

# WOMEN MAKING WAVES

Natural health for dogs and cats has come a long way over the last ten years. These pioneers of the holistic animal care industry have been key players in this exciting evolution.

BY ANN BRIGHTMAN

Years ago, you'd have been hard pressed to find many alternative healthcare products or services for your dog or cat. It's a different story now. This exciting growth is due largely to a number of courageous industry pioneers, many of whom started their careers when the alternative approach was still breaking new ground. Among them are the following women:

**ANDI BROWN,**  
Founder  
*Halo, Purely  
for Pets*  
Est. 1991



When Andi Brown's cat fell ill 22 years ago, she discovered the veterinary prescribed food he was eating was making him sick. "After whipping up a stew made with fresh chicken and vegetables, he became well. We wanted to share our recipe with everyone," Andi explains.

Andi started Halo out of her home with only \$3,000; today, it's a multi-million dollar business. They offer a complete line of natural and holistic pet care products, including foods, treats, herbal grooming aids and nutritional supplements.

"People actually used to laugh at me. They thought no one would be interested in buying 'natural products for pets'."



**SUSAN MARINO,**  
Founder  
& Executive  
Director  
*Angel's Gate  
Hospice for  
Animals*  
Est. 1993

Calling Angel's Gate a labor of love for Susan Marino would be a vast understatement. The facility, under Susan's direction, cares for animals considered "unadoptable" – the criti-

**SUSAN WEISS,**  
President  
*Ark Naturals  
Products for Pets*  
Established 1995



Like many others, Susan Weiss started her business when the holistic approach was still regarded with skepticism. Building her natural remedy and supplements business took patience and faith. "It's always easy to enter an arena when the chips are up and dollars are climbing – it's much more difficult to believe in something, invest your own money and hang in there when no one is listening, or cares."

Annual sales have risen from under \$200,000 when the business began to over \$8 million. As a founding member of the National American Supplement Council (NASC), the company has also worked to help legitimize the natural products industry for animals.

"I believe healthy animals help keep humans healthy. How lucky am I to work this hard at something I feel so passionately about!"

cally and terminally ill. It has been recognized as a model for hospices across the nation.

Susan, who also works with physically challenged animals, incorporates holistic approaches, including hydrotherapy, acupuncture, chiropractic care, essential oils, flower essences, T-Touch, massage, and raw food diets, into her patients' healing and palliative regimens.

"I believe I have been chosen to do this work," says Susan. "It was very difficult at the beginning, because I got a lot of criticism. But the animals are as much teachers as patients, setting forth life lessons that resonate long after they are gone."