



Forever Friends

BILL PALMER TOUGH-TALKING SOFTIE

To those who knew him best, Bill Palmer was a man of two temperaments, depending on whether you walked on all fours or swam on his swim team. To be a swimmer under Bill's legendary tutelage was to endure the most punishing workouts and the bluntest rebukes for lackluster efforts. But to be a non-human member of Bill's family was to live in the lap of luxury, where his bed was your bed and no expense was spared to ensure your comfort.

"As a coach, he was hard. He expected your best," says MaryAnne Nelson, a former swim student who would eventually come to know both sides of Bill as his wife. "Pets? He spoiled them rotten."

Bill served for three decades as coach of the Central Jersey Aquatic Club, an American

powerhouse that launched swimmers to national titles, world records and Olympics gold. He was also an endurance athlete who finished nearly 200 triathlons and a successful businessman who ran his own disposal company. But at home, it was the animals who ran the show. "Ever since I can remember, there were pets," says his daughter, Judi Smith. "Dogs, cats, horses — everything you can think of. He was such a huge animal lover."

Bill discovered Best Friends Animal Sanctuary in its early days, on a side trip from a motorcycle tour. Its animals-come-first vibe struck a chord that resonated until the end, when it came to light that he had willed part of his estate to Best Friends. "He was always impressed by how much they cared," says MaryAnne.

Bill died on December 30, 2020, after a three-year struggle with pulmonary fibrosis. Even as the disease had him tethered to an oxygen tank, Bill took comfort from his beloved dog Lindy's head resting in his lap.

Bill's funeral was packed with swimmers, who came with reverent stories of a tough-talking father figure whose coaching made them not just better swimmers, but better people. Among the glowing eulogies was one that mentioned, with all good humor, "how he loved animals better than most people," says MaryAnne. "For his obituary, I changed it to 'as well as most people,' but he would have said 'better than most people.'"





Mary Jane

A PIG'S LESSON IN PATIENCE

Mary Jane is a bit shy around people. Before she joined the other residents of Marshall's Piggy Paradise at Best Friends Animal Sanctuary, she was found wandering alone in the wild, so no one knows what shaped her view of humans. Though she is by nature a social creature, Mary Jane isn't quite sure yet about the humans who so badly want to earn her trust.

Rosalie Wind is hoping to help. As Mary Jane's chief caregiver, Rosalie's foremost goal is to help her find happiness in a home of her own. That means getting Mary Jane more comfortable with people. And after eight years of working with the pigs at the Sanctuary, Rosalie says it's the pigs themselves who have taught her the secret to making that happen. "Patience," she says. "Learning how to be patient, to take your time. Not to expect everything in one day."

Over the years of watching over the pigs, Rosalie has also learned to question her assumptions, starting with her human-centric viewpoint that every pig is eager to be petted. "We're primates. We want to hug and hold one another," says Rosalie. "Pigs are not primates. When they're

in the field together, lying in the sun or shade together, they're not always hugging and holding. They just want to hang out together. This habit of petting and touching ... realizing that's not necessarily the pig's way forced me to take a step back and do some self-reflection."

Relating to Mary Jane, then, involves "lots of just sitting, co-existing with her," says Rosalie. "Asking things of her but not crossing boundaries."

Meanwhile, Mary Jane has a new friend, a sweet pig named Teresa, who's helping to ease her anxieties. Rosalie is hoping that the two of them will be adopted as a pair, with Teresa mentoring Mary Jane on the joys of human affection. "Mary Jane needs a home with someone who's open-minded and patient, who will accept her if she never comes around, but is also willing to put in the time with her," says Rosalie.

Apparently, Rosalie's own patience is paying off. At last report, Mary Jane was enjoying belly rubs from her caregivers — albeit with a long stick, but as we know, these things take time.

PRINCE AND PAWS SHELTER COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM

At Best Friends, the road to achieving no-kill nationwide by 2025 is paved with equal parts compassion and collaboration. Compassion is what drove a ragtag band of dreamers to start building a sanctuary for homeless pets in southern Utah back in 1984. Best Friends Animal Sanctuary not only became the biggest sanctuary of its kind in the country, it's the heart of a national movement that has seismically shifted the landscape of animal welfare. Now, in the ongoing quest to save more lives across the country, collaboration is adding the muscle to the heart. And one particularly potent display of that is the Prince and Paws Shelter Collaborative Program, named after the beloved adopted pets of the program's lead investor and visionary partner.

