the inside flap of the ear once daily, alternating ears. A recent abstract presented at the North American Veterinary Dermatology Forum in April 2025 showed encouraging results. Levels of allergic antibody (IgE) to ragweed, timothy grass, and house dust mites were substantially reduced, and clinical lesions showed good improvement too. This study included only 6 dogs, so more work is needed to be sure that it meets its original promise. It does appear to be more expensive than injections or sublingual drops or sprays. For more information visit the Allibre website (<https://www.allibre.com/>) where you can download information and see some testimonials from veterinary dermatologists.

#### Reference:

1. das Neves Pinto et al. *Challenging the norm: epicutaneous immunotherapy for canine atopic dermatitis. Allergy 2024; 79:255.*

# Summary: Investigation on the In Vitro Effects of Resveratrol on Peripheral Blood Mononuclear Cells Harvested from Healthy and Atopic Dogs.

*By Valerie A. Fadok, DVM, PhD; Diplomate, ACVD*

**T**his WFA-funded study was undertaken at the University of Florida College Veterinary Medicine by Dr. Domenico Santoro. Resveratrol is a natural polyphenol present in the skin and seeds of grapes. Notably, it is a component of red wine. This compound has antimicrobial activity as well as anti-oxidant activity. There has been great interest in studying the effects of this compound in a variety of inflammatory disorders, including atopic dermatitis. Most of the studies have looked at its effects in cell systems and mouse models, but results are encouraging. Interestingly, a metabolite of resveratrol is able to inhibit one of the critical enzymes (Janus kinase-1) mediating the itch and inflammatory pathways in atopic dermatitis. This is the same enzyme targeted by oclacitinib (Apoquel®, Zoetis). In mouse models, this metabolite has been able to reduce the inflammation, itch, and skin water loss associated with house dust mite allergy.

The purpose of Dr. Santoro's study was to examine the effects of resveratrol on canine mononuclear cells prepared from fresh blood. Mononuclear cells are lymphocytes and monocytes, both very important in immune function. Samples were taken from 10 healthy dogs and 10 atopic dogs. The cells were cultured overnight, then set up for the experiment.

Each dog's cells were set up to have a negative control (no resveratrol and no stimulant (phytohemagglutinin – PHA – a compound derived from the red kidney bean that causes lymphocytes to proliferate), from positive control (PHA), resveratrol alone, and PHA + resveratrol. After 24 hrs these cells were tested for viability, production of defensins, anti-oxidant activities, and cytokine production.

One of the important things to consider is the effect of culture on cells. Do the cells remain alive or do they die under these conditions? There were two tests for viability. One is a measurement of an enzyme that only leaks out of dying or dead cells. The other is a measurement of a specific kind of cell death called apoptosis.

The cells were assessed for their anti-oxidant activities, the product of host defense molecules (called defensins), and a

number of cytokines important in atopic dermatitis and other inflammatory states

This study showed that cells from healthy dogs tended to be healthier, in that there were fewer dead cells in all the test conditions. Resveratrol tended to increase viability. Interestingly, the cells from atopic dogs had almost double the number of apoptotic cells regardless of the culture conditions. This finding is quite interesting as skin cells from atopic humans and mice tend to die by this mechanism, and that impairs the skin barrier (the very surface of the skin which holds water in and keeps allergens and microbes out).

Healthy cells had more antioxidant activity than atopic cells. Resveratrol seemed to increase the anti-oxidant activity in healthy cells, and to some extent, in atopic cells. The levels in atopic cells never reached that of healthy cells however, and the changes were not statistically significant.

Interestingly, resveratrol-treated atopic cells were able to increase their production of one of the defensins, compared to healthy cells. This is interesting because defensins are molecules that help kill pathogens. With regard to cytokines, the resveratrol had little effect on either population, and it was noted that the allergic cells tended to produce less. Possibly this effect resulted from the fact that there were more dead cells in that population.

So what can we conclude about resveratrol and atopic dermatitis? The concentrations used in this study were not high enough to warrant a recommendation of oral resveratrol for atopic dogs, but these concentrations were based on equivalency to what is safe to administer to a dog systemically. Higher levels might be more effective, but this compound at high levels can induce renal disease in dogs. It is possible that resveratrol could be used much more effectively on the skin. Much more work needs to be done to support the use of this compound.

It is important to realize that while these are negative results, they are still very valuable. Based on these results, we can say that administering resveratrol orally at doses safe for dogs is unlikely to be beneficial

## Westie Foundation Expands Canine Clinical Trial in Response to Worldwide Interest

*Dog owners asked for their pets to be included in drug study in canines suffering from lung scarring*

HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES, June 13, 2025/ EINPresswire.com/ -- The Westie Foundation of America (WFA), a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the health and well-being of the West Highland White Terrier breed announced today the expansion of a drug study that was launched in December 2024. The drug, named 4MU, is being studied for the treatment of deadly lung scarring called Pulmonary Fibrosis (PF), sometimes also called Westie Lung Disease (WLD).

Due to increased interest and demand from around the world, the study of the investigational drug study is expanding to include West Highland White Terriers, "Westies," and other canines suffering from the deadly lung disease and living virtually anywhere in the world. The study was originally open to Westies only in the United States. The expanded study will now include Westies in the U.S. and worldwide and other breeds affected by PF will also be considered.

Westie owners from around the world have been asking for their dogs to be included. We listened and now any dogs from just about anywhere suffering from deadly lung disease are being welcomed into the study," said Bebe Pinter, President, Westie Foundation of America. The expanded study will now include Westies in the U. S. and worldwide, and other dog breeds affected by PF will also be considered.

*Westie owners from around the world have been asking for their dogs to be included. We listened and now, dogs living just about anywhere are being welcomed into the study,"*  
*Bebe Pinter, President, Westie Foundation of America*



There are currently no Pulmonary Fibrosis-specific drugs approved by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) for use in dogs suffering from the disease. The disease causes scarring in the lungs that renders them unable to effectively transport blood oxygen, leading to lung failure and death. Two drugs were approved for PF a decade ago in humans and have been shown to slow the scarring process. Although the drugs have been used for PF in humans, neither of the drugs, pirfenidone or nintedanib, has been studied in dogs stricken by the disease. Thus, the need to explore potential new therapies for dogs with PF is important for the West Highland White Terrier breed.

