

CITY OF BALTIMORE

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HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health Department, BARCS seek information in recent animal abuse cases

BALTIMORE, MD (June 18, 2009) – The Baltimore City Health Department and the Baltimore Animal Rescue and Care Shelter, Inc. seek the public’s help in identifying the person or persons responsible for an egregious act of violence committed yesterday against an animal.

Animal Control officers responded to a call for a dead animal in the 3700 Block of Lewiston Avenue. Upon arrival, they discovered a cat that had been tortured, bound with a chain and rope to a utility pole and severely burned by firecrackers that were exploded under the animal’s head.

Last week, two juvenile boys were arrested and charged with setting a pit bull on fire. The dog, named Phoenix, sustained burns over 95 percent of her body. An alert Baltimore City police officer saw the dog on fire and used her sweater to put out the flames. Animal Control officers took the dog to BARCS where she was stabilized and later transported to a rescue operation, but ultimately succumbed to her injuries.

There was evidence the dog had been involved in dog fighting.

“We must communicate to our young people that cruelty to animals is not acceptable behavior,” said Health Department Interim Commissioner Olivia D. Farrow. “We implore witnesses to any acts of dog fighting or animal abuse to come forward, call 311 – the city service line – and provide information to investigators.”

In the Phoenix case, more than \$26,000 was raised to find the dog’s killers. Some of the money will go to the BARCS Franky Fund to help other homeless, injured animals.

“We want to make people aware that this is happening in the city and it cannot be tolerated,” said BARCS Program Manager Debra Rahl. “We have to break the cycle. Research has consistently shown that young people who abuse animals are likely to be violent toward other people later in life.”

Anyone with information about the tortured cat should contact the Bureau of Animal Control and ask for the Animal Enforcement supervisor on duty from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

For information about the Frankie Fund, visit
www.baltimoreanimalshelter.org/donating/franky_fund.php

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