



THE AMAZING STORY OF GILBERT GRAPE...

Tickled Pink Weimaraner Rescue (TPWR) is a federally recognized 501 (c) (3) nonprofit organization focusing on the rescue of Weimaraners and Weimaraner mix-breeds in the US Southwest. Since its inception, this organization has rescued and rehabilitated hundreds of Weimaraners in need. Operating entirely by volunteer support and donations, this rescue frequently takes in special needs dogs, or dogs that other rescue organizations cannot or will not take.

Here is the story of one of our very special dogs in rescue -- the amazing story of Gilbert Grape:

Recently, one night, one of our volunteers received notification from a volunteer at a local high-kill shelter, informing her that an approximately 6 year-old stray Weimaraner had been taken into the shelter that day. The dog was kept in the area of the shelter where sick and aggressive dogs were held.

This dog's shelter intake note read:

"Dog has XL mass connected at base of sternum, multiple small masses over body, pale mucous membranes, cold to touch, ..., difficulty walking due to mass and is severely emaciated."



Even though this

news arrived late in the evening, our volunteer inquired whether this dog could be taken into rescue immediately that night, but was told it had to wait until the morning.

The next morning, our volunteer presented to the animal shelter upon their opening to remove the dog from the shelter and to immediately take him to the closest veterinary hospital. During the examination by an emergency veterinarian, this dog was noted to have a massive tumor hanging down from his chest, making it almost impossible for the dog to walk, and due to the size and weight of the tumor - he had to drag it between his feet - the skin covering the tumor had broken down and become infected.

The dog was noted to have a high fever and appeared emaciated with several other tumors scattered over his entire body. Throughout the intake process as well as the initial veterinary assessment, our volunteers were impressed with the gentle personality and kindness this dog was showing towards them, wagging his tail throughout his ordeal and having striking bright and hopeful eyes! Our volunteer decided to lovingly call this gentle boy "Gilbert Grape" - "grape" for the immense tumor hanging from his chest, that must have been growing there for at least one year! Gilbert was started on intravenous treatment with fluids, antibiotics and pain medication. Basic laboratory testing was done and X-rays of the tumor were taken to determine the best course of action.

Once receiving pain medication, Gilbert quickly showed signs of much increased comfort! All laboratory testing came back reassuringly, and after consultation with a veterinary surgical specialist, the decision was made to proceed with tumor removal to give Gilbert a chance at life. Even though it was unclear whether or not the tumor was cancerous, whether it could be removed in its entirety, or whether or not this dog would be strong enough to survive anesthesia (let alone any blood loss), our volunteers decided this would be the best plan for Gilbert, as he impressed on them with his keen determination and apparently strong will to live!

An emergency fundraising campaign was initiated via the TPWR Facebook page (www.facebook.com/TickledPinkWeimaranerRescue) to raise the funds for Gilbert's operation, now named "Operation Remove Gilbert's Grape"!

The fundraiser resulted in overwhelming support from hundreds of volunteers and supporters from around the world, providing the necessary funds to proceed with Gilbert's surgery and recovery!

On a Saturday afternoon, only little more than 24 hours after entering into rescue, Gilbert Grape was taken into surgery during which the veterinary surgical staff removed a 12 lb. tumor in an hour-long operation. During the surgery, in order to allow for safe



removal, the tumor had to be placed onto a separate operating table because it was so large and so heavy!

Gilbert made it through surgery safely, and recovered overnight in the hospital. The next day, Gilbert greeted our volunteers in the hospital sitting up in his recovery bay drinking water and enjoying the new "lightness" of his being. His condition stabilized quickly over the next day and he was able to leave the veterinary intensive care unit the day after surgery to go home to a loving foster home. His recovery continued over the



next several days, during which Gilbert needed to re-learn how to walk and keep his balance without a 12 lb. "Grape" dangling between his legs. He proved to be a quick learner and by the third day,

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he enjoyed the morning sun and fresh air in his new foster home.

Anxiously awaiting the results of his tumor histopathology, Gilbert returned to the veterinary hospital six days after his surgery. Miraculously, this gigantic

“Gilbert, bring out your shades!”, your future is bright! You were given a brand-new life!



We wish to thank and acknowledge all of the Tickled Pink Weimaraner Rescue volunteers and supporters that have supported Gilbert (now Grape-less!) on his road to recovery. Thank you!!



tumor turned out to be 100% benign, a massive lipoma (i.e. a non-cancerous fatty tumor), and Gilbert received a clean bill of health!!

Fast forward two weeks after Gilbert Grape entered rescue, he was at home in a wonderful loving foster home, his operative wound was healing, and many of his fans and friends had sent him gifts of love and kindness! Gilbert continued his road of recovery by receiving physical therapy sessions to help with his physical and emotional rehabilitation. Today, a healthy and happy Gilbert lives with his loving adoptive family in his newly found forever home.

