

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **Gulf Coast Humane Society, Inc.**

**Media Contact:**

Aimée R. LaLonde, Director of Development

239.332.0364 ext. 308

[aimeelalonde@yahoo.com](mailto:aimeelalonde@yahoo.com)

**2/25/08 - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**photos attached**

### **Gulf Coast Humane Society Burglarized & Valuable Equipment Stolen**

Fort Myers, Florida, 2/25/08 – Gulf Coast Humane Society staff were shocked to find one of the Arcadia Street entry gates broken off the track and open Monday morning. Inside the administration building, a locked door had been kicked in to gain entry to a conference room containing over \$7,000 in brand new computer equipment and other supplies for the new low-cost public veterinary clinic scheduled to open in March. Fort Myers Police Department was contacted immediately and the investigation remains open.

Gulf Coast Humane Society has been accepting owner-surrendered pets in Fort Myers for over sixty years and houses approximately 250 animals at any given time. Thankfully no animals were harmed as a result of the burglary and all animals have been accounted for.

Delivered to the facility on Friday, the stolen items included a new computer server for the entire facility, two new computers, three computer monitors, and two medical supply storage cabinets. All of these items are necessary to finalize completion of the new low-cost veterinary clinic and this incident has delayed installation of hardware, training of staff, and the availability of services to the community. GCHS administration had specifically allocated funds to pay for these items and was informed Monday that insurance will not cover the loss of this equipment.

Gulf Coast Humane Society must now invest tens of thousands of dollars in replacing the stolen equipment, upgrading outdated security systems, and repairing aging perimeter gates and fences in an effort to protect the animals and other assets. GCHS administration estimates the actual theft-related expenses to surpass \$58,000 in the next couple of months. As a private non-profit organization providing a vital service to the community, this type of unexpected expense will devastate short- and long-term plans to improve and increase available services to animals housed in the shelter and pets in the community.

Gulf Coast Humane Society is always in need of donated supplies for the shelter however, at this time, hopes to attain donated security system improvements, much-needed gate and fence repairs, and assistance in replacing the new computer equipment and medical storage cabinets. To donate your professional services or equipment, please call 239.332.0364 or e-mail [aimeelalonde@yahoo.com](mailto:aimeelalonde@yahoo.com).

If you have any information pertaining to this theft, Gulf Coast Humane Society asks you to please contact the Fort Myers Police Department at 239.334.4155.

The mission of the Gulf Coast Humane Society is to provide humane care for surrendered animals in Southwest Florida by offering refuge, providing medical care, and facilitating an adoptive home. To learn more about the Gulf Coast Humane Society, please visit [www.gulfcoasthumanesociety.org](http://www.gulfcoasthumanesociety.org). Gulf Coast Humane Society is located at 2010 Arcadia Street in Fort Myers, FL 33916.

The Gulf Coast Humane Society is a private 501(c)(3) non-profit animal welfare organization that receives no federal, state, or county funding and relies solely on donations and fundraising events to fuel its mission of caring for the orphaned and displaced animals of Southwest Florida.