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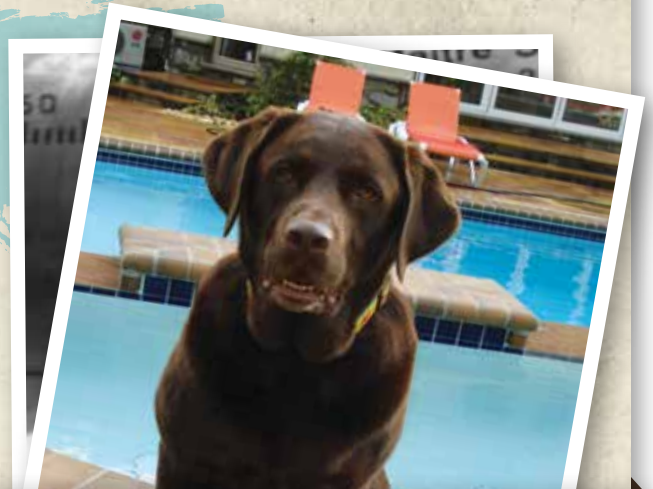
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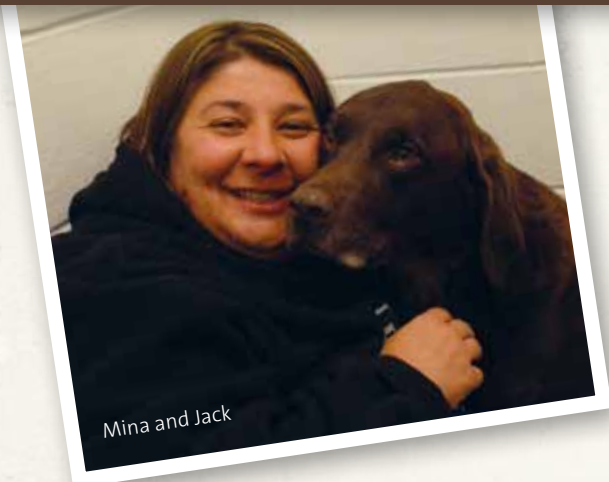
The Best Place on Earth

Helen Radenkovic
University of Pennsylvania

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"The Best Place on Earth"



BY HELEN RADENKOVIC

Mina Ebrahimi hastens into Penn Vet's Ryan Hospital lobby anxious and overwhelmed with concern for her beloved nine-and-half-year-old chocolate lab, Jack. She left her home in the Washington, DC metro area at 3:30 a.m. to drive to Ryan Hospital because Jack's coughing and respiratory fits were worsening. Jack is by her side, happily greeting the Hospital security guard, Lona, with kisses. Lona opens her arms to embrace Mina and welcome her – they are old friends, and Mina has made this long drive many times before. As far as she is concerned, Penn Vet is the only suitable place to bring Jack at a time like this. With unmatched expertise, innovative tools and great compassion, Penn Vet's Ryan Hospital addresses the most complex companion animal diseases.

Mina and Jack have been coming to Ryan Hospital since 2004, after Jack was diagnosed with an intrahepatic liver shunt, a life-threatening genetic development where a blood vessel carries blood around the liver instead of through it, compromising the organ function. Jack was just a puppy when he was diagnosed by his primary veterinarian in Virginia, and one of the very first dogs to benefit from a complex Interventional Radiology procedure previously only available to humans. During the

novel, minimally invasive procedure, metal coils were inserted into Jack's shunt to promote coagulation and close off the abnormal blood vessel in his liver. The procedure was a success. However, the young puppy's ordeal was not yet over.

Shortly after healing from his procedure, Jack had to be rushed back to Penn Vet to address a gastric ulcer and severe gastrointestinal bleeding, which is a complication that can occur in dogs with intrahepatic shunts.

With intense medical treatment, Jack made it through these close calls. Inspired by the level of care and compassion she and Jack experienced, Mina expressed her gratitude through an incredibly generous gift, naming the Jack Miller-Ebrahimi Interventional Radiology Program at Penn Vet.

