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LONGER, QUALITY LIVES FOR DOGS IS THE PASSION BEHIND BURT WARD'S GENTLE GIANTS BY REID CREAGER

Pop culture history is littered with fallen Hollywood stars. Since rocketing to stardom as Robin on the iconic mid-Sixties TV show "Batman," Burt Ward has gone to the dogs—but in a remarkably inspirational and unselfish way.

Ward and his wife, Tracy Posner Ward, have saved the lives of more than 15,500 dogs via their Gentle Giants Rescue that they founded in Norco, California, in 1994. All of those dogs have lived in their home until they were adopted. Often devastated by the pain of seeing some of those larger dogs die at age 5 or 6, they turned to the innovation arena to help all dogs live longer, healthier lives with all-natural, low-fat, hearthealthy Gentle Giants dog food, sold nationally with no profit for them.

"Gentle Giants dog food is excellent for all dogs of all ages, sizes, and stages of life," Ward says. Burt and Tracy have fed it to dogs from 3 lbs. to 300 lbs., from 4-weekold puppies to seniors that are 27, healthy and active.

Ward says the food—in combination with the Gentle Giants feeding and care program—can double the lifespan of dogs and sometimes triple the lifespan of bigger dogs, which typically live six to nine years.

"Suppose a restaurant opened up where you live," he says, "and at this restaurant everyone who ate there could live 200 years and be totally healthy. How hard would it be to get a seat at that restaurant?

"We invented something that changes, lengthens, and improves the lives of dogs. Life is the most valuable and precious commodity in the world."

A scientific, loving formula

Gentle Giants dog food—U.S. trademark serial No. 77255248, registration date Jan. 6, 2009—was not a hastily conceived product. The Wards had nutritionists from across the United States develop their unique formula. The couple fed the dog food to the thousands of dogs in their rescue for years and saw great results before making it commercially available in 2008.

Burt Ward said their pursuit of the highest standards included "spending some time finding the most prominent patent and trademark attorneys, then the time for providing detailed information to the attorneys prior to their filing, then determining which classes that we want to seek registration for, filing and waiting ... waiting ... waiting ... sting the registration and maintaining the records as to when to file renewals, etc."

Now Gentle Giants is available nationally online from Walmart.com, Chewy.com and Petsmart.com, and is sold in 1,200 stores in California as well as thousands of stores throughout the country.

Most dog foods have 12 percent to 22 percent crude fat, Ward says, but Gentle Giants has only 9 percent. Made in the USA, the dog food has natural, super-premium ingredients that include farm-raised chicken, 12 non-genetically modified organism vegetables, three non-GMO fruits, complete vitamins, chelated minerals, glucosamine, chondroitin, prebiotics and probiotics.

Ward may be most proud of what the dog food doesn't have: No added fat, No excessive protein, No meat or poultry by-products, No fillers, No artificial colorants. Burt Ward shows off his "canine kids" on the facing page: Tara (left), 26 years and 8 months old as of August; and Madonna (right), 20 years and 5 months old. Both dogs, which are fed Gentle Giants dog food and are on Gentle Giants' feeding and care program, are healthy, energetic and living double to triple their normal lifespan of 6-9 years.



You can see some of the active dogs shown above, many of which have far exceeded their normal lifespans, at gentlegiantsproducts.com. The website also shows how the dogs are fed and how the dog food is manufactured. Upper right: Burt Ward, his wife, Tracy, and some of their large-breed dogs. At right: Gentle Giants dog food.

"When people feed their dogs our food and follow our feeding and care program, we get letters telling us that after four to five weeks, they have a completely different dog, amazingly healthier and happier."—BURT WARD

No artificial preservatives. No non-specific animal source 'meat' or 'poultry' meat, meal or fat. No grain 'mill run' or non-specific grain source. No ground corn, whole grain corn or corn gluten. No wheat or wheat gluten. No ingredients imported from China.

"Our program of longevity and age management for dogs is all science," Ward says. The food is designed to go hand-in-hand with Gentle Giants' feeding and care program—a hallmark of 23 years' experience rescuing and caring for dogs, and a lifetime of working with dogs.