Dog owners interested in having their dogs participate in the 4MU study may contact the Westie Foundation of America via email requesting their inclusion. To do so, owners should email WFA at [health@westiefoundation.org](mailto:health@westiefoundation.org). To learn more about the study, visit <https://westiefoundation.org/New-Pulmonary-Fibrosis-Clinical-Study>. Veterinarians are encouraged to share this important information with their canine patient owners. A paper on the subject of Pulmonary Fibrosis in domestic animals, including Westies, in particular, was published based on a 2014 Fibrosis Across Species

(Westie FoundationExpands... from page 14)

conference of veterinary and human researchers convened by the WFA. The paper may be found at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30879739/> The 4MU drug study was funded by the WFA and its donor partners. To make your tax-deductible donation to support efforts to improve the lives of Westies and other canines, donate at: <https://www.westiefoundation.org/donate>.

About the Westie Foundation of America: (WFA):

The Westie Foundation of America, Inc. is a non-profit organization recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)3 organization. The WFA mission is to provide financial aid and other support for the medical research to benefit the health and quality of life of West Highland White Terriers, and to develop and communicate information regarding the health care, breeding, and quality of life of Westies to Westie owners, Westie breeders, and veterinarians. To find out more about the WFA's Biobank and other efforts, or to make a tax-deductible donation, visit: <https://www.WestieFoundation.org>

Teresa Barnes  
Westie Foundation of America  
+1 303-521-4080

email us here: <https://www.einpresswire.com/contact/author/5253249>

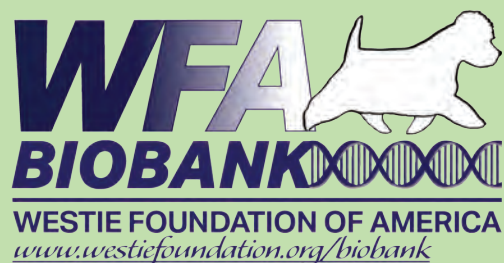
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### WHO MAY PARTICIPATE?

All West Highland White Terriers of any age, regardless of their pedigree or health status, are welcome to support our efforts.

### WHAT IS COLLECTED?

A small blood sample is collected and shipped to a lab where DNA is extracted from the blood.

### WHY ARE WE BANKING WESTIE DNA?

The stored DNA samples will provide raw material for researchers to use in their research studies. Biobanks are created with the long-term goal of linking DNA with health issues and diseases.

### WHERE IS THE DNA STORED?

The WFA has contracted with a lab which has successfully stored and maintained both human and animal DNA to store the DNA at its facilities.

### WHEN WILL THE SAMPLES BE COLLECTED?

Collection can begin now and will continue indefinitely.

## Supporting Westie Health One DNA Sample At a Time

### WESTIE HEALTH, HOW CAN I HELP?

In order to make a difference to the future health of our breed and to take advantage of technology, the Westie Foundation of America, Inc. has established the Westie Foundation of America Biobank (WFA Biobank). We are currently recruiting Westie blood samples from which DNA will be extracted. It does not matter whether your Westie is a pedigreed dog, a rescue dog, or a dog of unknown lineage. Blood samples from all Westies are welcome and appreciated. We need DNA samples from healthy dogs as well as those with health issues.

The stored DNA samples provide raw material for researchers to use in their research studies. DNA biobanks are created with the long-term goal of linking genetic information contained in the DNA with health issues. Since many disorders in animals have a genetic basis, our canine companions serve as potential models of human disease leading to improvements in both animal and human health.

Our DNA biobank is an organized collection, searchable through a custom database based on information from a health questionnaire answered by dog owners. This database, developed by the WFA, is strictly confidential. Each blood sample submitted is entered with a unique sample number, and information from the health questionnaire is linked to that number. The database is maintained in a secure, cloud-based site.

The lab techs extract DNA from the blood of our Westies. The WFA is funding the cost of mailing, DNA extraction, and storage of the samples. We provide the special DNA extraction blood tube and mailing supplies (that you take to your veterinarian to collect the blood sample), and the return postage. Each blood sample provides multiple samples of DNA to support health studies selected by the WFA.

For more information and to request a sample kit:

[www.westiefoundation.org/biobank](http://www.westiefoundation.org/biobank)

***The West Highland White Terrier Club of America endorses and supports the WFA Biobank and encourages all members to participate.***

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# First Scholarship Awarded in New Veterinary Scholarship Program

*Awardee seeks to improve veterinary access to care for pets and underserved pet owners*

## Briana Guerra

HOUSTON, TX, UNITED STATES, September 30, 2025 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Support for promising veterinarians in training has never been more important than today. The Westie Foundation of America, Inc. (WFA), a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to the health and well-being of the West Highland White Terrier breed announced today the first scholarship award of The Westie Foundation of America /Thomas and Roxanne Austin Veterinary Scholarship program.

Briana Guerra was named the inaugural scholarship recipient as part of a new program announced last year. Awards are given exclusively to UC Davis veterinary students in training.

UC Davis named Guerra the winner on behalf of the scholarship program, based on a rigorous set of criteria proposed by the WFA.

"Your support means more than words can express," said Briana Guerra, the inaugural scholarship recipient. "Thank you for helping me pursue my lifelong dream."

A first-year vet student, Guerra has previous clinical experience obtained at the Los Angeles Veterinary Center and upon graduation, she plans to work and practice in an area where she can support a bilingual clientele and traditionally underserved pet owners.

"It is an honor to work with UC Davis on this important contribution to the new veterinary generation. We are pleased to say Briana meets and exceeds the scholarship criteria of academic excellence and we are honored to help further her veterinary goals," said Kay McGuire, DVM, Vice President, Health for the Westie Foundation of America, Inc.



"These students represent the future of veterinary medicine, and we're honored to celebrate their admission together," said Angela Reynolds, Senior Director of Development, UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. "Thank you for trusting UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine to award this."

We are pleased to say Briana meets and exceeds the scholarship criteria of academic excellence and we are honored to help further her veterinary goals."