Eight years after Jack's first visit to Ryan, he and Mina are back to address his breathing problems. It is another emotional, nerve-wracking day for Mina, but as soon as she sees her team of clinicians, Dr. Susan Volk, assistant professor of small animal surgery, and Dr. Mark Rondeau, an internal medicine specialist, she is visibly relieved and breaks into a big smile. Warmth and affability come easily to Mina and she instantly makes two new friends at Penn Vet. She breathes a sigh of relief knowing that Jack's breathing issues will be examined and addressed from every possible angle by some of the finest clinicians in the field.

Jack's coughing condition is currently being managed with medication and continued observation. While dogs with liver shunts never grow to full size, at 90 pounds, Jack is full of Labrador energy! Little slows him down. The only reminder of his liver shunt hardship is his silky soft puppy coat that never quite developed into an adult coat – just one more way that Jack is special.

Mina expressed her gratitude to Penn Vet for the expert care provided to Jack with yet another extraordinary gesture of generosity. With an additional gift, she purchased much needed anesthesia and Interventional Radiology equipment; supported exciting research in novel stem cell therapies; sponsored the training, health care and food for a puppy in

Computed tomography angiogram showing stent and caudal vena cava (light area, left of center).



training to become a detection dog at the Penn Vet Working Dog Center; and purchased training supplies and provided marketing funds for the Center.

"Penn Vet is the best place on earth," Mina declares. "And it's not only because Jack's treatment was successful, but also because of the brilliant people here and the School's history of clinical innovation."

Whenever Mina visits Ryan Hospital, she makes a genuine effort to connect with each clinician who treats her beloved dogs. She also takes the time to learn about new, exciting advancements in veterinary care and the programs being pioneered at Penn Vet. This is how she learned about the novel stem cell therapy research and the Penn Vet Working Dog Center, which she decided to support.

Mina also has taken on the responsibility of promoting the high-quality care, research and teaching at Penn Vet through social media efforts and press releases and by hosting events. Recognizing this passion, Dr. Joan Hendricks, Gilbert S. Kahn Dean of Veterinary Medicine, welcomed Mina to the School's Marketing and Development Committee, where her enthusiasm and acute business acumen make a meaningful impact. Mina also got her sister, Sarah Miller, involved with supporting the Working Dog Center and exciting marketing initiatives for the School.

When she is not advancing Penn Vet's mission, Mina owns and runs Saint Germain Catering, the largest corporate catering business in the Washington, DC metro area. In 2010, she won the CEO Brava Award for Women Leaders, and in 2011, she was named one of the Top CEO Leaders under 40 years of age in the Washington, DC metro area. In April of 2013, she started the Mina Ebrahimi Foundation to support a variety of charities and women's causes. She continues her involvement with the Ronald McDonald House and Operation Homefront, an organization which provides emergency financial and other assistance to the families of service members and wounded soldiers. Between spending time with her family and friends and growing her business and her philanthropy, Mina never loses momentum.

Today, Mina is focused on advancing the Jack Miller-Ebrahimi Interventional Radiology Program at Penn Vet. With Dr. Dana Clarke, a lecturer in Interventional Radiology

Ultrasonographic image showing shunt (S) and caudal vena cava (CVC).



and Critical Care, at the helm of the Interventional Radiology program, Ryan Hospital provides minimally invasive treatment with less chance of infection, less pain and a decreased recovery time for animals suffering from a number of diseases. Interventional Radiology utilizes fluoroscopy, a real-time moving x-ray imaging modality, to visualize the placement of catheters, stents, balloons and coils into blood vessels, the urinary system, the respiratory system and other tubular structures.

