

## CUSTOMER STORY:

# AKC Canine Health Foundation



*“Every bit of time we can save and every process improvement we can make means we can do more for canine health. Blackbaud’s technology helps us improve efficiencies that save time, and time saved translates into measurable impact for dogs—and their people.”*

—Diane Brown  
Chief Executive Officer  
American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation

If you’re a dog person, you just get it. When you bring a dog into your home, they become a part of your family. They play a role in countless standout memories. They grow to be an “I can’t imagine my life without you” companion. And this feeling—that is understood in homes across the world—is a driving force behind efforts to ensure dogs everywhere can live healthy lives as best friends to their people.

At the forefront of that driving force is the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation, an independent affiliate of the AKC, which has been funding scientific research to advance the health of all dogs and their people since 1995. And if you didn’t get it already, you will after speaking with the Foundation’s accomplished chief executive officer, Diane Brown. “We’re here to meet the unmet medical needs of dogs,” she says. “We look for the best researchers in the world, and we fund the best research initiatives we can to advance our mission.”

AKC Canine Health Foundation  
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- Luminate Online®
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- Raiser’s Edge NXT®
- Financial Edge NXT®

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In the same way bringing a dog into your home is a long-term investment, Diane sees the Foundation's donors' contributions as long-term investments in canine health. "Research is inherently a long-term venture," Diane says. "With the AKCCHF, you aren't making a donation that immediately provides a meal or builds a home. With research, you don't get that same kind of instant gratification—achieving results can take years. You're making an investment in science with the hope for an outcome down the road."

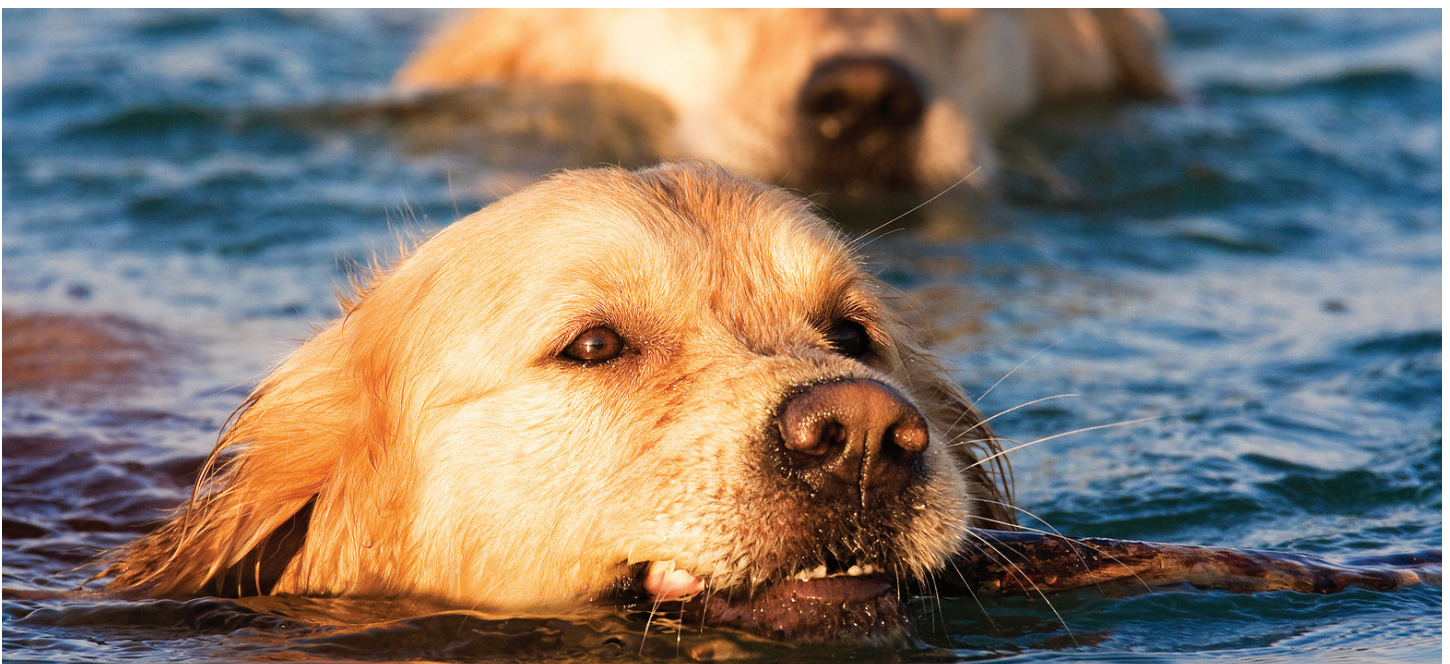
Those hopes for future outcomes cut across a multitude of focus areas under the umbrella of improving dogs' health. The AKCCHF uses Blackbaud Grantmaking™ to manage the grantmaking process that funds research internationally for canine health across 25 different research areas. "We know our donors have specific areas of interest to them when it comes to dogs' health. Whether it's related to lungs, skin, cancer or any number of focus areas, people have experienced health issues with their own dogs," Diane explains. "We categorize our grants in ways so that our donors can easily invest in areas that matter to them."

