

# A GIFT TO SHARE

**Barry Schieber's life changed the moment he set eyes on Moritz. Two of his three books about their adventures are written from Moritz's perspective, and illustrated by artists with a gift to share.**

Moritz was born high in the hills of Switzerland. At 12 weeks old, he flew to Montana with his new master, Barry, and grew into a magnificent and gifted therapy dog.

Barry was instantly and utterly enchanted by Moritz's kindness, and how he could open up and warm people's hearts wherever he went. Barry began writing – he wanted a wider audience to feel and share Moritz's magic.

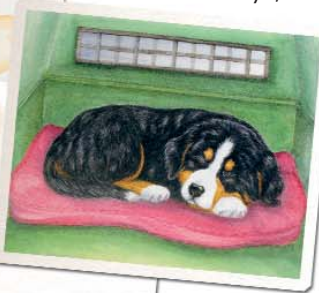
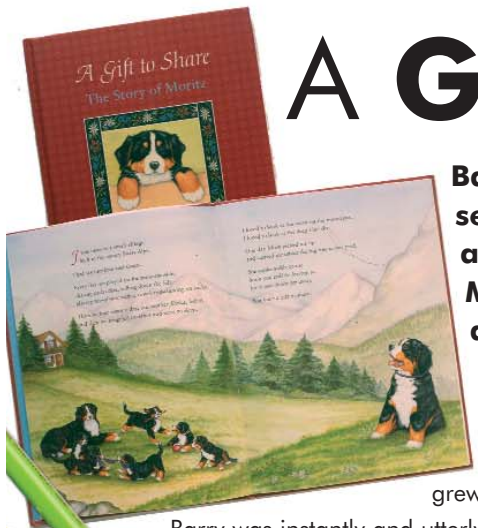
In the first children's book *A Gift to Share: The Story of Moritz*, Moritz is the transparent voice telling his young readers how he felt leaving his family and arriving in America. The book is peppered with true-to-life illustrations of Moritz playing with his siblings, nuzzling his mother, bonding with Barry and discovering his life's assignment as a healing dog. Without really trying, the book teaches children about generosity and trust.

Mary Garbe, a Bernese owner and artist in Wisconsin, created the book's engaging illustrations. She never met Moritz, but used the story and a feast of photos as her sources of inspiration. "Photographs are always useful for certain poses and proper proportions or markings, but to capture the true personality of a subject I must find small details like a glint in an eye, a subtle tilt of a head or a barely

perceptible interaction with their surroundings," she says. "I studied Moritz's photos and reread his story many times. The illustrations had to tell the story even if the words were missing."

Barry had already seen Mary's work in *Before Santa was Santa*, a fictional children's story about how Santa acquired a pack of Berners as his first sleigh team. "I could see she had such warmth for the breed," said

Barry. "Berners are a part of her life, and illustrations come naturally to her. In the Moritz story, readers feel like they are walking with him."





In *A Gift to Share*, Mary was keen to get across Moritz's calm self-assurance as a grown-up, the trait both she and Barry think has engaged people's hearts. "This trait truly is a gift to share when children, or anyone for that matter, are frightened, lonely or confused," she says. "What could be better than a great big dog with soft eyes, and time to listen?"

Mary was also particular about conveying Moritz's softness, a characteristic not always shared by the dozens of Berners she's illustrated. "Each Berner I've drawn has its own special personality," she says. "Some are playful and goofy. Others are serious and driven in their life assignments. Moritz exuded a softness that said, 'you can trust me'. I tried to convey that."

**Open your hearts**

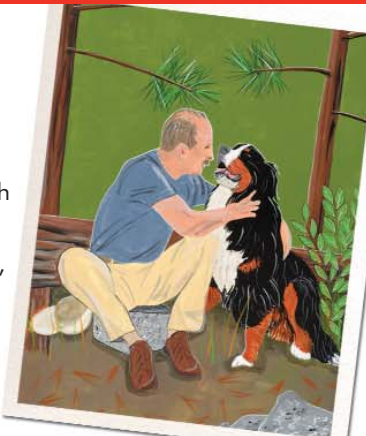
For his second book, *An Open Heart: A Story About Moritz*, Barry chose Hedvig Rappe-Flowers, a renowned art teacher from Montana, to illustrate. Hedvig had never drawn a Berner before, but approached the work from her love of nature. The book retells the story of a hike

Barry and Moritz once took in the forest. It is a story about kindness, and Hedvig captures the point beautifully and colourfully in her illustrations, most notably in the drawing of Moritz with a butterfly on his nose.

"Hedvig was incredibly sensitive to the story, of how the book should look and feel, and how it should touch young readers," said Barry. "Her drawings blew me away."

Hedvig had a very different approach to Mary. She felt she needed to meet and bond with Moritz before starting work in her studio. As an art teacher, she has always taught children that the best drawings come from experiencing a subject in its fullness. "You've got to employ all the senses," she says.

Despite different methods and styles, the timeless illustrations of both books have captured children's hearts across America. "All I ever expected was a likeness to Moritz, but these drawings go right in, they open the heart and tell the story in a different way to the text," says Barry.



Page 17: Mary Garbe's illustrations from *A Gift to Share* by Barry Schieber; page 18, illustrations from *An Open Heart* and centre right, Hedvig Rappe-Flowers with Barry and Moritz. For more about the books visit [www.nose-to-nose.com](http://www.nose-to-nose.com)

