



## **MEDIA CONTACT:**

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## **REWARD INCREASED IN BRUTAL DOG TORTURE**

**FORT MYERS, FL – June 8, 2015** - In the wake of a horrific incident this past weekend in which a dog had been dragged behind a car and tortured in Clewiston, Southwest Florida Crime Stoppers and the Gulf Coast Humane Society (GCHS) are teaming up to increase the reward for information leading to the arrest of the person or persons responsible.

On Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, just after noon, a female dog was brought to the GCHS in Lee County after being found in a wooded area in the Montura neighborhood of Clewiston. There were black encircling lines around her muzzle and neck, as though a ligature had been placed to keep her muzzle closed and then wrapped around her neck to aid in dragging her behind a vehicle. The female pit bull mix had extreme injuries to all four paws, lacerations on her rear legs and other related injuries. The extent of the injuries was severe, with multiple bone fractures, shredded front paws and a ripped underbelly. Due to the traumatic injuries, veterinarians determined the most humane course of action was to euthanize the dog. Members of the GCHS staff stayed alongside the dog, who they named Aaliyah, until she finally passed at 1:32 p.m.

Since Saturday, concerned and outraged citizens have donated just over \$1,600 in reward money for information leading to the arrest of the person or persons responsible for Aaliyah's injuries and subsequent passing. In addition, a reward of up to \$5,000 is being offered from the Stop Illegal Dog Fighting Gofundme account, and up to \$1,000 is being offered by Southwest Florida Crime Stoppers.

"What happened to Aaliyah is nothing short of heartbreaking, tragic and horrific," said Trish Route, Coordinator, Southwest Florida Crime Stoppers. "Only a truly sick individual would torture an animal in that kind of fashion, and we hope that someone who knows who is responsible will do the right thing and come forward so that the perpetrator(s) can be brought to justice and face the full extent of the law." Jennifer Galloway, Executive Director of GCHS said, "I cannot express how disturbed we are all by this. To see and touch her while she passed was one of the hardest things I have had to do. Knowing this was done intentionally has just left a knot in my throat. Any exposure we can get to help will hopefully prevent something like this in the future."

Saturday's act of horrific violence is currently being investigated by Clewiston Animal Control. Investigators are also searching for the puppies that Aaliyah had just weaned.

Anyone with information on the individuals involved with the torture of Aaliyah or any other animal is asked to call Crime Stoppers at 1-800-780-TIPS (8477). All callers will remain anonymous and will be eligible for cash rewards of up to \$6,000. Tips may also be made online at [www.swflcrimestoppers.org](http://www.swflcrimestoppers.org) or by texting a tip to CRIMES (274637) Keyword: REWARD. Anyone

wishing to donate to the increased reward fund can do so through the Gofundme website, [www.gofundme.com/lmf15c](http://www.gofundme.com/lmf15c) More than \$25,000 has been raised through the Gofundme account since it was started in February, in the aftermath of the torture of Sunset, who had been critically injured as a result of being used as a bait dog. After months of rehabilitation, Sunset is healed and was recently placed in a safe family home.

For additional information, contact Trish Route, Crime Stoppers Coordinator, at [troutte@sheriffleefl.org](mailto:troutte@sheriffleefl.org).

Gulf Coast Humane Society, located at 2010 Arcadia Street in Fort Myers, was established as the first non-profit animal welfare organization in southwest Florida in 1947. The 501(c)(3) mission is to rescue, provide safe refuge and compassionate care, and find forever homes for abandoned and neglected animals in the area. GCHS only takes in owner surrendered and transfers from other shelters and rescue groups with a high success rate of adoptions. Their veterinary clinic is open to the public and offers a full array of affordable services six days a week.

For more information about Gulf Coast Humane Society call 239-332-0364 or visit [www.gulfcoasthumanesociety.org](http://www.gulfcoasthumanesociety.org).