



# Saying goodbye with dignity

If your pet is terminally ill or seriously injured, the decision to end its suffering through euthanasia is a trying and emotional one. After making the difficult decision, many people find the next step—obtaining the services of a veterinarian to euthanize their companion—to be even more stressful.

Generally, owner-requested euthanasia is performed on pets that have been struggling with terminal illness or severe injury. Because the animal is weak, getting her to the veterinarian's office can be a challenge, resulting in awkward methods of loading the pet into and out of the car.

At-home euthanasia is a relatively new trend that helps make the last hours together more dignified and easier for both pet and person. According to Jason Miller, D.V.M., "home is the best and most peaceful place for an animal during its last moments." Miller puts his thoughts into actions; in addition to his work as a regular practitioner, he offers a full service animal home hospice and euthanasia service, Graceful Departures. In this case, the name says it all. Surrounded by familiar smells and sounds, pets are more relaxed, which puts their owners

at ease.

Miller, who works full-time at Parkway Pet Clinic, was inspired to offer at-home euthanasia services after his uncle's dog developed cancer. While everything was done to attempt to control the cancer, it spread and it became apparent that the end result would be painful and difficult. His uncle asked Miller if he could euthanize the dog at his home, and Miller complied. "Since then, I have had many people approach me with similar requests," says Miller. "Graceful Departures has grown on an as-needed basis."

Word of his services spread through cards given to animal hospitals around the county. "When a pet owner first is told their pet is terminal, they usually aren't ready to make plans for the end," explains Miller. "They need time to accept the fact, and then they

begin to think about how they can give their pet a dignified end. If they ask about euthanasia, they may get my card as being one option."

Whether cat or dog, Miller takes the time to get to know his clients and their pet. He spends a great deal of time talking with the loving, responsible people who must say good-bye to their beloved friend. Miller carefully explains each step in the process, and lets the owners know what to expect as the animal slips away. He respectfully removes the body, unless the owners wish to tend to that task themselves.



JASON MILLER, DVM

Miller's deep respect for the sanctity of life is what drives him to put in the extra hours—at any time of day—to help people ease their pet's suffering with dignity. Death is inevitable, but rather than an awkward passage, Miller strives to give his patients a graceful departure.

For more information, visit [www.gracefuldepartures.com](http://www.gracefuldepartures.com). 🌸

## P O E T R Y

### RAINBOW BRIDGE

Author Unknown

*Just this side of heaven is a place called Rainbow Bridge.*

*When an animal dies that has been especially close to someone here, that pet goes to Rainbow Bridge. There are meadows and hills for all of our special friends so they can run and play together. There is plenty of food, water and sunshine, and our friends are warm and comfortable.*

*All the animals who had been ill and old are restored to health and vigor; those who were hurt or maimed are made whole and strong again, just as we remember them in our dreams of days and times gone by. The animals are happy and content, except for one small thing; they each miss someone very special to them, who had to be left behind.*

*They all run and play together, but the day comes when one suddenly stops and looks into the distance. His bright eyes are intent; his eager body quivers. Suddenly he begins to run from the group, flying over the green grass, his legs carrying him faster and faster.*

*You have been spotted, and when you and your special friend finally meet, you cling together in joyous reunion, never to be parted again. The happy kisses rain upon your face; your hands again caress the beloved head, and you look once more into the trusting eyes of your pet, so long gone from your life but never absent from your heart.*

*Then you cross Rainbow Bridge together....*