Kay McGuire, DVM, WFA, stated "This scholarship is awarded to a deserving and inspiring rising star."

The program launched in 2024 to support and celebrate the next generation of veterinarians who have a keen interest in the Westie breed and who strive for veterinary excellence. The program is centrally focused on the University of California Davis (UC Davis) veterinary program renowned for its

excellence in veterinary medicine, training and innovation.

"Tom and I are proud to support the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine and the Westie Foundation of America by funding veterinary scholarships for deserving students. Our pets have brought us immense joy, and we understand firsthand the vital role quality veterinary care plays in helping them live long, healthy and happy lives. We are thrilled to congratulate Briana Guerra as the inaugural recipient of this scholarship," said Roxanne Austin.

Guerra was chosen amongst a distinguished group of UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine students. UC Davis' class of 154 students, of whom Guerra is one, were selected from over

*(Continued on page 18)*

(First Scholarship Continued from page 17)

3,000 applicants with a record 57% of whom are first-generation college students. Guerra's parents were immigrants who fled civil war in El Salvador. She is the first in her family to pursue a college education.

#### **ABOUT THE WESTIE FOUNDATION OF AMERICA, INC.**

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<https://www.WestieFoundation.org>

Teresa Barnes

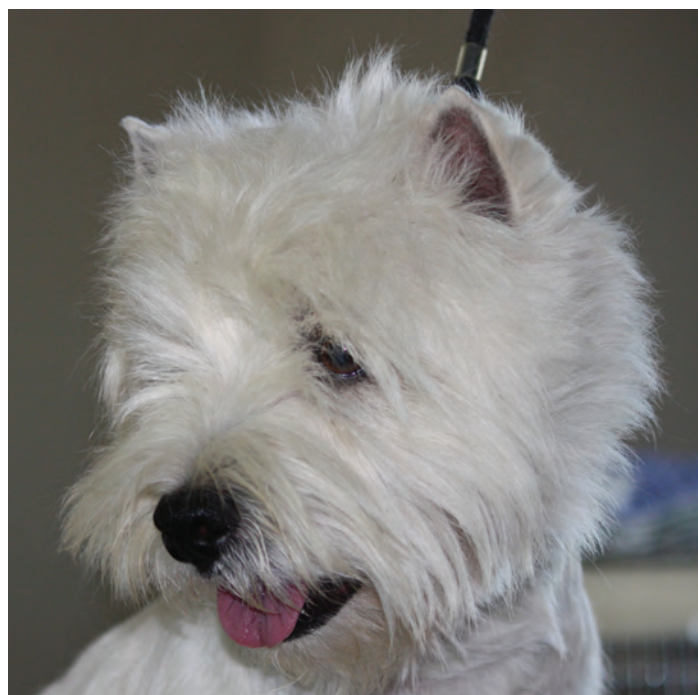
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# MEMORIALS

## 2024

**In Memory Of Barbara Barrie**  
*North Texas Terrier Club*

**In Memory Of Rick Eggers And Duff**  
*William Eggers and Deborah Mclean*

**In Memory Of Camcrest Stonebriar Goes Platinum**  
*Maureen Noumov*

**In Memory Of Gch Bryn Lea's Let Freedom Ring Td Mx Mxj Of Dcat Se Rato**  
*("philadelphia")  
York County Dog Training Club*

**In Memory Of Cara**  
*Steve Schroffel*

**In Memory Of Bella Vista's Call Me Double Trouble**  
**CD BN RA TDX TDU SE RATN CGC**  
*York County Dog Training Club*

**In Memory Of Skyehigh's Jack McCormak**  
*Lindy Barrow*

**In Memory Of Quinn**  
*Jim & Tina McCain*

**In Memory Of Ch Rock Me Sweetly O'Westhill (Leila)**  
*Joseph Mazur*

**In Memory Of Ch Charmed I'm Sure O'Westhill (Phoebe)**  
*Joseph Mazur*

**In Memory Of Bella Vista's Call Me Double Trouble**  
**CD BN RA TDX TDU SE RATN CGC**  
*Mary Frame*

**In Memory Of Marla May**  
*Melissa Collins*

**In Memory Of Susieq And Molly**  
*Thomas Mccord*

**In Memory Of Westies Dixie, Bandit, Katie & Robbie**  
*Patricia & John Antonelli*

**In Memory Of Sophie**  
*Kay Mcguire*

**In Memory Of Izzy, Mia And Zoey**  
*Blake and Lisa Snider*

**In Memory Of Our Beloved Westie Max**  
*Christine Norrick*



## Legacy Alliance

THE WESTIE FOUNDATION OF AMERICA  
WAS FOUNDED IN 1997

**The mission of the Foundation:**

Lead, innovate and advance medical research to benefit the health and quality of life of West Highland White Terriers. Lead, guide and advocate on behalf of Westies. Develop and communicate to Westie owners, Westie breeders, veterinarians and others who share our challenges.



The WFA is a tax exempt, non-profit corporation. Your tax deductible gift or bequest to the WFA's Legacy Alliance Program will help to further its mission.

The Westie Foundation of America is extremely grateful to those of you who have chosen to further the health and well being of our wonderful breed by contributing to the Legacy Alliance Program. If you are considering a gift or bequest to the Westie Foundation of America, please contact Bebe Pinter, President at [president@westiefoundation.org](mailto:president@westiefoundation.org).

We encourage you to visit our website, <https://www.westiefoundation.org> to view the results of Westie health and educational challenges the WFA has met so far.

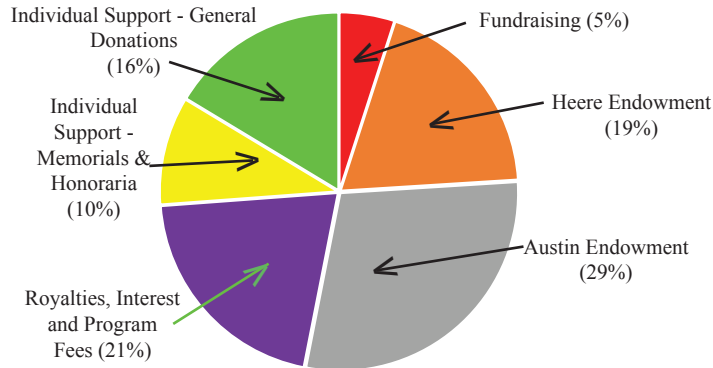


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# Financial Report – Fiscal Year 2024

By Gary C. Sackett, Treasurer

## Revenue = \$262,952



## REVENUE

**Individual Support** 2024 saw the Westie Foundation of America, INC (WFA) establish its first collaboration with UC Davis to award scholarships for students in Veterinary School. Revenue from individuals supporting the WFA's mission in 2024 totaled \$208,452 (79%). An additional \$54,500 (21%) in dividends, interest, royalties from affiliate programs, Facebook Auction, and Health Book sales ensured that we had sufficient funds to continue the mission of the WFA.

