

Woman's dying wish: Take care of my 'kids'



Story Published: Jun 9, 2008 at 5:53 PM PDT

Story Updated: Nov 20, 2008 at 9:24 PM PDT

By [KOMO Staff](#)

CONCRETE, Wash. -- She isn't afraid of death. It's fears for her pets' lives after her death that keeps her up at night.

Last week doctors told Mary Jo Eckler she has three to four months left to live. Chemo isn't working; cancer is taking over her body. Eckler is suffering multiple sclerosis and pancreatic cancer.

"I'm not afraid of death, I'm more scared that I don't have enough time to get my kids good homes. That terrifies me," she said.

From her bed, she says her 8-year-old dog Hooch and her 5-year-old cat Twisted Sister are the reason she wakes up every morning.

"I can hardly talk about it, care so much," Eckler said.

She has three dying wishes: She doesn't want to die alone, she doesn't want to die in a hospital, and she wants a good home for the pets she calls her kids.

Eckler's caretaker took care of two of those wishes by bringing her into her home in Concrete. She contacted KOMO News to see if we could handle the animal wish.

Eckler is too weak to leave her bed, so we brought the CEO of the Humane Society For Seattle-King County to Eckler's bedside.

"I'll find a foster family until they can place them together. I'm going to go find that foster family," said Brenda Barnette.

Barnette says the humane society often counsels people who are worried about leaving their animals behind after they die.

"We will do the right thing for your friends when the time is right," said Barnette.

"I can't thank you enough," said Eckler.

Hooch needs a home where he can be put to work. He acts as Eckler's service dog, fetching towels and dropping tissues or mail. Twisted Sister is an affectionate cat that adores petting.

"I could pet her for hours and it wouldn't be enough," said Eckler.

They will remain with Eckler until the end.

If you're interested in finding out more about these animals or how to will your pets to The Humane Society for Seattle King County, [e-mail Barnette](#).