

# The METROWEST DAILY NEWS

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## **NATICK**

# Surgery saves local dog's eye

► Waltham vet helps puppy found on the streets of Puerto Rico

By Kathy Uek  
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NATICK — Weighing in at 20 pounds, Parker, might be small for a dog, but he owns a big attitude. A scar over his right eye is his badge of courage after living on the streets of Puerto Rico.

Save A Sato rescue program found Parker in a parking lot — thus the name Bill and Tricia Hunt of Natick gave the dog when they adopted him.

Thousands of satos — slang for stray dogs — wander the streets of Puerto Rico every day in search of food and shelter, according to Roberta Dehman Hershon, spokeswoman for the Veterinary Emergency and Specialty Center of New England (VESCON). Many dogs living on the streets are injured in car accidents and dog fights.

"I assume his behavior is from living on the street," said Tricia Hunt. "He eats his dinner in about a minute — trails of the scavenger past he probably had. He also stands on his hind legs and walks along to look bigger."

The Hunts adopted Parker from Buddy Dog in Sudbury, which since 2001 has participated in the Save A Sato program to find loving homes for these animals.

Parker didn't always have the scar. When the Hunts adopted the corgi, pug and Chihuahua mix had only half an eyelid.

The Hunts took Parker to the Veterinary Emergency and Specialty Center of New England in Waltham to see its ophthalmologist, Dr. Michelle Willis. Her exam

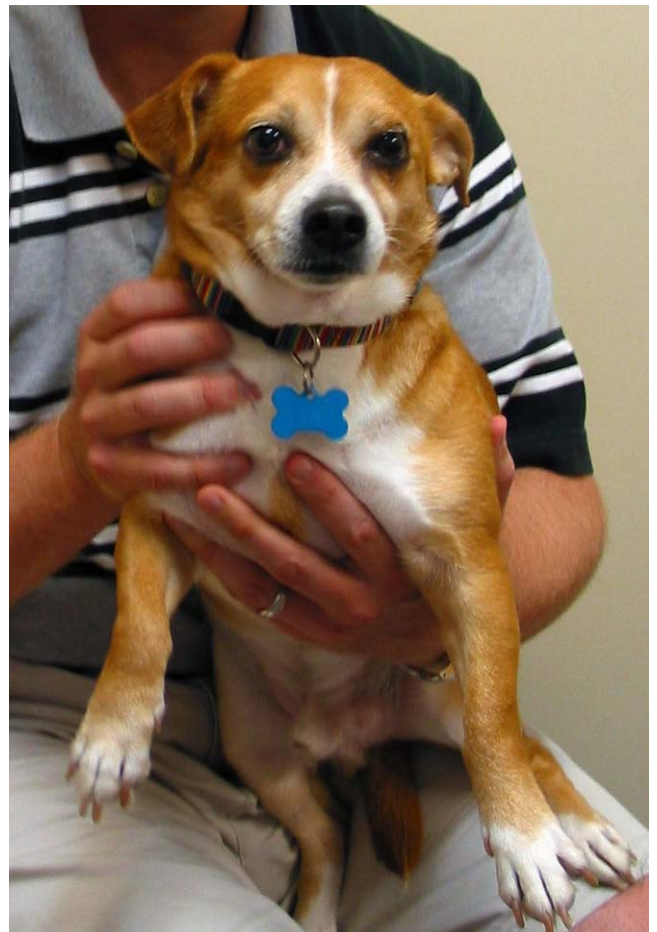
found Parker's cornea was damaged due to exposure. During Parker's two-hour surgery, Willis created a rotational pedicle graft from the area under his lower lid and rotated it up to cover the defect involving the upper eyelid, according to the company's press release. To create a smooth lining for the new eyelid, a graft was also taken from the inner portion of Parker's lip.

The little dog with one ear that flops over while the other sticks up is back to his old tricks. "He runs around in circles in the back yard, plays catch and keep-away under the dining room table," said Bill Hunt. "He loves to play and be a lap dog. He's fairly lazy with bursts of energy."

The couple's previous dog, Casey, twice as heavy as Parker, died in January. "We're both dog people and were looking for the next family member," he said.

On a second trip to Buddy Dog, Tricia found the dog she wanted.

"All the dogs were barking, but Parker wasn't going to bark or anything crazy to get attention," said Tricia. "When I took



**Parker, found roaming the streets of Puerto Rico, now has found a home in Natick.**

him for a walk, he wasn't interested in chasing rabbits. He stayed by me. Those were good signs."

Parker likes his downtime, too. "He loves to have his belly rubbed," said Bill Hunt. "We knew he was looking to be loved."

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