



Bentley the pup's popcorn legacy

by DEBORAH MCCAGUE

This is the story of a little dog, that was deaf and looking for a home, the Fayette County family who adopted him, and how this popcorn loving pooch inspired a business that has contributed thousands to help shelter pets find forever homes and loving families.

It all started when the Dale family decided to adopt a dog and their two daughters Jackie and Katharine chose a nine-week-old, wire haired fox terrier they named Bentley. They soon discovered that although he was deaf his sense of smell was keen and whenever the family made their favorite snack, at the first pop, Bentley would come running from the farthest corner of the house to eagerly watch the process and wait for his tasty treat. He enjoyed popcorn all his life, and why not? It's a good-for-you snack, naturally high in fiber, low in fat and, according to their vet, good for dogs too.



Fast forward 13 years and Bentley's long and happy life is now over. The girls are grown, and Steve Dale is discussing with his family possible business ventures, when Jackie and Katharine, missing Bentley, suggest a gourmet popcorn business called Bentley's with a portion of the sales somehow going to help other homeless dogs and



area alone, 100,000 lost or homeless animals are destroyed, and at the same time, there are people all over the country who would love to have a pet. He sees so many dogs and cats like Bentley, who are destined for great things, whether warning a family of fire, guarding a home or giving unconditional love and companionship. He believes every home should have a pet. It is therapeutic, and it teaches children a sense of responsibility. Plus, these furry friends just make home a nicer place.

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cats. Dale liked the idea. Pooch Bentley wasn't the only one who was crazy for popcorn. Friends, family, and anyone who tasted the Dale family's scrumptious butter pecan and toffee caramel munchies became a fan. So, Dale went right to work perfecting the recipe, which was kettle roasted with Indiana popping corn, fresh cream, grade A butter, Georgia pecans, sweet California almonds and brown sugar.

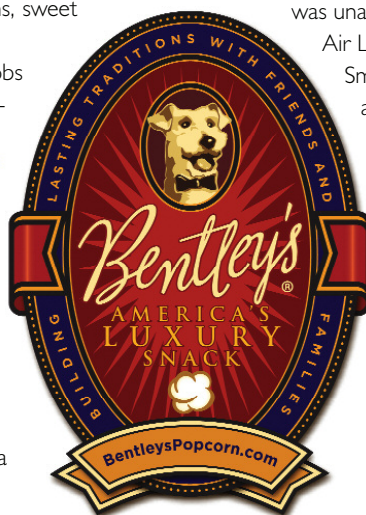
Another challenge was the packaging. Humidity robs popcorn of its flavor and crunch. After much experimentation, he developed single-serving bags packed in large tins in order to ensure the popcorn tasted as fresh as the moment it was popped. For the third part of the equation, a mutual acquaintance put him in touch with Atlanta veterinarian, Dr. Michael Good who founded the Homeless Pets Foundation. At once they realized it was a perfect match.

Dr. Good created the all volunteer Homeless Pets Foundation to assist animal shelters by providing critical medical attention, food, comfort, foster care and the placing of homeless pets with loving families. Each year in the Atlanta

sation." The company now ships 10,000 bags a day from its Fayetteville plant with eight full-time employees. Bentley's has been featured twice on Rachael Ray's television show as the "snack of the day"—first in 2009 and again in April 2010. Everyone in the audience was given a bag and the response was unanimous: They loved it. Bentley's popcorn is served on Delta

Air Lines flights, at Atlanta Braves games, the Georgia Aquarium, Smoothie King, TeaFusions at The Avenue in Peachtree City and at 268 gift shops around the country; and 5 percent of every sale is donated to the Homeless Pets Foundation.

Bentley was one lucky dog who was able to leave a lasting legacy, and thanks to the volunteers, generous donations, corporate sponsors and popcorn lovers, more than 12,000 other pets have found a home and a family who will treasure them. ■



For more information on Bentley's Popcorn go to bentleyspopcorn.com. For more information or to adopt a pet, volunteer or contribute to the Homeless Pets Foundation go to homelesspets.com.