



**VCSG**

# Veterinary Care & Specialty Group

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*24/7/365*



**423-591-0270**

**January 2020**

**In this edition.....**

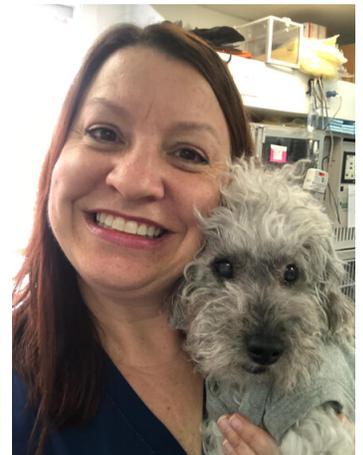
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**VCSG is a proud supporter of...**

Wreaths Across Chattanooga  
Retiring of the 2019 Christmas Wreaths  
Honoring our Military Veterans  
Saturday, January 25  
Chattanooga National Cemetery  
8:30 AM



**Dr. Amy Holford  
will be seeing appointments  
January 9-11  
January 27-31  
Call VCSG  
(423) 591-0270  
for available times**



Dr. Holford and Maxie

**SEE PAGE 6 FOR HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION UPDATE  
SCHEDULED OPENING JUNE 2020**

**HAPPY NEW  
YEAR!!!**

**Warmest wishes from the  
doctors and staff at VCSG  
for all good things in  
2020!!**

**24 HOUR VETERINARY BROAD ST.**

**DOC VADER WILL BE SEEING PATIENTS JUNE 2020!**

**VCSG**



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## Vader's Friends of the Month



Vader Pullen

## Ask the Vet:

The K9 Golden Years:  
How to help your pet age  
gracefully and pain-free

Nikita Viens, DVM, CVMMP



The picture above is my dog Sabrina a month before she passed away last November at the age of 12. Sabrina was there for all my important life events: my graduation from veterinary school, moving to my first apartment, my first real job and getting married. I adopted Sabrina at six years old and like most dogs, she was my best friend and was loyal to me until the day she passed. It was important to me that she lived a long, healthy, pain-free life and pass away with dignity. Here is the story of how I helped her do that.

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**MTN VIEW  
AUTO GROUP**

BLADES  
CREATIVE

**NORTHRIVER**



PERIODONTICS & IMPLANTS



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1. **Ideal Body Condition:** While Sabrina was in my care I kept her very trim. I watched her weight and body condition carefully and always adjusted her food to keep her at an ideal weight. I knew that any extra weight pressing down on her joints and back would only accelerate the onset of arthritis and associated pain. Maintaining a healthy weight is the most important thing we can do for our pets - it's the one factor we can actually control! It prevents arthritis, gastrointestinal disorders, endocrine disease like diabetes, cancer, and other chronic ailments. Our pets live longer lives when they are at a healthy weight.
2. **Exercise and maintaining mobility:** Walking, hiking and jogging are important for us to stay healthy, and it is important for our pets, too. At the height of our physical fitness together, Sabrina and I were running 10k's during my time as a student. We also did a lot of walking and hiking around our neighborhood. It was such a wonderful way for us to bond. Maintaining mobility is especially important as our pets get older. Exercise will help them increase muscle mass (which is the support system for bones and joints), decrease stiffness, increase range of motion and help to increase and prolong mental acuity. Eventually, Sabrina and I stopped running altogether when I recognized her physical condition was diminishing with age. Our hikes became less intense, and our walks got shorter. Be sure to pay attention to your pet as they age. Do not ask them to do more than they are physically capable.
3. **Pain control:**
  - a. **Supplements:** Your pet should be on joint supplements starting at a young age. These supplements include glucosamine, chondroitin and fish oils at a minimum. There are many supplements and ways to provide them to your pets including over-the-counter products for people and pet treats which are palatable. Starting at the age of six, Sabrina was placed on a prescription joint health diet that had therapeutic levels of the above-mentioned supplements. For me this was the most convenient way to deliver these important joint precursors. You can ask your veterinarian about options that will work for your family. Placing your pets on supplements early in life will help to prolong joint health and prevent arthritis, as well as many other wonderful side effects, e.g., shinier coats and improved immune system health.
  - b. **Medications:** When I began to notice Sabrina was slowing down and the range of motion in her hips and knees wasn't as it used to be, I started her on medications to manage pain and arthritis. There are many options with medications and most of them are very safe. One medication in particular, called Galliprant, is even safe in