## ASSETS

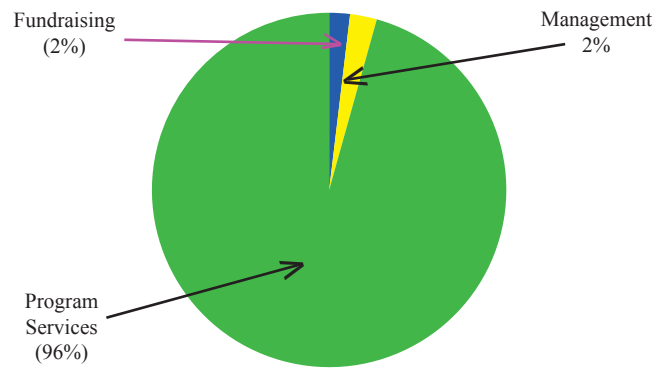
**Restricted Funds** All memorials and honoraria are included in the Temporarily Restricted Fund which now totals \$814,816. Through the generosity of Tom & Roxanne Austin, we have a UC Davis Scholarship funded in the amount of \$56,450. The Austin Atopic Dermatitis (AD) endowment is funded in the initial amount of \$160,243 and the Karen Heere Endowment Fund for Cancer stands at \$193,503. Our Restricted Funds total 52% of our assets. The income from these funds may be used to fund projects, but the principal is restricted by the Board of Directors and invested carefully to maintain the principal while bringing a reasonable return. The Finance Committee tracks these funds monthly to ensure conformance with WFA investment policy.

**Unrestricted Funds** WFA has an unrestricted funds balance of \$1,070,326 (48% of our assets) including cash and CDs. These funds are used to support program services, management operations and fundraising. In 2024, we increased our expected expenditures to continue the exciting study on AD at the University of Zurich, update The Westie Health Book and fund additional research in AD.

## LIABILITIES

**Future Projects** WFA retains current liabilities of \$25,152 to fund the remainder of the University of Zurich study, the 2025 Westie Wellness, and other ongoing activities.

## Expenses = \$144,990



## EXPENSES

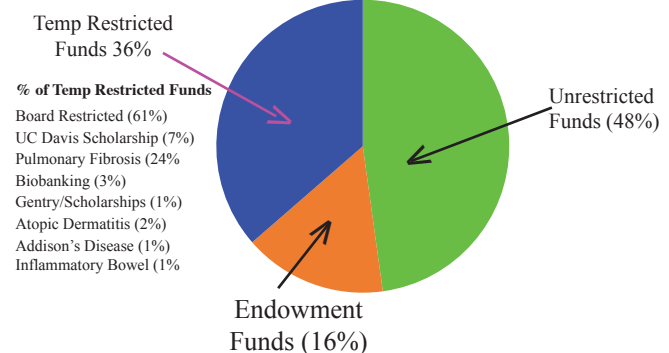
**Program Services** In 2024, we saw a continuation of university related research projects. The WFA continued support of research and education related to diseases affecting the West Highland White "Terrier".

**Research** An additional \$43,822 was committed to Rametrix to further develop a urine test for detecting cancer in dogs. \$29,996 went to the AKC Canine Health Foundation supporting 2 grants in Atopic Dermatitis. We also continued the effort with the University of Georgia to update the Westie Health Book which includes adding new chapters on cancer related issues and updating research on other Westie related diseases. This effort will be completed in early 2025 with a new Health Book available in mid-2025. We also continued to support the Biobanking effort, provided samples from the Biobank to Cornell University for a Legg-Calvé-Perthes study and provided urine samples to Rametrix for the cancer study.

**Education** Expenses included website updates and other related expenses. In addition, the WFA awarded three veterinary scholarships in the amount of \$5,000 each and funded the first UC Davis scholarship for 2025-2026 in the amount of \$18,550.

**Management and Fundraising** These expenses were minimized (2.4% for Management and 1.9% for Fundraising) by careful allocation of resources and the fact that all officers, directors, and committee members are volunteers.

## Assets = \$2,238,587



---

# Project title: Fecal microbiota transplant for treatment of canine atopic dermatitis

## Dermatology Unit, Vetsuisse Faculty of the University of Zurich

Date: 20.08.2025

Westie Foundation of America  
428 Hedgecroft Drive  
Seabrook, TX 77586  
USA

**Project title:** Fecal microbiota transplant for treatment of canine atopic dermatitis  
**Investigator(s):** Ana Rostaher, Nina Maria Fischer  
**Institution:** Dermatology Unit, Vetsuisse Faculty of the University of Zurich  
**Project Start:** 01.08.2024 **Current Date:** 20.08.2025

### Annual study progress report

#### 1. Observational study

This part is represented by a comparative study between healthy and atopic West Highland White “Terrier” dogs, analyzing the gut microbiota composition and diversity utilizing Illumina MiSeq sequencing of the metagenome. We hypothesize, that gut microbiota of allergic dogs is less diverse and contains less short-chain fatty acid-producing bacteria, when compared to healthy dogs.