For the initial pilot of the program, four peer mentor organizations were paired with three shelter fellows in January 2021. The goal for mentors is to create partnerships with fellows and give those shelters guidance and tools to increase their save rates, such as help

with ramping up adoptions and spay/neuter surgeries. Best Friends supports each match with funding, training and other resources.

Once the first-year stats were in, it was obvious that the initial collaborations had worked wonders. As a result of those partnerships, 6,525 additional lives were saved in 2021. Tangipahoa Parish Animal Services in Louisiana, which was mentored by Brandywine Valley SPCA in Delaware, increased its save rate from 22% to an astounding 81%, a 270% increase in lives saved.

But behind those hard numbers are many individual faces, one of which belongs to a cat named Leela. While living outdoors in a Florida community, Leela suffered a severe accident of some kind. A concerned passerby noticed Leela's swollen face and brought her to Pinellas County Animal Services (PCAS), a fellow in the shelter collaborative program. The shelter didn't have the means to treat Leela, but the collaborating partners did. Jacksonville Humane Society and Friends of Strays (the mentor shelters) had a veterinary team that treated Leela's wounds and saved her life. And as Leela healed, a PCAS volunteer fell in love and adopted her, bringing her home to start her new life.

Heartwarming stories such as Leela's now have Best Friends planning at least 135 collaborations over the next four years, projected to save the lives of at least 35,000 cats and dogs.

THE PRINCE AND PAWS SHELTER COLLABORATIVE

SAVING AMERICA'S PETS



BRENDA RUTHIZER CAT FOSTER VOLUNTEER ON THE GO

Brenda Ruthizer and her husband, Terry O'Hara, love to travel, wandering the world in search of the next great slope to ski or trail to hike or rock to climb. They also love having cats in their lives, which would seem to be a rather formidable hurdle for anyone hoping to marry the two passions.

Not at all, says Brenda. She and Terry, adventure hounds and cat fanatics both, have hit on the perfect solution — fostering. They simply open their hearts and home temporarily to cats waiting to be adopted. “Why, we get the best of both worlds,” says Brenda. “We get to travel when we want, and once we’re home, we get to satisfy our need for cat hugs.”

Brenda and Terry shared their home with cats for decades before retirement beckoned and the travel bug bit. “After our last two cats went to the Rainbow Bridge, we tried to have a life

without pets, but realized that’s not a life we wanted to have,” says Brenda. “We wanted to travel more, but we didn’t want to leave our cat for that long.”

On the advice of a friend, Brenda reached out to Best Friends’ team in Salt Lake City to ask about fostering a cat. “As soon as I called,” she says, “they were all on it: ‘When can you come in?’” She went home that day with a cat and a carload of donated supplies: scratching posts, cat trees, litter, food, toys.

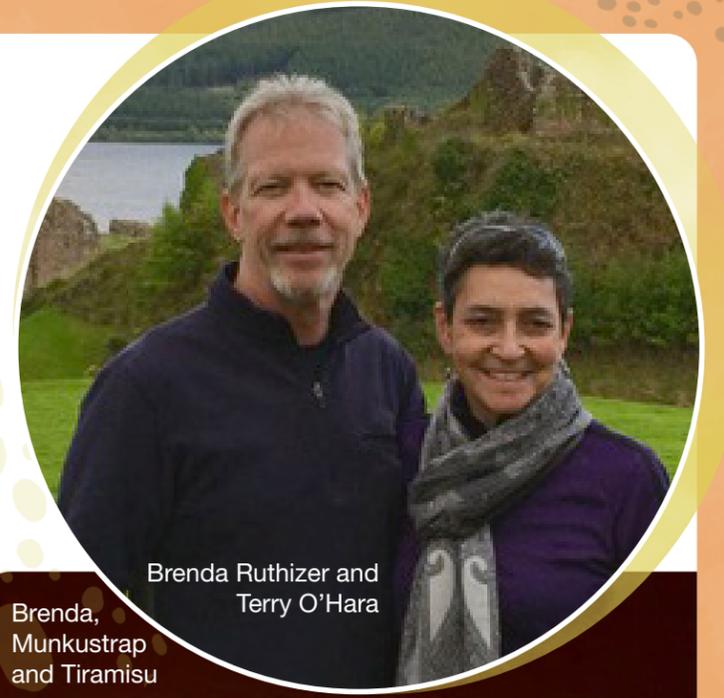
Three years and 35 foster cats later, Brenda says, “Best Friends makes it so simple. All you need to foster is the want, and Best Friends takes care of everything else.”

