



# Z's Amazing Story of Survival

# SHOT!

By Cheryl Brady  
Owner, Vet Care Express  
Animal Ambulance

**We** couldn't believe our ears—a gunshot wound. The call came in early one afternoon in January. "Z," a beautiful, two-year-old Pit Bull, was staying with his "grandmother," Linda Sebold, while his "dad," Ryan, was at work. Grandma had to make a quick run to the store and left Z out in the yard while Grandpa stayed home in the house.

When Linda returned, she asked her



husband where Z was, because he hadn't come to greet her, which was very unusual. The couple found him huddling in a room that he never goes to, and he just wasn't acting right; she feared that he may have been poisoned. Linda did a quick exam and discovered a tiny bit of blood back by his right rear leg. Looking further, she saw a hole in his side. Not knowing what had happened, but fearing that Z had somehow been shot, she took him to the closest veterinary clinic—Braden River Animal Hospital.

The staff at the clinic on SR 64 took Z in

right away and quickly realized the seriousness of his condition. Dr. Janet Doucet and her team first stabilized the dog and then closely monitored him while taking radiographs to try to determine what may have happened. Once they took a look at the radiographs, it was confirmed: Z had, indeed, been shot. Not knowing exactly what damage had been done internally or the extent of Z's internal bleeding, the staff knew that Z would need immediate surgery and overnight critical care and observation. So, Dr. Doucet called Sarasota Veterinary Emergency and Specialty Center (SVESC), to arrange for his surgery and care.

Knowing that time was critical in this case and wanting to make sure that Z was in experienced and skillfully trained hands, Dr. Doucet then called us at Vet Care Express Animal Ambulance to transport the seriously wounded dog to SVESC.

When we arrived at the animal hospital, we carefully lifted Z onto a stretcher, loaded him into the ambulance, administered oxygen and continued to monitor him closely while making the 30-minute trip to SVESC.

Upon our arrival, Z was examined by Dr. Wendy Ellis, owner of SVESC while his radiographs were reviewed by Specialty Surgeon Dr. John Kirsch of Coastal Veterinary Surgical Specialists.

Within a half hour of arriving at SVESC's



Cheryl Brady,  
Vet Care Express Animal Ambulance  
Photo by Connie Summers

new state-of-the-art facility, located at 7414 South Tamiami Trail, Z was taken into surgery by a team of doctors and technicians skilled in using the most technologically advanced equipment to do everything that they could to save his life.

Gunshot wounds can be very tricky. Depending on trajectory, caliber, entry/exit wounds and where the bullet lodges, the length and complexity of surgery can vary greatly. In Z's case, the bullet, which turned out to be a pellet, had entered Z's abdomen near his rear right leg and then, because of the trajectory, pierced his bowel five times, causing very heavy internal bleeding. Unfortunately, the pellet also hit the mesenteric artery, one of the main arteries to the bowel, so about a foot of Z's intestine had to be removed and resected. Finally, the pellet lodged into the lining of the stomach and had to be removed.

After spending one night in



Pictured far left, Ryan Sebold and his dog, Z. At left, Cheryl Brady of Vet Care Express with Z and Ryan. Cheryl provided emergency transport for Z after he had been shot in Bradenton. Photos by CT Botha

the hospital under close observation, Z was allowed to go home to continue his recovery and healing in his own environment. Within a week, he improved greatly, and today he is back to his old self again.

"I know Z's chances of survival would have been slim without this great community support system that we now have in place," says Linda. "He first received tremendous care at Braden River Animal Hospital and then the ambulance transport...not only did he need oxygen, but there's just no way that I could have made that drive—the whole way, I would have been terrified that he wouldn't make it. And then SVESC's outstanding skill and collaborative effort and Dr. Kirsch's emergency surgery certainly saved Z's life.

"If this had happened in a different place or before we had these resources, we probably would have had to put Z down," Lynda adds.

While the Sebolds are relieved that Z has fully recovered, a question still remains: Who shot Z and why? Local law enforcement has not been helpful in attempting to find the individual responsible for aiming a gun at an innocent dog at close range... and firing. The family is outraged—and with good reason.

But thanks to the teamwork, caring and concern at Braden River Animal Hospital, Vet Care Express Animal Ambulance, Sarasota Veterinary Emergency and Specialty Center and Dr. Kirsch at Coastal Veterinary Surgical Specialists, Z is a happy, healthy, very active dog today! 🐾

Cheryl Brady is the owner of Vet Care Express, the first emergency animal ambulance service in Sarasota and Manatee counties. For more information about Vet Care Express or to schedule a transport, please call 941-592-5131 or visit [www.vetcareexpress.com](http://www.vetcareexpress.com).

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