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Companies create ways for you to keep your pet forever

posted by: **Jeffrey Wolf** , Web Producer
written by: **Quynh Nguyen** , 9NEWS Reporter/Producer
reported by: **Mark Koebrich** , 9NEWS Consumer Reporter
created: 2/27/2008 2:20:43 PM

KUSA - The loss of a beloved pet can be devastating. Very often, people look at their animals as "treasured" members of the family. The evidence of that is in the billions of dollars Americans spend on their animals every year.

One of the newest areas of spending is on memorial keepsakes to help pet owners deal with the grief of losing an animal.

Lynn Huffman lost her dog Grizzley about a year ago. She had Grizzley for 14 years.

She decided to have Grizzley's cremated ashes put into a piece of jewelry that she wears around her neck. The memories of her beloved dog are now always close to her heart.

"I wanted to always keep a little piece of her with me at all time and this pendant was a great way to do that," said Huffman.

The pendant is filled with Grizzley's cremated remains. The center blue topaz represents Grizzley's birthstone.

"She was my heart and soul for 14 years," said Huffman. "I'll never let all of her go."

Huffman and other pet owners are finding different ways to honor their beloved pets.

Ashes can also be turned into art. A Massachusetts-based company called Art from Ashes makes handcrafted glass ornaments with ashes in them. The results range from paperweights to delicate perfume bottles.

"It's something that you see everyday that's beautiful to look at. It's a piece of art but it's also functional in the sense that it helps you remember your pet," said Peter Brown of Art from Ashes.

Remembrances can also come in the shape of stepping stones - complete with a pet's picture and name.

Minnesota-based Pet Steps to Heaven mixes ashes with concrete to create custom pieces stepping stones or benches.

"Every piece of work that we do is to help celebrate somebody's memory," said John Laub of Pet Steps to Heaven.

Letters are intricately shaped from stained glass and personalize each keepsake. They are then set into the stones - resulting in expressions of love and beauty.

"Now you got a visual picture of who the pet was and it just brings back what you knew about the pet," said Patty Laub of Pet Steps to Heaven.

The cost of memorial keepsakes range from a few dollars to a few thousand dollars. Many pet owners say it's money well spent.

For more information about Pet Steps to Heaven, you can visit www.petstepstoheaven.com or call 651-338-7070.

For more information about Art From Ashes, you can visit www.artfromashes.com or call 413-303-1793

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