**100% completed. The paper was accepted by Plos One and will go into print in the next days.**

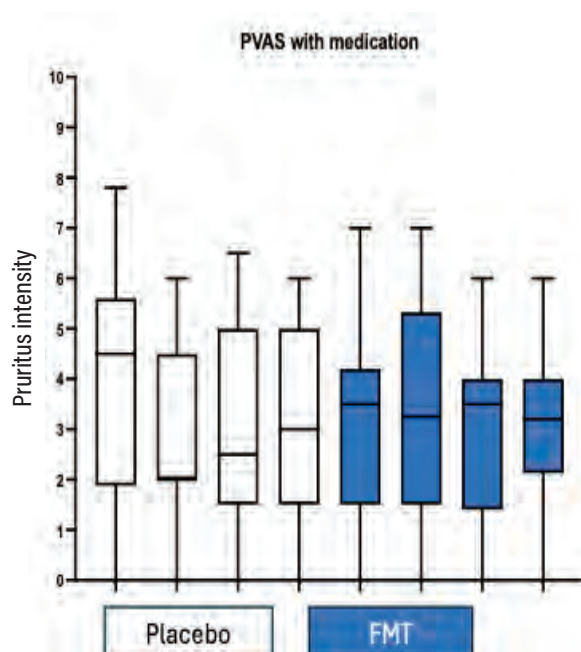
#### 2. Double-blinded placebo controlled study

The second part is a randomized double-blinded, placebo-controlled study including 40 dogs with AD, studying the efficacy of fecal microbiota transplantation (FMT) to cure or reduce the disease burden. We hypothesized that it is possible to modify the gut microbiota by FaMT and that FMT can positively influence the clinical course of allergy. The last objective of our study is to explain the pathophysiology **behind FMT by multi-omics approach. Data and sample acquisition 100% completed. We plan to reach the proposed timeline.**

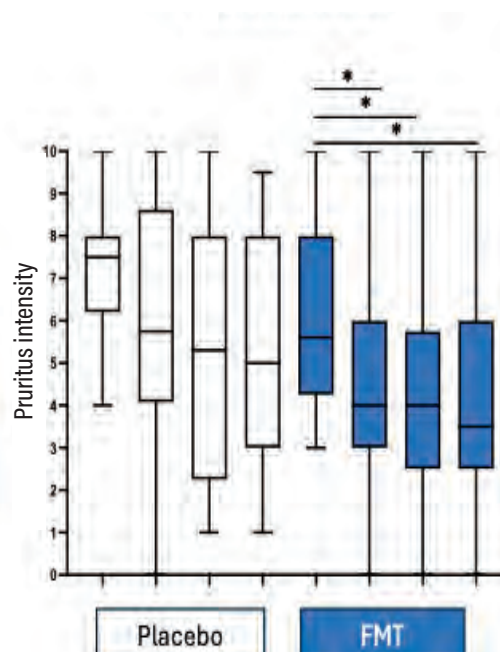
We included 40 dogs, performed again statistical analyses and the results are very promising. This time we could move beyond descriptive statistics and could also calculate statistical significance (p values, marked with \* in the graphs below). Please find below the data for the pruritus and CADESI (skin lesion intensity score).

*(Continued on page 23)*

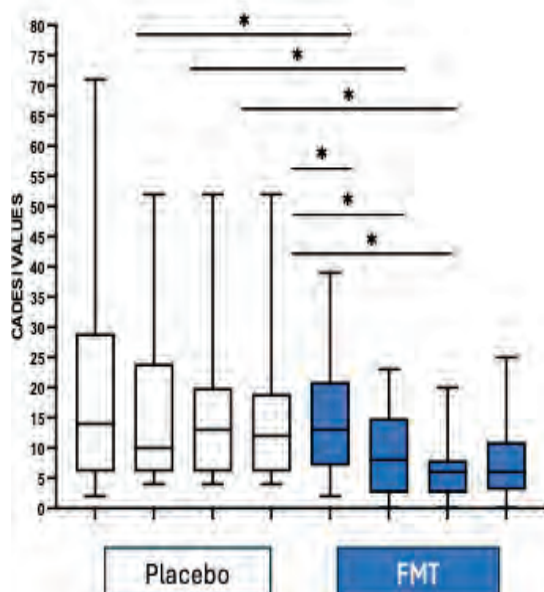
PVAS with medication



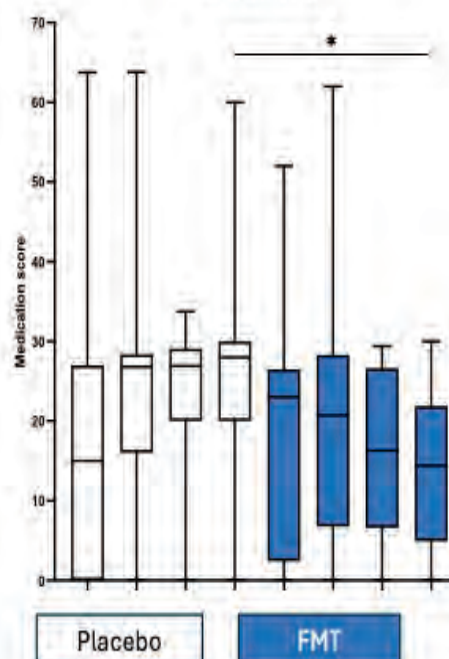
PVAS without medication

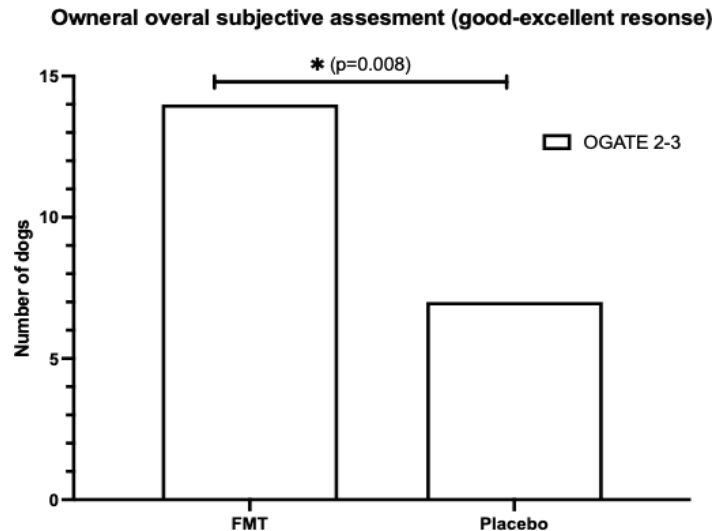


CADESI evaluation



Medication score





The following preliminary data could be currently extracted:

- Dogs receiving FMT have a statistically higher reduction in pruritus than dogs with placebo
- Dogs receiving FMT have a statistically higher reduction in lesional scores (CADESI) than dogs with placebo
- In dogs receiving FMT the anti-itch medication can be reduced to a much higher extent
- FMT is safe

In August/September 2025 our collaborator (Prof. Jan Suchodolski team) will analyze the biosamples (we will start with the metabolome and metagenome). The following biological materials were collected: PBMCS, serum, plasma, feces, and skin, and are stored at -80°C for further analysis. To date, we have collected approximately 2'000 samples (including duplicates).

