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## ORLAND PARK



Tribune photo by Antonio Perez

Betty and Dennis Brennan hold pictures of beloved pets that had to be put to sleep.

# Kindness for dying pets

## Couple help ease pain as beloved animals are put down

When they found their faithful dog Cubby lying on the floor in her own puddle, Betty and Dennis Brennan knew it was time to end their 16-year-old companion's suffering.

But in the vet's office, they were unable to hold down Cubby as the terrified canine lay on a cold metal table waiting to be euthanized.

The couple resolved to make it easier for others to bid their pets farewell. The Brennans started Orland Park-based Cubby's Compassionate Pet Service, which allows elderly or ailing pets to die in a home environment, surrounded by people who love them.

"They are family members. Maybe you don't baptize them, but they're family members who loved you," Betty Brennan

said. "We decided there had to be a better way for the pet and for the owners."

Initially, they had trouble finding vets willing to make euthanasia house calls, Dennis Brennan said. A few agreed to do it as a one-time favor, then realized they were providing more than just a sterile service.

"It has made it easier for me in the long run, and I think it's easier on the clients, too," said Dr. James Wahl of Avenue Animal Hospital in Tinley Park.

When a customer calls, the Brennans review a list of the pet's symptoms with the client. They won't help euthanize pets whose ailments are not severe or animals that are not ill but whose owners consider them a nuisance.

Shortly before the vet is

scheduled to arrive, Betty Brennan talks the family through the procedure, which takes place either in the owner's home or inside a small trailer the Brennans have made up to resemble a funeral parlor. Afterward, she gives them time alone with their pet before sending the body to the Hinsdale Animal Cemetery and Crematory in Willowbrook.

The Brennans don't figure to get rich from the business and Betty has kept her job as an office manager, but they are breaking even. "I look at this as a ministry," she said.

"We've hugged and kissed every client," Dennis Brennan said. "That's how you know you did something right."

Call 708-349-0444 or visit [www.cubbycares.com](http://www.cubbycares.com).