



The Poop Scoop Quarterly Newsletter

Spring 2026 | Vol. 18



Medical Matters When Pets Give Blood

Most pet owners have heard of blood donation for people, but far fewer realize the same thing happens for dogs and cats. Veterinary blood transfusions quietly save lives every day, whether after a car accident, during surgery, or in the middle of a medical crisis. None of it is possible without donor pets and the programs that support them.

Our recent post about Baelor, a severely anemic kitten, is a good reminder of how meaningful a single transfusion can be. Here's a look at how it all works.

When does a pet need a transfusion?

Transfusions aren't routine, but they're more common than most people think. A general practice like ours sees the need arise in a handful of situations, and emergency hospitals see it daily. The most frequent reasons include:

- Trauma, such as hit-by-car injuries, deep lacerations, or internal bleeding
- Immune-mediated hemolytic anemia (IMHA), in which the body attacks its own red blood cells
- Rat or mouse poison ingestion, which interferes with the blood's ability to clot
- Bleeding tumors, severe parasite infestations, and certain complicated surgeries
- Inherited clotting disorders like von Willebrand disease or hemophilia

Warning signs that a pet may be in trouble include pale or white gums, sudden weakness, rapid breathing, collapse, or unexplained bruising. When those show up, a transfusion is sometimes the difference between a patient who walks out of the hospital and one who doesn't.

Where does the blood come from?

The vast majority of veterinary transfusions happen in emergency and specialty hospitals, and most of those hospitals buy their blood products from commercial animal blood banks. Those banks source their supply from community donor programs, university teaching hospitals, and volunteer-based "blood drives" run by participating practices. Blood is usually separated into components such as whole blood, packed red blood cells, and plasma, so that a patient receives exactly what they need. Some general practices also maintain a small in-house donor program for non-emergency cases, but this is much less common than at the ER level.

Could your pet be a donor?

Dogs and cats can both be donors, and the requirements exist to keep the donor safe and the recipient protected. General guidelines from most programs:

Dogs: between 1 and 8 years old, typically over 50 pounds, up to date on vaccines, in excellent health, on no medications other than parasite preventatives, calm temperament, and never having received a transfusion themselves.

Cats: between 1 and 8 years old, at least 10 pounds of lean body weight, strictly indoor, free of feline leukemia (FeLV) and FIV, fully vaccinated, and tolerant of brief handling.

Dogs can safely donate about every 4 weeks and cats about every 8 weeks, though most programs only ask for a commitment of 4 to 8 donations per year. A single canine donation of roughly one pint can support two or three patients once it has been separated into components. Cats donate a much smaller volume (about 2 ounces), and because there's no universal feline blood type, every feline recipient is typed and cross-matched first.

What does donating actually look like?

The appointment itself is short, usually under half an hour. The donor is checked over by a veterinarian, a small patch is shaved on the neck, and the blood is drawn while the pet rests on a table, often with a favorite treat or a technician's full attention. Most dogs handle it like a slightly boring vet visit. Cats are typically given a light sedative to keep the experience stress-free. Donors go home the same day and get back to normal within hours.

How to get involved

If you'd like to find out whether your pet could be a donor, the best first step is to ask your regular veterinarian. They can point you toward the closest program, whether that's a local emergency hospital, a university-based blood bank, or a commercial donor network. A single healthy pet enrolled in a program can help save dozens of lives over the years they donate, including pets like Baelor.

Every transfusion begins with someone's dog or cat showing up for a thirty minute appointment. It's one of the quieter ways pets save other pets, and one of the most important.

Warm regards,

Dr. Leigh Samanowitz, DVM

University Animal Clinic

7250 Canon Street, Sarasota, FL 34240



Tiny neonate kitten, Baelor, peeks out from the warmth of the incubator after receiving a donor blood transfusion.

Volunteer Spotlight: Deb Ravas



Deb Ravas shares her experience as a volunteer following a 30 year career as a kindergarten teacher in Upstate New York and relocating to Parrish in August of 2024.

My career was a fulfilling one, so retirement and a new location to call home was a big adjustment. Giving back to my community was important to me. I also wanted to do something different from anything I had done in the past.

Lucy Kisela, my friend and neighbor, was instrumental with steering me in the direction of HSLWR. She has been such a wonderful mentor to me. We have worked together many times now and I have learned so much from her!

The staff at the shelter have all been so welcoming, kind and patient since I started volunteering there. I have met many incredible people who volunteer as well. The shelter has provided both purpose and community for me!

My husband and I moved here from upstate NY. We have 2 grown daughters. One lives in Panama City Beach, FL and is getting married this September. Her fiancé is an amazing addition to our family. Our younger daughter lives in Valencia, Spain, and has been teaching English to Spanish students there.

We have a senior pup, Bailey, who is 14 1/2 years old. She is a sweet little dog who fills our hearts and home with love.

My favorite part of volunteering is that every shift is different. I work with both dogs and cats at the shelter and love doing both! I have been able to connect with so many great animals and get deep satisfaction when they find their forever families.