#### **Output data:**

- First publication was just accepted 2025: V Felten, JL Turck, S Unterer, C Favrot, J Suchodolski, NM Fischer, A Rostaher. An insight into the gut microbiota of healthy and allergic West Highland White Terrier dogs – a preliminary study. PlosOne 2025. Accepted 02.08.25. Published 27.08.25: <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0328100>
- By the end of 2025 year we plan to submit two further publications:
  - (1) Differences in gut microbiota and metabolome in 50 healthy and 50 allergic client-owned dogs
  - (2) Efficacy of FMT in atopic dogs: a double-blinded placebo-controlled study
- In 2026 we plan to submit one more publication: Insights into the gut metagenome and metatranscriptome responses to FMT in atopic dogs

**Presentations:**

1. **Upcoming:** Microbiome Forum Virtual Event (Nestle) 12.-13.11.2025. Exploring the Gut-Skin Axis: The Role of the Gut Microbiome in the Pathogenesis of Canine Atopic Dermatitis and Panel discussions (Ana Rostaher 50 min)
2. **Upcoming:** Annual Meeting of the Swedish Dermatology Group 16.10.2025, Uppsala, Sweden.
  - a. The evolution of Hygiene Hypothesis in humans in human and veterinary medicine (Ana Rostaher, 45 min)
  - b. Unraveling the Microbiome: Its Impact on the Pathogenesis of Canine Atopic Dermatitis (Ana Rostaher, 45 min)
  - c. Targeting Skin and Gut Microbiomes in the Treatment of Canine Atopic Dermatitis (Ana Rostaher, 45 min)
3. **Upcoming:** ESVD\_ECVD Conference 11.-13.09.2025, Bilbao, Spain. Short Communication on the FMT for canine atopic dermatitis and Poster: An insight into the gut microbiota of healthy and allergic West Highland Whiter Terrier dogs (Vera Felten, 20 min)
4. Doctoral thesis presentation 21.5.2025, University of Zurich. An insight into the gut microbiota of healthy and allergic West Highland Whiter Terrier dogs (Vera Felten, 45 min)
5. Swiss Veterinary Days 24.4.2025, Basel, Switzerland. Pathogenesis of canine atopic dermatitis (Ana Rostaher, 30 min)
6. Inaugural presentation, 25.5.24, University of Zurich. Healthy together – one health concept for combating allergies in dogs and humans (Ana Rostaher, 30 min)
7. Healthy together – one health concept for combating allergies in dogs and humans and panel discussion, 28.10.2024, University of Zurich: Swiss-Korean Life Science Week, (Ana Rostaher, 45 min)
8. European College of Veterinary Dermatology Workshop, 24.10.2024, Prague, Czech Republic.
  - a. Mesenchymal stem cells and co. – new options for treatment of canine and feline allergies (Ana Rostaher 135 min)
  - b. Pathogenesis of Canine atopic dermatitis and panel discussions (Ana Rostaher, 165 min)

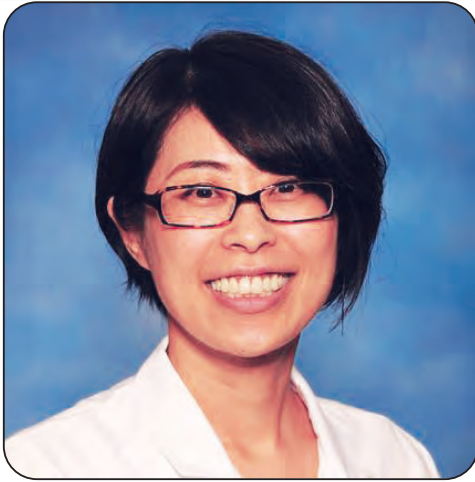
**Requests for Assistance:**

Our final objective is to elucidate the pathophysiology of Fecal Microbiota Transplantation (FMT) through a multi-omics approach. We would greatly appreciate your support in achieving this goal.

## Where Are They Now?

Chie Tamamoto-Mochizuki, DVM, PhD, Diplomate, AiCVD

By: Valerie A Fadok, DVM, PhD, Diplomate, ACVD



*Dr. Tamamoto-Mochizuki*

Those of you familiar with the Westie Foundation are probably aware that we award grants and scholarships to a number of worthy veterinary candidates who are interested in understanding diseases that affect Westies. These awards have included veterinary students as well as post-graduate veterinarians who are pursuing a career in research and academics.

In 2018, we awarded a grant to Dr. Tamamoto-Mochizuki to provide support for her dermatology residency and graduate work at North Carolina State University. She earned her DVM from Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine in Japan in 2007, followed by a four-year residency in Small Animal Internal Medicine at the University of Tokyo. She came to the USA to study with veterinary dermatologists at North Carolina State University, and completed her residency and board-certification through the Asian College of Veterinary Dermatology in 2018. Her PhD was awarded in 2021; her research focused on immunology as it relates to skin. Her special interest is itch, and how IL-31, the itch molecule, contributes to the itch of canine atopic dermatitis. For those of us whose dogs have taken Cytopoint or Apoquel, IL-31 is the target by which these medications decrease itch.

Dr. Tamamoto-Mochizuki has recently joined the veterinary faculty at the University of Tennessee as an assistant professor, where she continues to study how IL-31 works in the skin. She is currently teaching veterinary students how to diagnose and treat skin diseases in dogs and cats, and is a current member of the International Committee on Allergic Diseases in Animals (ICADA). This committee develops guidelines for how best to treat our allergic dogs and cats, and promotes continued research on atopic diseases in all our veterinary species. Dr. Tamamoto-Mochizuki is active in continuing education for veterinarians in the management of skin diseases, particularly those involving allergy. She has published several papers, and we are proud to have played a role in her career development. Below is a list of her publications.