Brenda and Terry, who have since become Forever Friends by willing part of their estate to Best Friends, aren’t home from traveling long

before they’re scanning the website for their next foster cat. Brenda says, “We like to come home and pick up a cat that same afternoon if we can.”

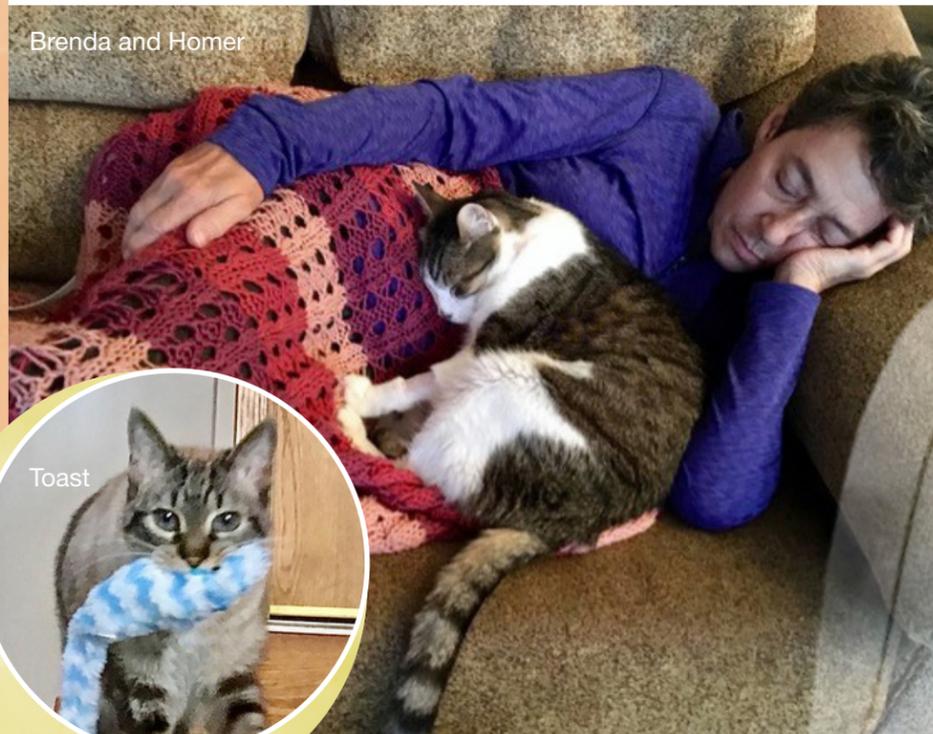
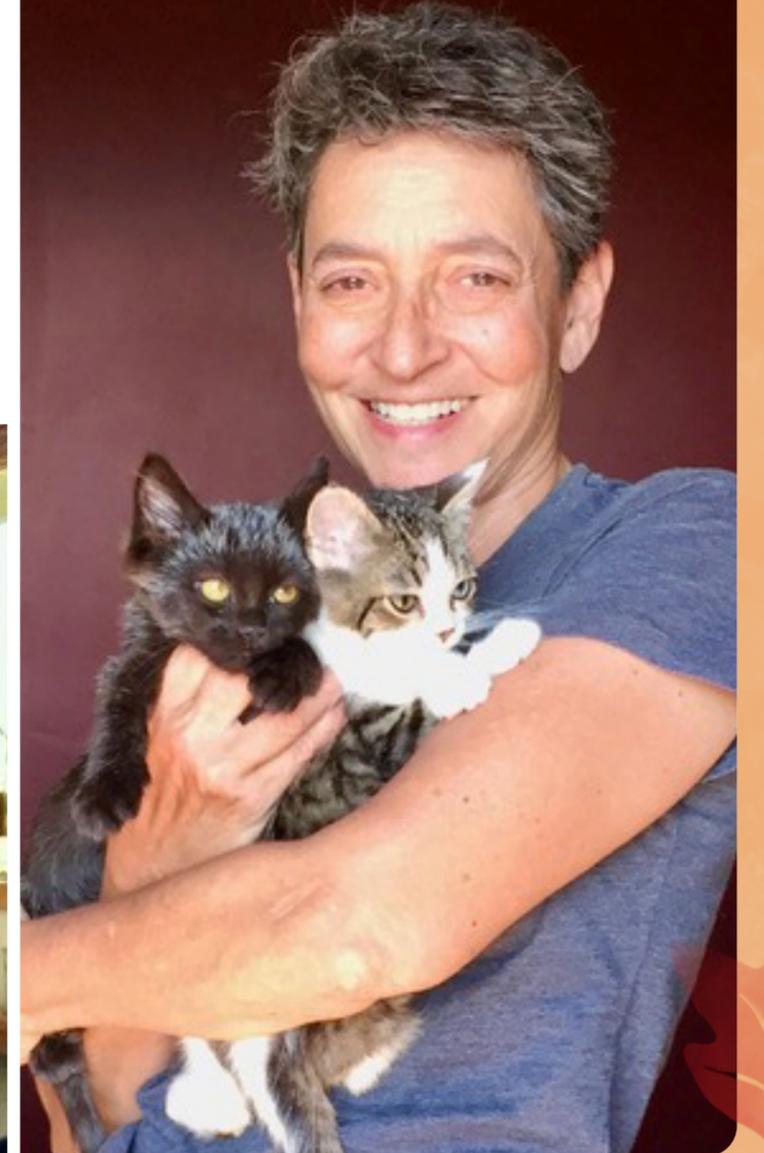
That’s not to say there haven’t been challenges. Brenda and Terry typically request the cat in the shelter with the most need, which has them fostering cats with ornery streaks and extra sass. Most memorable was Bernard, all 20 grouchy pounds of him. “I could not lift Bernard,” recalls Brenda. “Nor did he want to be lifted. There was a lot of swiping.” Bernard ended up getting adopted and returned, but then was adopted again, this time for keeps. Brenda notes, “Every foster cat we’ve had has found a home eventually.”