Thank you for your contribution to our organization, Deb!

Would you like to become part of our community like Deb and Lucy? Visit our website at <https://hslwr.org/Volunteer> for more information.

New Charitable Giving Benefits for Supporters



Beginning with the 2026 tax year, a significant change to U.S. tax law expands the availability of charitable deductions to millions of taxpayers who previously received no direct tax benefit from their giving. This new provision introduces an “above-the-line” charitable deduction for non-itemizers—effectively reshaping the incentives around charitable contributions and broadening access to tax savings.

What Is an Above-the-Line Deduction?

An above-the-line deduction reduces a taxpayer’s gross income to arrive at adjusted gross income (AGI). Unlike itemized deductions, it is available regardless of whether a taxpayer claims the standard deduction. This distinction is important because most Americans—roughly 90%—take

the standard deduction and therefore have historically been unable to deduct charitable contributions.

Key Features of the 2026 Provision

Under the new law (enacted as part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act), non-itemizing taxpayers can deduct a limited amount of charitable contributions:

- Up to \$1,000 for single filers
- Up to \$2,000 for married couples filing jointly

This deduction is:

- Above-the-line, meaning it is taken in addition to the standard deduction
- Limited to cash contributions made to qualified public charities
- Unavailable for donations to donor-advised funds or most private foundations
- Not indexed for inflation, meaning the dollar limits remain fixed over time

Why This Change Matters

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 significantly increased the standard deduction, which led to a sharp decline in the number of taxpayers who itemize. As a result, many individuals who continued to give to charity no longer received any tax benefit for doing so.

The 2026 change addresses this gap by restoring a tax incentive for everyday donors. For the first time in years, taxpayers who take the standard deduction can still receive a direct tax benefit for modest charitable contributions.

Things to Consider

Taxpayers should consider several planning strategies in light of the new rule:

- Timing of donations: Some taxpayers may benefit from shifting contributions into 2026 to take advantage of the new deduction
- Donation type: Only cash gifts qualify for the above-the-line deduction
- Documentation: Proper substantiation (receipts, acknowledgments) remains essential
- Coordination with itemizing: Taxpayers near the threshold for itemizing may still benefit from "bunching" deductions into a single year
- Itemizers also see new rules and thresholds

While the dollar limits are modest, the policy shift is significant: charitable giving is once again incentivized for nearly all taxpayers, not just those who itemize.

We encourage you to speak with your tax or financial advisor to see how the 2026 changes may impact you.

Divas and Dogs 2026 - Palm Royale



On March 20th at the elegant Lakewood Ranch Golf & Country Club guests of our annual Divas & Dogs fundraiser stepped into Palm Royale glamour—where pastel luxury, vintage resort chic (courtesy of Lilly Pulitzer), and unapologetic flair took center stage in a fashion show and luncheon.

Attendees were treated to an afternoon of fabulous fashion, delightful company, scrumptious lunch, and the chance to bid on exclusive items during a silent auction and raffle. The event was sold out and was our biggest fundraiser yet. Thank you to all our sponsors, guests, vendors and volunteers who made this day possible.

[Click Link to View the Full Divas and Dogs 2026 Photo Album](#)



Thank You Community Foundation of Sarasota County!

The Robert Parker Fund of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County honored us with a \$25,000 grant. With funds for urgent or extraordinary veterinary expenses it is a wonderful gift to our shelter and the animals able to receive treatment.

Here are a few of the ways these funds are working to save local homeless animals in need:

IHOP was a stray with a badly damaged right leg, hindering his ability to live a happy life. This sweet 2-year-old pup is now a tripod and living his best life with adopter, Hannah.

Previously featured, Starbucks was just a few days old when he was found unable to live on his own. He required 24-hour care in an incubator and bottle feeding. Medical care was provided for treatment of Puppy Strangles and pneumonia. He's now healthy, neutered, vaccinated, microchipped and adopted into a wonderful forever home.

Tonia is a young Mastiff looking for a foster, while she completes treatment for heartworm, followed by eye surgery. In time she will be healthy and ready for adoption.

In 2025, HSLWR saved over 400 animals. Our veterinary costs were substantially higher, as we were willing to take animals that need special care to become pain free and adoptable. These funds are more critical than ever, for us to achieve our goals of saving these deserving lives.



Tonia is undergoing treatment for heartworm and will require eye surgery.



Little Starbucks made an incredible recovery and is living in his forever home.



IHOP is now a healthy tripod living a happy life with Hannah.

Humane Society at Lakewood Ranch does not receive any state or federal funding, therefore we rely not only on our generous individual donors, but also on grants and our community partners.

Humane Society at Lakewood Ranch
26920 Gopher Hill Rd.
Myakka City, Florida, 34251
Phone: 941-361-1071
<https://hslwr.org>

We are open to the public for adoptions Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 11 am to 4 pm. We do not take any appointments-walk ins only!