Among Mina's generous gifts of equipment are a portable fluoroscopy unit, also known as a portable C-Arm, and a laser lithotripsy machine. The first in a veterinary teaching hospital in the nation, this C-Arm enhances the way Penn Vet clinicians perform a variety of surgical procedures such as cardiology, orthopedics, and urology. The laser lithotripsy machine enables Dr. Clarke to treat painful bladder stones by delivering laser pulses through a fiber optic scope inserted into the urethra to pulverize the stones in the bladder. The stones are then able to be removed with a basket and without the need for a single incision. Both tools have transformed the way Dr. Clarke and her colleagues deliver care to beloved pets and they have helped to establish Penn Vet as a leader in minimally invasive surgery.

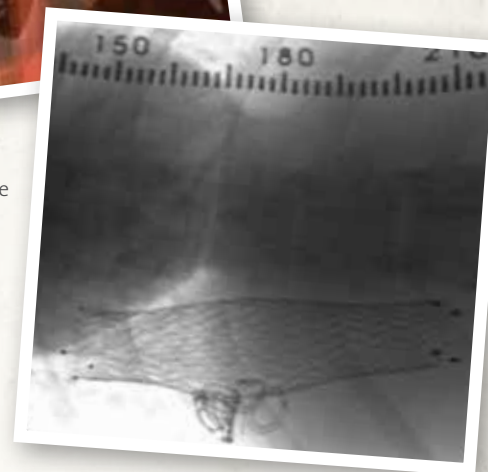
Dr. Clarke is passionate about using her critical care background to further this emerging field. She is a firm believer in collaboration and exchange of knowledge, and has been joined by top Interventional Radiology specialists from the University of Pennsylvania's Perelman School of Medicine to perform procedures at Ryan Hospital. Mina could not be more proud to see that the Jack Miller-Ebrahimi Interventional Radiology Program has taken such an enlightened path in developing new knowledge. Her vision is that, in addition to delivering unparalleled care, Penn Vet will become the top veterinary teaching and training venue in Interventional Radiology.

Most recently, Mina returned to Ryan Hospital with her other chocolate lab, Tony, to address his walking difficulties. She was upset, crying intermittently as she described Tony's symptoms to Dr. Adam Moeser, a neurology specialist. Tony's symptoms were suggestive of a number of maladies that ranged from neurological to orthopedic. Mina was desperate to find an answer to alleviate Tony's recurring problems. Dr. Moeser and Dr. Kim Agnello, an assistant professor of surgery who specializes in minimally invasive orthopedic surgery, took an in-depth look into what was limiting Tony's mobility and causing him discomfort. Comprehensive neurological and orthopedic examinations, x-rays, magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), and the GAITfour electronic walkway system ruled out a spinal cord abnormality and suggested that osteoarthritis was the source of Tony's recurring pain. A new diagnostic modality in Dr. Agnello's tool box, the GAITfour is an innovative technology used to evaluate the gait of animals with



Animation of stent being inserted. (Infiniti Medical).

Finished procedure showing stent with coils.



possible arthritis and other orthopedic diseases.

Since his diagnosis and prescribed medications, Tony is feeling much better. "He is like a new puppy again," Mina exclaims.

Back at home, Mina has two more Labradors – a yellow lab named Barney and a black lab named Suzie. Along with Jack and Tony, their wellbeing is one of Mina's greatest priorities. She believes that providing the finest veterinary care is the least she can do for her Labradors in exchange for the support and healing they provided to her after an accident left her wheelchair-bound and in rehab for almost two years. Both of Mina's ankles were shattered in a jet skiing accident during a family vacation, and she endured difficult surgeries and a challenging rehabilitation. With the support of her family – both human and canine – Mina made a remarkable recovery. It was during those trying, dismal days filled with pain that her canine companions provided the kind of quiet, loving support that allowed Mina to remain hopeful about her recovery and future quality of life.

"They saved me, and I'll do anything for my babies. My dogs and Penn Vet helped me to build myself as a person." Mina's devotion to her pets is undeniable, and her choice for their care is Penn Vet's Ryan Hospital. Her experiences here showcase some of the many ways that Penn Vet leads the veterinary profession.