The Wards feed their dogs five or more times a day smaller, more frequent meals—on elevated feeders with their food and water easily accessible, without the stress of the dogs continually having to lean down to eat and drink. This is designed to reduce the added stress of digesting large quantities of food at a single time and to avoid bloat and torsion, a major killer of dogs.

Under the Gentle Giants feeding and care program, dogs are taught to self-regulate how much they eat so they only eat what they need, do not overeat, and never gain too much weight. The food is also designed for greater absorption into each dog's body to maximize nutrition while minimizing the volume of food in its stomach at any given time.

Ward says, "If you went to see your medical doctor for an annual exam and asked your doctor the following question: 'Am I better off eating one or two big meals a day or four or five smaller meals a day?' What do you think your doctor would say?"

Given that the latter choice is the most healthy, "people say, "Well, yeah, but that applies to human beings.' I say, 'Wait a minute. A dog is a living creature, and a dog is not nearly as well designed as a human being. That's why we live so much longer than dogs.' So, it's actually much more important for a dog to eat five or more times a day than it is for a person."

Beyond the food

As important as healthful, quality food is, Ward says it's just as crucial for dog owners to understand the many physical and emotional components involved in maximizing a pet's quality of life and age management,

4 INVENTORS DIGEST INVENTORSDIGEST.COM

which significantly affect a dog's longevity. He urges pet owners to read and follow the feeding and care program detailed at gentlegiantsdogfood.com.

"When people feed their dogs Gentle Giants and follow our feeding and care program, we get letters telling us that after four to five weeks they have a completely different dog, amazingly healthier and happier," he says. "There is usually a huge, overall improvement in a dog's health, including overall alertness. Other manufacturers add fat to their dog food to make dogs hungrier so you will feed them more food and be forced to buy more dog food, all at the expense of your dog's health. Some manufacturers add protein to their dog food—not because it is necessary or good for dogs, which it isn't, but because customers can be misled by this marketing technique to believe that more protein is better for dogs when it is the exact opposite."

In younger dogs, Ward says, Gentle Giants prevents and corrects developmental issues caused by too much protein in other dog foods. In older dogs, his food's balanced protein helps them move and play without the pain also caused by excess protein in other foods. He says older dogs act like puppies after a consistent diet of the food, staying active and healthy as long as age 27.

The Wards typically shelter 45 to 50 dogs at a time. "Right now we have 24 of the dogs that we have here that have already lived more than twice their normal lifespan. That is consistency. That is not an anomaly."

'Just a couple weeks'

All sales from the dog food go to produce more dog food, which the Wards sell only slightly above cost so that it is affordable for as many people as possible. They take no salary and make no money from the sales of dog food, or from the rescue—a California nonprofit 501(c)(3) public benefit corporation that Ward says is the largest giant-breed dog rescue in the world.

This is especially significant when considering the expenses of a rescue that houses breeds such as Great Danes, greyhounds, Mastiffs, and St. Bernards. Ward confirmed that the dogs consume roughly 600 lbs. of food each day costing about \$14,000 a month, and their annual veterinary expenses can be \$50,000 or more.

Burt and his wife feel fortunate they can shoulder such an economic load. Ward notes that he has made personal appearances for decades at which fans buy autographs and have their photo taken with him, the proceeds of which are used to help care for the rescue dogs. He has also run companies. When he met his future wife in 1989, she and her late father, industrialist and philanthropist Victor Posner, owned and operated about 3,600 companies with annual sales of \$26 billion.