1. Introduction to the ICADA 2023 canine atopic dermatitis pathogenesis review articles and updated definition. Eisenschenk MC, Hensel P, Saridomichelakis MN, Tamamoto-Mochizuki C, Pucheu-Haston CM, Santoro D. *Vet Dermatol*. 2024 Feb;35(1):3-4. doi: 10.1111/vde.13183.
2. Update on the role of genetic factors, environmental factors and allergens in canine atopic dermatitis. Hensel P, Saridomichelakis M, Eisenschenk M, Tamamoto-Mochizuki C, Pucheu-Haston C, Santoro D; International Committee on Allergic Diseases of Animals (ICADA). *Vet Dermatol*. 2024 Feb;35(1):15-24. doi: 10.1111/vde.13210. Epub 2023 Oct 15. PMID: 37840229 Review.
3. Transcriptome profiling in acute experimental canine atopic dermatitis skin lesions after IL-31 inhibition with lokivetmab. Tamamoto-Mochizuki C, Crawford N, Eder JM, Gonzales AJ, Olivry T. *Vet Dermatol*. 2023 Aug;34(4):327-338. doi: 10.1111/vde.13159.
4. Update on the skin barrier, cutaneous microbiome and host defence peptides in canine atopic dermatitis. Santoro D, Saridomichelakis M, Eisenschenk M, Tamamoto-Mochizuki C, Hensel P, Pucheu-Haston C; International Committee on Allergic Diseases of Animals (ICADA). *Vet Dermatol*. 2024 Feb;35(1):5-14. doi: 10.1111/vde.13215.
5. IL-31 and IL-31 receptor expression in acute experimental canine atopic dermatitis skin lesions. Tamamoto-Mochizuki C, Olivry T. *Vet Dermatol*. 2021 Dec;32(6):631-e169. doi: 10.1111/vde.13034. PMID: 34796564.
6. Proactive maintenance therapy of canine atopic dermatitis with the anti-IL-31 lokivetmab. Can a monoclonal antibody blocking a single cytokine prevent allergy flares? Tamamoto-Mochizuki C, Paps JS, Olivry T. *Vet Dermatol*. 2019 Jan 23. doi: 10.1111/vde.12715.
7. Pilot evaluation of the antipruritic efficacy of a topical transient receptor potential melastatin subfamily 8 (TRPM8) agonist in dogs with atopic dermatitis and pedal pruritus. Tamamoto-Mochizuki C, Murphy KM, Olivry T. *Vet Dermatol*. 2018 Feb;29(1):29-e14. doi: 10.1111/vde.12486.
8. Transcriptomic profiling of dorsal root ganglia in atopic and healthy dogs: A comparative RNA sequencing study with implications in cutaneous itch research. Tamamoto-Mochizuki C, Mishra SK. *Vet Dermatol*. 2025 Jan 27. doi: 10.1111/vde.13324.

# What is an Endowment and How Does it Help the Westie Foundation of America?

*By Gary C Sackett, Treasurer*

**T**he definition of an endowment is a donation of money of property to a nonprofit organization, which uses the resulting investment income for a specific purpose. Endowments come in several forms, but the two most common are the Regular and Named Endowments.

Both types of endowment are similar. Funds are donated to the WFA to be used for a specific purpose (e.g., Atopic Dermatitis, Cancer, etc.). A written agreement is created between the WFA and the initial donor which specifies the purpose of the endowment, how the endowment funds can be spent, reporting requirements for the endowment, how the endowment can be modified and how long the agreement is in effect. With a named endowment, the initial donor's name and purpose of the endowment will be memorialized for the term of the endowment (which may be in perpetuity).



In 2022, through the generosity of Karen R. Heere, the WFA received its first endowment “The Karen R. Heere Endowment for Research in Cancer Affecting West Highland White Terrier Dogs Fund”. The earnings from the investments will be used in perpetuity to support cancer research. Other donors have already contributed to this fund, and it now exceeds the \$100,000 minimum requirement. Funds are already being granted by the WFA for cancer research.

In 2023, through the generosity of Tom and Roxanne Austin, the WFA received its second endowment with the “Tom and Roxanne Austin Endowment for Atopic Dermatitis”. The focus of this endowment is to research causes of canine atopic dermatitis and to develop lower cost treatments for affected dogs. The WFA has provided grants to the University of Zurich for its innovative study.

Endowments are important to organizations like the WFA because they ensure that there is a funding stream for future work studies while safeguarding the original principal investment. They provide a way for donors to impact health issues that are important to them, and they provide excellent opportunities for estate planning. For donors facing the minimum required distributions from their IRAs and 401k's, this is an excellent strategy to give to the WFA within IRS guideline strategy.

The WFA has an agreement framework in place to tailor for future endowments. We have the mechanisms in place to quickly assist in creating endowments and have the reporting format available for multiple endowments. If this is something that resonates with you and you would like additional information on how to set up an endowment, please contact the WFA President, Bebe Pinter ([president@westiefoundation.org](mailto:president@westiefoundation.org)) or the Treasurer, Gary Sackett ([treasurer@westiefoundation.org](mailto:treasurer@westiefoundation.org)).

## The Westie Health Book

Common Health Problems, How to Recognize Them,  
and What to do About Them



## PRINTED COPIES OF **THE WESTIE HEALTH BOOK** ARE NOW AVAILABLE!

A printed copy of THE WESTIE HEALTH BOOK provides an easily accessible reference to help ensure your Westie's health. There are up-to-date sections on Westie health, breeding, genetics, common diseases in Westies, complementary and alternative medicine, and sections on each of the health problems affecting our beloved breed, written by the foremost researchers and veterinarians who have the greatest knowledge of our breed.

## **GREAT GIFT FOR YOURSELF, YOUR VETERINARIAN, OR A NEW WESTIE PUPPY OWNER!**

LINK TO WFA WEBSITE ORDER FORM: [westiefoundation.org/westie-health-ebook](http://westiefoundation.org/westie-health-ebook)  
or fill out the form below and mail it in. Thank You!