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That categorization of research grants dovetails into donor segmentation, which is an area of donor engagement and marketing that the AKCCHF is prioritizing with Blackbaud's support. This helps the Foundation to understand what matters most to its donor base and also to support marketing efforts that lay out a timeline and show progress toward specific canine health outcomes.

"Say, we have a donor who has been involved with the Foundation for 10 years. With Blackbaud Raiser's Edge NXT®, we can see that that donor has focused his or her investments in one particular disease over all these years. We instantly understand more about that donor because we can see what motivates him or her," says Diane. "We can even lay a map over our donor segmentation to see when certain diseases have an outbreak in a particular area, and we can use Blackbaud's Luminate Online® to target our communications to those urgent areas of need."



*With Blackbaud Raiser's Edge NXT, we can see that that donor has focused their investments in one particular disease over all these years.*

Speaking of areas of need, the AKCCHF has recently invested in several initiatives that are already showing results. In particular, the AKCCHF's epilepsy initiative is already yielding life-changing outcomes, with a new emergency room treatment for epileptic dogs now available based on the investment in genetic research. Another area of need that the AKCCHF has been focusing on heavily since 2016 is tick-borne diseases. "This is an area that affects all dogs, from small to giant," Diane explains. "People can relate to this, and our donors responded immediately. We've seen increases in tick habitats, extensions of tick season throughout the year, where they migrate, etc. Tick-borne diseases are often under-diagnosed, so we see ourselves continuing investment in this area for several years to yield more outcomes with direct benefits for dogs and their people."

With so many areas of canine health to cover and a variety of funding initiatives underway simultaneously, the AKCCHF knows the value of working efficiently. "As we've upgraded our systems with Blackbaud's support, we have been able to significantly improve efficiency across the Foundation. With Blackbaud Grantmaking™ Luminate Online®, Raiser's Edge NXT® and Financial Edge NXT®, we've seen improvements from areas like automation and our ability to easily spot duplicate entries in our databases."

Where Diane sees scientific research as a long-term investment for donors, she sees technology as a long-term investment for the Foundation. "As we've upgraded our technology systems with Blackbaud, we have made a point to invest in training, too. When you look at technology as a long-term investment for your organization, you recognize that spending time improving your staff's working knowledge of the systems will help to unleash the power that's there," Diane says.



Now, the Foundation doesn't put a premium on efficiency for efficiency's sake. "Every bit of time we can save and every process improvement we can make means we can do more for canine health. Blackbaud's technology helps us improve efficiencies that save time, and time saved translates into measurable impact for dogs—and their people."

And the AKCCHF is certainly seeing the impact of their work. "One of the ways we measure success is through the output of our funded researchers—peer-reviewed scientific publications are like an end-product for us," explains Diane. "We're currently up to 675 publications, and those publications have been cited more than 23,000 times in other research. This helps you see the reach and potential impact, plus we can compartmentalize these results to understand our return on investment. Our Blackbaud technology is helpful in identifying and evaluating some of this. For example, we can look at our Blackbaud Grantmaking™ data and match dollars of funding to publication outcomes to uncover a sweet spot for our grantmaking efforts."



## Blackbaud's technology helps us improve efficiencies that save time.



With a purposeful investment in technology and training to enhance relationships with donors and boost efficiency alongside a commitment to excellence and outcomes through research, the AKC Canine Health Foundation is leaping into the future of grantmaking. "We have very well-educated donors who also bring so many personal experiences to guide their investments with AKCCHF. We're scientific in our approach to improving canine health, yet we know the long-term investment our donors make comes from a personal and emotional place. Through our work, we meet some remarkable people and hear so many inspiring stories about the dogs in their lives."

And when organizations like the AKCCHF make progress in improving canine health outcomes, those stories can become even more wonderful for dog people—and the dogs they love—everywhere.

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### About Blackbaud

Leading uniquely at the intersection point of technology and social good, Blackbaud provides software, services, expertise, and data intelligence that empowers and connects people to advance the social good movement. We serve the entire social good community, which includes nonprofits, foundations, corporations, education institutions, and the individual change agents who support them.