Then there’s the inevitable day facing all successful foster volunteers, when the kitty who has stolen their hearts is heading to his or her new home. “Saying goodbye, ooh, that’s hard,” says Brenda. “Terry starts tearing up when I take the cat carrier upstairs. But knowing they’re going to a good home is my reward.”



Brenda Ruthizer and Terry O'Hara

Brenda, Munkustrap and Tiramisu



Brenda and Homer

Toast



Brenda and Mr. Mom

YOUR LEGACY IN ACTION: KITTEN FOSTERING MENTORS

The kittens are coming, the kittens are coming! It's a cry heard every spring among shelter workers across the country, when unsterilized community cats start giving birth, and well-meaning community members start delivering thousands upon thousands of newborn kittens to shelters already filled to capacity. It's an "all hands on deck" time that prompted Best Friends CEO Julie Castle to send out this alert to our supporters last year: "We are asking everyone nationwide to raise their hands to help."

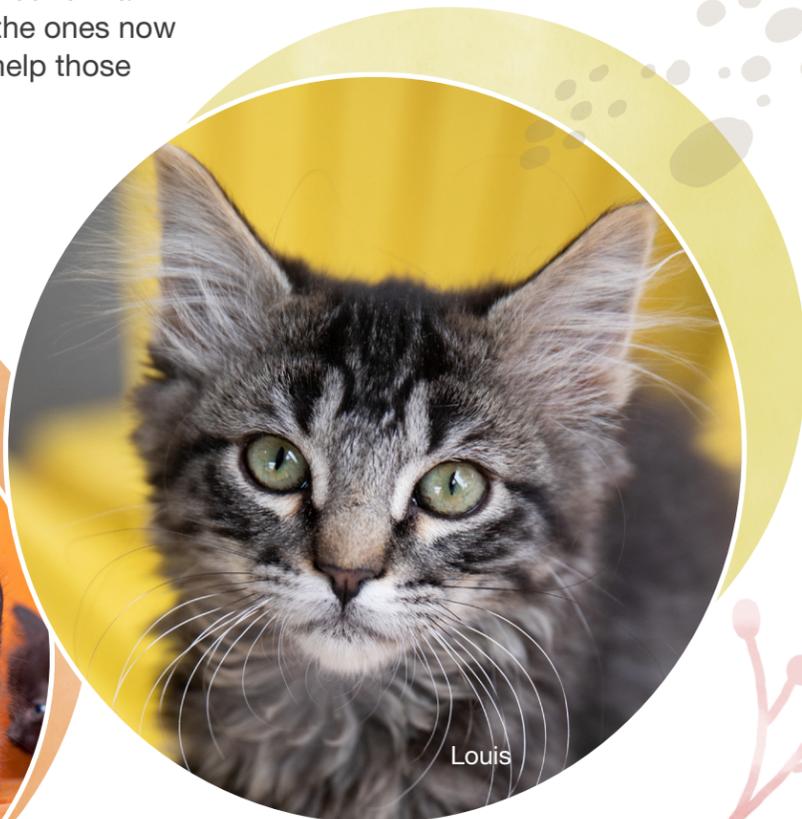
That plea is being answered by more and more dedicated volunteers who are stepping up to foster newborn kittens, helping them go from vulnerable balls of fur to playful sprites ready to rule the world. But what about when the helpers need help?

That's where kitten fostering mentors come in. The mentors are volunteers who have been through the trials and tribulations of raising kittens. They're the ones who have found that the rewards far exceed their fears, the ones now lending the voice of experience to help those who are new to fostering.

The Best Friends lifesaving team in Los Angeles has taken mentoring of foster volunteers to another level, opening up a hotline for dispensing kitten fostering advice. During kitten season, the line gets about two dozen calls a day, with fostering mentors answering questions such as "How do I get the kittens to eat on their own?" and "How do I get them to use the litter box?"

"Our foster mentors do amazing work," say Tabitha Newman, manager of lifesaving outcomes at Best Friends in L.A., "and they have a close relationship with our foster staff here, to help troubleshoot in real time." Overall, more than 18,000 neonatal kittens and nursing mom cats have benefited from the Best Friends L.A. kitten care program since it started in 2013.