Their love of animals was a commonality from the start. "When my wife and I started rescuing Great Danes 23 years ago, the person who had been rescuing them had passed away. Dogs that people had to give up



Among the suggestions at GentleGiantsRescue.com:

- Only feed your dog Gentle Giants dog food.
- Never feed your dog a food that has more than 22 percent protein or more than 9 percent fat.
- Never feed your dog any food that has a greasy feel on the outside.
- Feed Gentle Giants dog food dry, Do not add water. It is recommended to add one heaping tsp. of Gentle Giants canned food at each meal for extra nutrition and taste.
- Elevate food and water bowls at a height so that dogs don't have to lean down to eat, but just tilt their heads down. This can help avoid bloat and torsion, a major killer of dogs.
- A month after transitioning your dog to Gentle Giants, you can increase the amount of dog food that you offer him or her at each feeding to reach a point where your dog will walk away from the food. Gentle Giants is designed for dogs to self-regulate how much they eat. With other dog foods, you need to limit how much your dog eats—so you never know whether you are feeding your dog too little, the right amount, or too much.
 - Feed the dog Gentle Giants for 10 to 15 minutes, then remove the food.
- If dogs have any stress or exercise with food in their stomach, they can bloat and die. Gentle Giants dog food is designed to reduce the risk of bloat and torsion.
- Make sure there is no stress or exercise at the times that your dog eats. Do not allow your dog to exercise for at least one hour before and for one hour after each feeding, and feed no food for at least one hour before and after riding in a vehicle.
- Remove the overall stress in your dogs life by fulfilling your dogs emotional needs. Have them live inside your home in the main living area as a member of your family.





Burt Ward is still in demand as Robin. Last fall, he, Adam West and Julie Newmar (the original Catwoman) reunited to provide voices for an animated feature, "Batman: Return of the Caped Crusaders." Some of Ward's memories involving the TV show that ran from 1966 to 1968:

What are your fondest memories of Adam West (the original Batman who died June 9 at 88)?

I met him 10 minutes before we were going to have a screen test together. Eleven hundred young actors were considered for the role. After five minutes of talking with him, we were both laughing and realized we had a lot in common. We shared a similar kind of humor and became instant friends. We laughed for more than 50 years since then.

*Losing Adam was a terrible loss, completely unexpected. But, I know he spent his whole life making people happy and entertaining people. I encourage people to look at the positive things in life, taking into account that we all have a very short time on this planet, and we should make each day as productive as possible. That's what he would have wanted for us—not to be sad.

"Thinking of Adam always makes me smile. Though other actors have played the role of Batman in feature films, Adam West will always be the best Batman. He was truly the Bright Knight and the one and only true Batman."

Because a lot of your face was visible while playing Robin, you had to do many of your own stunts. Is it true you broke your nose while filming the first episode when a 2-by-4 fell on your face?

'T was in the hospital four out of the first six days of filming: seconddegree burns, broken nose... that would be another whole interview.

"There was a lot of stuff that went on there. It was a dangerous show to make--and not the most comfortable costume in the world."



were going into shelters, where there's a lot of barking and dogs are under stress. When you see a big dog like a Great Dane in a cage and it's barking, nobody wants to take it out. In today's world, if they don't take it out within a few days and adopt it, it gets put to sleep."

When the Wards started their rescue, shelters were just a place for people to find lost dogs; owner-turnedin dogs could be put to sleep as soon as the owner who turned them in left. Even today, an owner turnin can be put down after 24 hours of being in a shelter. Although shelters today try hard to get dogs adopted, they are only required to hold owner turn-ins for 24 hours in case the owner might change his or her mind.

"I said to my wife in the first week of August 1994, 'We can't let these dogs die. We've got to do something. How about we rescue these dogs for just a couple weeks? I'm sure that in a couple weeks we'll find somebody else to take this over.'

"Well, it's been 23 years, and we haven't found anybody else to take over the rescue. I tell people that I need someone to come rescue me."

Every difference matters

Ward notes that the American Kennel Club counts 164 breeds of dogs; he and his wife rescue 45, or about onethird of all breeds. "I tell people that my wife has redefined the term 'Great Dane' to mean that if it has four legs and a tail, it must be a Great Dane."

Ward's wife, Tracy, points out that in addition to rescuing four-legged dogs, they have also rescued threelegged dogs and mixes of all 45 breeds they rescue... "We are saving lives. All lives are special, and all deserve to live the longest, healthiest, happiest lives possible."

