

Seniors Need Their Pets

My mother's transition to assisted living has been easier with her cat and dog companions.

Posted: January 19, 2010 3 a.m. EST

Mom's Cat, Baby Kiss Kiss My mom moved to an assisted living facility three months ago because she has dementia and needs daily care. When we were looking for a place for her, it was imperative that I find a place that would allow her to keep her pets, a rescue Siamese and a Yorkshire Terrier. We were lucky enough to have the choice of several facilities that allowed pets, and the one we chose allowed her to move in with both the cat and dog. They were also kind enough to waive the pet deposit because they understand the importance of pets in the lives of the elderly.

The transition to assisted living has been somewhat difficult for Mom, but having her pets with her made all the difference in the world. They give her a purpose every day. They provide her with continuity. They give her loving companionship and they foster conversation with other residents and their families so Mom has social interaction.

In other parts of the country, senior facilities do not allow residents to bring pets. This policy is abominable. It rips apart families. In a time when shelters are overflowing with animals due to families in financial crisis, it creates a situation where more beloved pets are relinquished to shelters. It makes the transition into senior living even harder that it has to be.

Mom with Duchess We should all join together and lobby for more acceptance of pets in senior living facilities. Meet with the administration and tell them about the success of programs at places like the Orange County, Calif., facility where my mom lives. Show them medical articles that tout the benefits of continuing to live with pets as you grow older. And share the evidence that therapy animal visits help with the healing process.

Yes, it is a little more work for the facility and the family for their parents keep their pets. But I am very willing to buy pet food, arrange grooming and veterinary care and help with clean-up so Mom can keep her beloved pets. Please join me in these efforts and our parents and their pets will live longer, happier lives.

Read more of my blogs at [Crazy for Cats](#).

[Click here to read more Cat Blogs.](#)