The kittens are coming — and thanks to fostering mentors, they're thriving and going to good homes.



Louis

BETH WOLFER: GIVING VOICE TO THE ANIMALS

Though it's ranked among our greatest fears, speaking in public is also one of our greatest powers. From Aristotle to Martin Luther King Jr., those with extraordinary skill in public speaking have changed the course of history.

Beth Wolfer guides her students through both sides of this fear/power paradox, helping them conquer the former by embracing the latter. As a public speaking coach for the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, Beth encourages those facing these scary moments to focus on the big picture, on the life-changing potential of their message. "And the message is not about yourself," says Beth. "You're just the vehicle."

As it turns out, it's a perspective that abundantly serves Beth's passion for animal welfare. As a planned giving officer for Best Friends, Beth helps donors give voice to the animals, through their estate plans. "My job is to help get donors' message across," says Beth. "I love being able to dovetail my side passion with my day job, to represent those beings who don't have a voice. It's such a privilege."



Beth Wolfer

WHAT COULD FEEL MORE SECURE?

NEW HIGHER PAYOUT RATES FOR CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITIES!

Looking for a way to give to the animals through Best Friends, while saving on taxes and receiving regular payments for the rest of your life? We have one that's easy, thrifty and flexible enough to suit your needs. It's called a charitable gift annuity. It's the gift that keeps on giving.

Here's what you give: a minimum donation of \$10,000 to Best Friends. Here's what you (and someone else, if you choose) will receive:

- A fixed monthly, quarterly or annual payment for the rest of your life, at an attractive payment rate
- An immediate charitable income-tax deduction
- The pleasure of helping to save homeless pets well into the future

Saving lives while saving money: Sound good? **Contact us at 435-359-9227 or plannedgiving@bestfriends.org**, and let our experts provide a customized illustration of how a charitable gift annuity could benefit you. We'll calculate your payments and tax benefits based on your age and a sample gift amount, without obligation and in confidence.