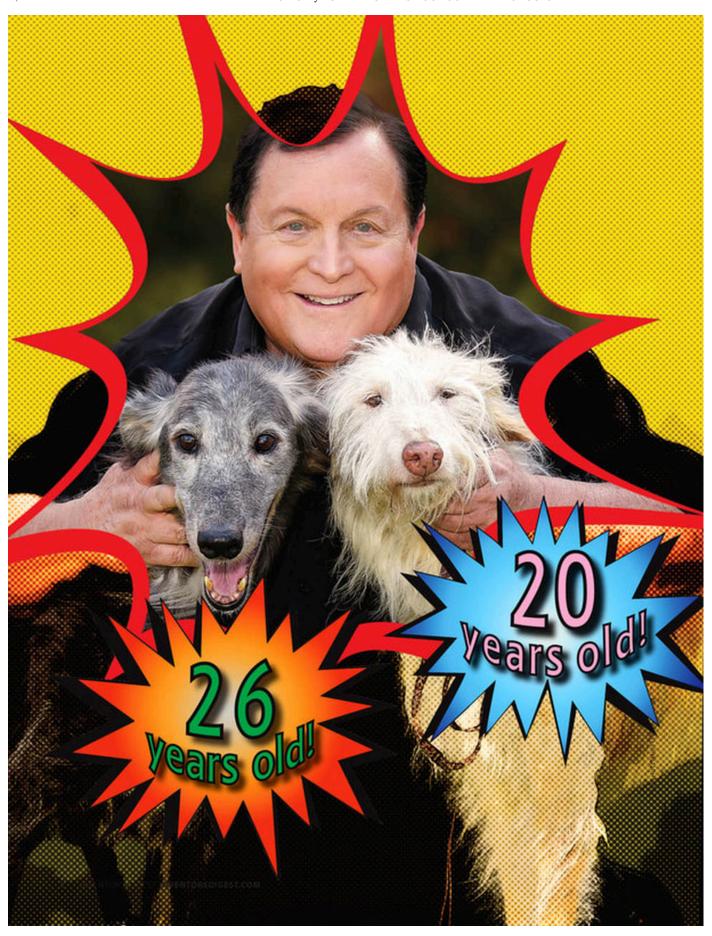
For them, Responsible Dog Ownership Month observed every September to educate the public about responsible dog ownership and to celebrate the deep bond between humans and their canine companions is an everyday occasion. Tracy, once appointed as a vice president, assistant treasurer and assistant secretary to a large conglomerate with thousands of corporations, says she regrets not being able to save all abandoned dogs. She tells this story to illustrate the importance of helping the world in any way possible.

"There's a guy walking down the beach, and he comes upon a site where a million starfish have washed up on the beach. He's watching this little boy, running back and forth, throwing back one or two into the ocean at a time, trying his best to save as many as he can.

"He says to the little boy, 'What are you doing?' The boy says, 'I'm saving lives.' But the man says, 'Why are you bothering? 'There's no way to save them all. What difference does it make?'

"The boy holds out one starfish, raises it over his head and says, 'It makes a difference to this one." ♥

On Facebook: Gentle Giants Dog Food & Products





An Exclusive Interview with Burt Ward. from TV's BATMAN

By Mike Bundrant

Why are some people willing to live at such extremes?

Burt Ward, best know for playing "Robin the Boy Wonder" in TV's BATMAN, currently resides in Norco, CA with 45 to 50 giant breed dogs living IN his house, all of which he has rescued through his charitable, non-profit, public benefit corporation, Gentle Giants Rescue and Adoptions, Inc. He and his wife, Tracy, dedicate their lives to the care, feeding, training and adoption of these animals. For Tracy, who

needs only two to three hours a night of sleep, it's a 22

hour per day investment of her time that she has made for the last 15 years.

Again, the 45 to 50 giant breed dogs, which weigh up to 300 pounds each, are Burt and Tracy's housemates. Somehow, in this sea of gentle giants, they tirelessly maintain a very busy rescue and adoptions operation, handling roughly 200 phone messages and emails daily and more than 100 adoption applications weekly. They are currently taking in and adopting out 10 to 20 new dogs each week.

