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Family seeks help with expenses after dog hit by car

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By BRANDON LACIC
 Sentinel-Standard editor

SARANAC - Luigi wasn't accustomed to running loose outside his home on Summit Street in Saranac, but on Wednesday, May 9, he had snuck past owners Robert and Jennifer Belt - and made his way into the roadway.

That's when the 2-year-old Italian Greyhound was struck and dragged by a truck, causing extensive injuries to his front legs, including one that was completely torn bare of skin.

Luigi was rushed to Sterner's Veterinarian office in Ionia, which referred the Belt family to the Michigan State University Small Animal Clinic. There, veterinarians were able to treat Luigi's wounds and initiate the skin grafting process. Since Luigi did not have internal injuries or broken bones, Jennifer Belt said the family could not bear to put the dog down or amputate the leg.



Saranac resident Jennifer Belt holds her injured pet Luigi, an Italian Greyhound whose front legs were badly injured when he was struck and dragged by a truck near the Belts' home. Courtesy.

"He is a major part of our family," said Jennifer Belt. "His injuries are very similar to those of a burn victim."

The problem was that the price tag for the three surgeries - two of which have already been completed - was approximately \$7,000. Jennifer Belt said that is a hardship for the family right now.

Through diligent work on the Internet, the Belts were able to secure grants and donations through various organizations and individuals. To date, however, they still need approximately \$2,000.

"There is never going to be a way to thank everybody," Jennifer Belt said of the generosity Luigi's received from people around the state. "It's just been awesome."

In addition, Jennifer Belt said the man who hit Luigi was very concerned and caring, and Jennifer Belt has kept him abreast of Luigi's recovery.

Luigi is scheduled for his third and final surgery next Tuesday, and will be home with his family in Saranac by Thursday. And the number one preparation for Luigi's return? A fence.

Anyone interested in assisting the Belt family with expenses may write a check to: Michigan State University-Small Animal Clinic, East Lansing, MI 48824, with "Luigi-Jennifer Belt" on the memo line or call the clinic at (517) 353-5420. Donors may also contribute through the Web site: <<http://helpussaveluigi.pledgepage.org/>>

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