**PRICE: \$37 US each or 3 for \$100**

**U.S. postage included. Please e-mail [info@westiefoundation.org](mailto:info@westiefoundation.org) for foreign postage.**

*Gary Sackett, WFA Tresurer, 6440 Sky Pointe Drive #140-213, Las Vegas, NV 89131*

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# LET THE IRS HELP

By Thomas Barrie

Making a contribution to the Westie Foundation should be a convenient, efficient process. In addition to the satisfaction of supporting Westie health research, one of the benefits of contributing is the income tax deduction which is allowed for charitable contributions. The 2018 tax law changes may reduce the benefits to the donor by making the standard deduction large enough that charitable deductions, with other deductions, do not exceed the standard deduction allowance. For some, the new standard deduction will make itemizing deductions of no benefit to the taxpayer.

You can usually deduct the full fair market value of appreciated long-term assets you've held for more than one year, such as stocks, bonds or mutual funds. In addition, if you donate stocks or other investments, you pay no capital gains tax.

Donating investments—especially highly appreciated securities—instead of cash can be a very effective and tax-efficient way to support a charity. Generally, if your assets have appreciated in value, it's best not to sell securities to generate the cash you need for a donation. Contributing the securities directly to the charity increases the amount of your gift as well as your deduction.

This method will maximize the effect of your gift to the Foundation by donating appreciated assets, such as stocks, bonds or mutual funds. Especially after a period of escalating stock markets, the value of many stocks will include unrealized gains. By making a donation of appreciated stock, the recipient gets the current appreciated value, and the donor is allowed the deduction for that value. No tax is due to the donor on the appreciation – the charity pays no tax: in effect, a tax-free transaction.

Many retired individuals are faced with IRA Required Minimum Distributions (RMD). Specified amounts must be withdrawn each year or the owner faces major penalties. Again, in this case, if the owner chooses to make a donation out of this withdrawal, he should make it as a direct in-kind donation to the Foundation, avoiding personal taxes on the donation, yet fulfilling the obligation for the RMD. This process is called an IRA Charitable Rollover,

and allows a donor to lower their adjusted gross income and therefore the overall tax liability.

Since fewer taxpayers are itemizing their tax deductions, it may make sense to “double-up” your contributions by making double contributions in one year.

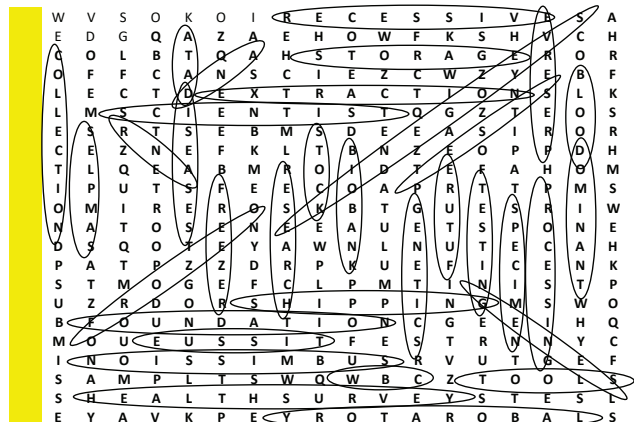
Every Broker will have the forms on their website necessary to make a direct stock transfer, or contact your customer representative to get the information you need. Also contact [Gary Sackett, WFA Treasurer, [treasurer@westiefoundation.org](mailto:treasurer@westiefoundation.org)] [or Jim McCain, Donor Manager, [catercain@gmail.com](mailto:catercain@gmail.com)] choose one for necessary information on where the donation is to be sent.

Of all the itemized deductions available to you, the charitable deduction is perhaps the most flexible in that you can control both the amount and the timing of your donations. And, as with all tax decisions, it's a good idea to meet with a tax or financial advisor to determine the best charitable giving strategy for your situation.



## WESTIE BIOBANK WORDS SOLUTION

biobank	preserve
Blood	processing
collection	recessive
Cryogenics	research
data	RNA
diseases	samples
DNA	scientist
dominant	shipping
extraction	specimen
foundation	stock
freezer	storage
frozen	submission
future	testing
genes	tests
genetics	tissue
health survey	tools
laboratory	WBC



# Westie Allergy Word Scramble



Word Scramble By Gary Sackett

**UNSCRAMBLE EACH WORD AND THEN UNSCRAMBLE THE BOXED LETTERS TO FIND A CONDITION AFFECTING MANY WESTIES.**

ETGNIST    \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_  
 PELMSUPNTES    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 RBOOHICTP     \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 QPAUOLE     \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 PTTYCNOIO    \_ \_  \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  
 IEDT     \_ \_ \_  
 BIRMOMCOEI    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  \_  
 GIHTCIN    \_ \_ \_ \_  \_ \_  
 RRTTHIANO    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_  \_ \_  
 ETAENTMRT     \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

**List the 10 letters  
in the boxes and  
unscramble to  
find the answer**

\_\_\_\_\_

*Puzzle solution will be  
in next newsletter.*

*So many adorable Westie families submitted their photos.*

*These are the finalists who are*

*“**Honorable Adorable Mentioned**” along with our  
**Winner by the ribbon!***

*The **Sushi Chef and His Assistant**  
featuring **Westies Chewie and Niu Niu**  
sent in by owners John and AJ Gregory, Austin, TX.*

***Thanks to everyone for your participation!***

*Get your **Holiday** outfits ready for the  
**WFA Westie Holiday Photo Contest** coming soon!*



**A PAWFECT HALLOWEEN**

<https://westiefoundation.org>

# Westie Cartoon Caption Contest

Create the winning caption for this Westie cartoon. Please send your caption to [bjpinter@msn.com](mailto:bjpinter@msn.com) before **January 31, 2026**. The winner will be announced in the next newsletter with their caption.

## Create a Caption for this Cartoon

*Copy of original watercolour by Ruth Sutcliffe, England*



## Winning Caption of Last Cartoon!

*Cynthia Hinz*



**"SOME BREEDS WOULD PREFER TO VIEW THE RIVER  
RATHER THAN PLAYING ON THE FUN BRIDGE"**



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