Tobi and I took the opportunity to meet Burt and Tracy at their home to learn more about their unusual endeavor. What we learned is that there seems to be no limit to passion. As we sat and listened to the former Boy Wonder expound on the importance of helping dogs live longer, it occurred to me that once you allow a passion to get under your skin, there is no telling where it will lead you.

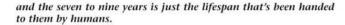
I'll let Burt take it from here.

Burt: I'm Burt Ward and my wife is Tracy Ward. We operate Gentle Giants Rescue and Adoptions, which is the world's largest giant breed dog rescue. In the last fifteen years of our operation, we have

rescued and placed about 11,600 dogs into safe, loving homes - dogs that would otherwise have been put to death. Along with the dogs we rescue and adopt are the ones that we keep for ourselves - we usually have three or four. Our mission is to help dogs live longer. Everything we do serves that primary purpose.

When we started back in August of 1994, giant breed dogs - in particular Great Danes - had an average life span of seven to nine years. With our developed feeding and care techniques, along with the unique, all natural dog food we created, we now have the majority of these dogs living 14 to 18 years, doubling the length of their normal lifespan.

HT: Maybe you've discovered their true lifespan



Burt: Exactly. Again, it's how you feed your dogs, how you care for your dogs and what you feed your dogs. Those are the three critical elements. Without all three, you don't maximize the longevity of the animal. You have to have all three. One of the things we've done that's different than all of the other rescue and animal shelters in the world is that all of our dogs live communally together. There are no cages here. Males and females are neutered and spayed, and they all live happily together. Most importantly, they live together in our house with us as members of our family.

HT: This is the "how we care for them" part of it?

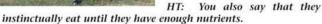
Burt: Yes. That alone makes a huge difference. If giant breeds are forced to live outside, it will cut their lifespan in half. These are companion animals. Giant breed dogs like to go outside and eat for ten minutes, go to the bathrooms and play for ten minutes, and then come inside. Otherwise, they'll be tearing your door down to come inside. If you force them to stay outside, you cut their lifespan in half.

You have to understand that these dogs are truly companion animals and they live for their master. Anything less than having a close companion relationship dramatically shortens their life. To deny them daily human companionship, which is the total instinctual drive of these dogs, is a death sentence for them. You can go to the market for thirty minutes and come back home, and your giant breed dog will look at you like you have violated him something terrible. Separation from their human companion is a horrible thing to them. As humans we have our business, our social life, our family, friends and entertainment. Dogs only have their masters, and only sometimes, other dogs. When they are inside members of the family, they don't mind waiting for their humans when they are not there, because they feel as if they are still with them as a member of their family in their home.

I have people who call me after looking at our website at www.gentlegiantsrescue.com and say, "How did you get those animals eating so close together? They are standing together like cows, shoulder to

shoulder, eating out of troughs. How come they don't fight? Did you Photoshop them in togeth-

I say, "No, we train them to do that." Once they are trained to enjoy each other's company and you give them additional emotional nutrition, they live longer. Happier dogs live longer. We also train every one of our dogs not to bark unless they sense danger.



Burt: Right. Humans eat to our satiation level, meaning that when we are full, we stop eating. A dog eats to its nutrition level, meaning if a dog isn't getting enough nutrition, it will keep eating and eating and, in some cases, even throw up and eat more. Many, many dog foods - whether purposely or not - have fewer nutrients than a dog really needs. The dogs keep eating dog food that is nutritionally deficient, and people keep buying more and more of the wrong dog food, dog food that doesn't fulfill the complete nutritional needs of their dogs.

Gentle Giants makes an all natural, complete nutrition dog food that includes chicken, fish, eggs, 9 vegetables, 3 fruits, 4 nutritious grains, and a multitude of vitamins and supplements, including Omega 6 and Omega 3 fatty acids, glucosamine, chondroitin, and probiotics.

However, profit from the sale of our dog food is not the primary



objective of our business. Our primary objective, our fundamental business, is making dogs live longer. That's what our business is. We developed our dog food because we found that eating too much dog food can shorten your dog's life. Like humans, we want to eat the right food in the right amounts. We spared no expense to make our dog food all natural with no fillers, no meat by-products or poultry by-products, and none of the chemicals that are commonly put in dog food. The result of



combining our top-of-theline quality dog food with our unique feeding and care techniques is that we have been immensely successful getting our dogs to live much longer, much healthier lives. We have doubled most of these dogs' lives - doubled them!