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geriatric pets with preexisting conditions, because it specifically targets joint pain while avoiding the stomach, kidneys and liver. Before I placed Sabrina on these medications, I took a basic blood panel to evaluate her organ function. This was important because some medications are damaging in the presence of specific diseases. For example, I would not have placed Sabrina on Carprofen (another effective, safe non-steroidal medication for arthritis) if she had evidence of chronic kidney disease shown on bloodwork. I may have selected a separate class of drug, such as Gabapentin. If you are unsure if your dog or cat may have arthritis or may be painful, have them examined by a veterinarian. We are trained to recognize signs of lameness, place joints through range of motion, and evaluate x-rays for signs of arthritis. We want to see your pet age gracefully and pain-free!

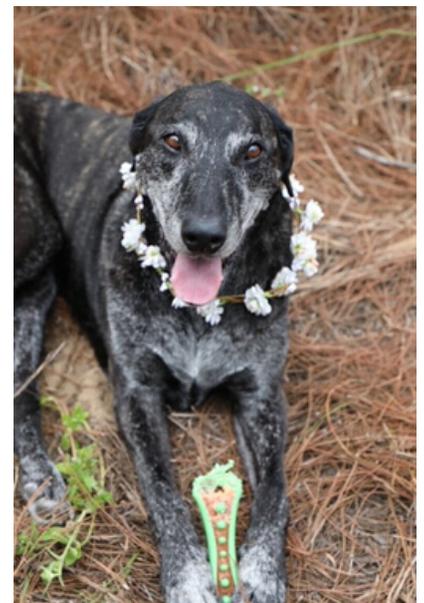
- c. **Integrative care:** When Sabrina had been on medications for one year, and they stopped providing adequate pain relief, I contacted an acupuncturist in my area for an evaluation. She treated Sabrina for knee, hip and back pain and improved her quality of life for another six whole months. It worked so well for Sabrina that I decided to attend school for acupuncture and spinal manipulation to treat and improve the lives of other animals! Acupuncture works wonderfully for managing pain. Other therapies that can help to prolong health and reduce pain are spinal manipulation/chiropractic work, massage, physical therapy, myofascial release, laser therapy, etc. Ask your veterinarian for a referral to someone in your area if you are interested in integrative care for your pet!

When Sabrina finally had difficulty getting out of bed several days in a row and fell down trying to get up one morning, I knew it was time.

I did everything in my power to keep her comfortable, and looking back, I feel good about that.

I helped Sabrina pass away at home, in her own dog bed surrounded by her family....

with dignity and an ample supply of farewell treats.





## Meet Some of our Staff Members and their Pets



Jenn and Weasley



Charlie and Chance



Tabitha, Marlie, Brandie



Rachel and Genesis



Ashley, Hattie, Cheddar



Katelyn, Wendy, Linus



Blanca, Wrigley, Barley



Lisa and Napoleon



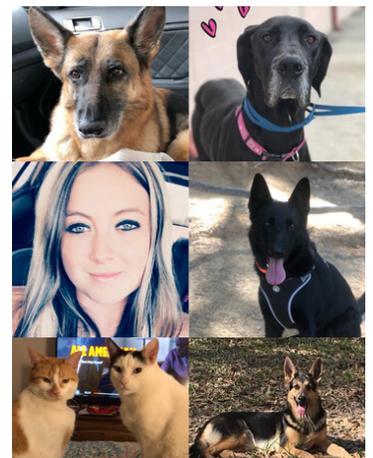
Kathy and Marley



Julie and Aphid



Kaitlin, Joey, Enzo



Tracey, Abby, Willow,  
Vega, Aqua, Oliver, Kit Kat



## Update on the Hospital Construction



**BerryHutton**  
TWO COMPANIES, ONE TEAM.

This month has been another productive one.  
The project continues to be on schedule  
with the wood framing 95% complete.  
The roof is scheduled to begin Monday, January 6.  
This will allow us to continue with the interior work  
during the winter months  
and open the new hospital as soon as possible.

Update on Construction by Mike Berry, President  
BerryHutton