HT: Your vision wasn't to go

nationwide with dog food. Your vision was to care for the dogs.

Burt: Exactly. I developed our dog food for our rescue dogs. One of our veterinarians then started asking me about the food. "I don't understand how can you have a Great Dane that's sixteen and a half years old? It's amazing," he said. So, I told him about our unique feeding and care techniques, and the low protein, low fat, high nutritional value of our dog food. The veterinarian has been feeding our dog food to his hospitalized dogs and boarding dogs for the last four years. And he feeds our dog food to his own, personal dogs. He also sells our dog food to his customers, and it sells so well that he has stopped selling all of the other brands of dog food that he used to sell, with the exception of prescription food. Everything about our dog food is designed to be the best of the best. Because of the spectacular results that we have had, we now require our adopters to use our dog food.

My wife and I take no salary from the rescue. We make no profit from the rescue, and we are continually donating our own money to it because it is expensive to keep all the dogs healthy and happy and to fund costly operations. We also pay for transportation here to rescue dogs from all over the world. We basically adopt the dogs for the cost of running the operation. The satisfaction we get comes from saving lives, and making these dogs live significantly longer, healthier lives.

When a person adopts a dog from us, we require that they use our feeding and care techniques and our dog food. We believe that after fifteen years of research and development, and the terrific results of getting these dogs to live so much longer, we don't want to go backward. We are also now widely distributed in our first grocery chain. Our dog food is available in all 166 Stater Brothers Markets in Southern California. Our sales have grown dramatically, because people are seeing significant improvement in the health and vitality of their dogs, and they are telling their friends and other people about the success they've had. Now many new people are feeding Gentle Giants dog food to their own dogs. Although I can't divulge the volume, we are receiving each new order from Stater Brothers in half the time of the previous order.

HT: One of the things that occurs to me is that what's missing for the dog owner is education. Most people go down the aisle and see all the choices, but they really don't know what's best.

Burt: Precisely. Most people have very good intentions and they do want their dogs to live longer. They just don't know how to accomplish that. They look at a dog food bag that shows a photo of really good looking meat on the bag, but unfortunately, what many of the bags contain are meat byproducts and poultry by-products that sometimes include things like beaks and toenails from a chicken.

You have to understand that there has been some testing with dog food that's been done in laboratories where dogs are locked in cages and force fed. In other words, it's not feeding in a natural environment. We have the greatest testing there ever could be with the more than eleven thousand six hundred dogs that have lived in our home that we fed five times or more a day, every day.

We are the only rescue that I know of that flies dogs in from all over the world. We just flew two Great Danes here from Taiwan, a Borzoi from Denmark, and a St. Bernard from Cancun. We fly dogs here from every state because almost all of the shelters know about us. And, of course we take in dogs from our local shelters throughout all of southern and northern California.

Once a person adopts a dog from us, we train that person and offer them free support for the entire lifetime of their adopted dog. Anyone who adopts a dog from us can call us twenty-four seven for the entire lifetime of the dog with any questions about health, care and behavior - any questions at all and for no charge. It's lifetime support for free. Where do you find lifetime support for free? I don't know any place, except us. This is the kind of dedication we have.

HT: Your background is television and movies, but you aren't doing that anymore, are you?

Burt: Yes, I am. People say, "You've been a caped crusader and now you are a canine crusader." But, I've starred in thirty movies for television since BATMAN. I have a computer room filled with a million dollars of state-of-the-art computers that I use to provide digital effects and computer animation for motion pictures. I've done visual effects for thirty-five major studio features. I'm involved in television and film productions, and yet, I love animals and I love dogs. Anything my wife and I get involved in philanthropically, we go as far as we can take it to make it as successful as possible.

HT: It's nice to have something you can put your whole heart into.

Burt: We feel really good about what we do. You know, there was some-body who wrote to us that had adopted three Great Danes from us. One of the Danes was 16 and 1/2 years of age. It died at 20. I'm sorry that it died, but I am happy that it lived that long. It lived almost three times the lifespan of the average Great Dane. So, I was very thankful. Several of our own dogs are currently between 10 to 17 years old and still going strong. All of our dogs are living longer, healthier lives and we attribute it to a combination of our dog food, our feeding techniques, and our care techniques. How you care for a dog is very important. Our basic feeding techniques are described on the back of our dog food bag, by the way.

So, our dog food is now greatly benefiting dogs everywhere and this is very exciting for Tracy and me.

HT: You have a holistic approach. It's not just the food. It's a lifestyle and a philosophy as well.

Burt: We teach people to understand their dogs better and their dogs to understand their people better. Even a dog senses when a human can understand them. It is much more enriching and it's profound when you open that direct line of communication by making them true members of your family.

Healthy Times wishes to thank Bob Chaney of Bob Chaney Family Martial Arts in Murrieta, CA for his help in arranging this interview.

Gentle Giants Rescue can be found at www.GentleGiantsRescue.com. Gentle Giants dog food is sold on their website and at all 166 Stater Brothers Markets in Southern California.





CANINE CRUSADER

BURT WARD'S MISSION: EXTEND PETS' LIVES WITH GENTLE GIANTS DOG FOOD



The Gentle Giants Philosophy "There is nothing more precious than life!"

Dogs are loving companions to humans. Dogs love us unconditionally and deservedly have earned the name "Man's best friend." Our pets are our family, and we want to give them the best of everything. When asked, "How long would you like your dog to live, most people will say "Forever - the longest life" possible!"

Our philosophy is to use our experience and technology, along with our unique "Feeding and Care Program" to make the very best food and provide it for the lowest, most affordable price, so that all dogs can live the longest, healthiest, happiest lives.

Gentle Giants is dedicated to the well being, health, and longevity of all dogs. It is the charity of Burt Ward and Tracy Posner Ward.

All Gentle Giants products, including the dry and canned dog food, are natural, made in the USA, and contain no corn, wheat, soy or gluten, and have no artificial colors, flavors or preservatives. All fruits and vegetables in Gentle Giants dog food have no GMOs.

Tara (above) is 26 1/2 years old and is healthy, happy, and active eating Gentle Giants dog food and following the Gentle Giants Special Feeding and Care Program.

Sophie (right) is 18 1/2 years old and is healthy, happy, and active eating Gentle Giants dog food and following the Gentle Giants Special Feeding and Care Program.

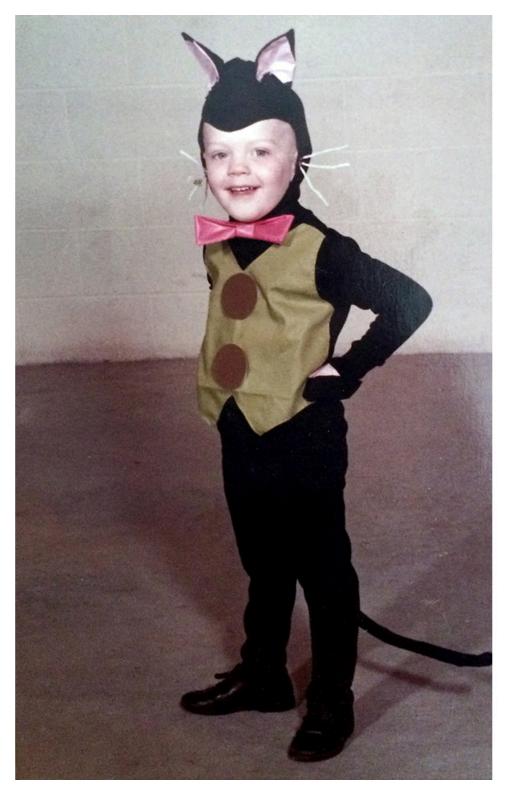
Our Team



Tracy Ward as "Wonder Woman" CEO



Burt Ward as "Robin" President



Bryan Myers as "Catboy" National Sales Manager

What Our Customers Are Saying