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Dog attack shakes mom, girl **Neighborhood pets taken away by Animal Control, put down.**

By **TOM MOOR**
Tribune Staff Writer

SOUTH BEND — For whatever reason, Adena Moore says her 4-year-old daughter, Hannah Connell, always has been terrified of dogs.

So when that topic came up at random while the two were taking a leisurely walk through their Forest Avenue neighborhood Sunday evening, Moore took some time to explain to her daughter that not all dogs are bad.

Then irony reared its ugly head.

Minutes after their talk, two large boxer mixed-breeds jumped out of a parked bus, ran up to them and knocked Hannah to the ground, biting at her.

“She was calling out, ‘Mommy!’ ” Moore said. “It was terrifying. I couldn’t believe what was happening.”

Moore said she found the strength to pull the dogs by the collars and off her daughter, while being bit and scratched in the process.

Moore took off running — with the dogs following close behind — to get them away from Hannah. With her shirt ripped and in a hysterical frame of mind, she was able to close herself in a fence at the house of the neighbor who owns the dogs, while another neighbor tended to Hannah.

The owner of the dogs came outside and was able to control them and put them back into his bus, while police and animal-control officers were called out.

Moore was taken to Memorial Hospital by ambulance, while Hannah’s father, Michael Connell, took Hannah to the hospital for treatment.

Hannah has bruising and a bite mark to the right side of her chest, while Moore received numerous cuts and bruises. Her left arm is wrapped up in bandages.

Both are visibly shaken.

“Hannah keeps having nightmares that dogs are in the house,” Moore said.

The dogs, and a puppy that the owner recently bought, were taken away by Animal Control. The two large dogs were put down Tuesday.

"These dogs could be killers," said Moore, 33. "We're both lucky to be alive."

A history of violence

Moore said the dogs have been a nuisance in the usually quiet near northwest side neighborhood for almost two years.

She said the dogs would often jump over their owner's fence and chase people around the neighborhood, although she doesn't know about any other attacks against people.

Last year, Moore said her mother watched from their home's second-floor window as the dogs made their way into their garage and killed the family's 10-year-old minx cat, BoBo. Catherine Toppel, director of Code Enforcement, confirmed Wednesday one of the dogs did kill the cat.

"The owner assured me then that I'd never have to see them again," Moore said.

One of the dogs was taken to Animal Control and deemed a dangerous dog for killing the cat, said Toppel, who oversees that agency. The owner was able to get the dog back.

But Moore said it was only a matter of time until the dogs attacked again.

"I was always worried a kid would get attacked by one of them," she said. "The neighborhood will be much safer without them here."

Taking action

The owner surrendered the dogs Sunday night to Animal Control, Toppel said.

The puppy, a Labrador mix, will likely be put up for adoption because it was not involved in the attack. Toppel said the puppy will be quarantined for 10 days for precautionary reasons.

"This is the third major attack since I've been here," Toppel said. "It was pretty severe."

Although a police report was not taken, South Bend police responded and the incident is logged into their computers.

Police responded to the scene first, but the dogs were contained, so there was nothing for police to do, such as capture or shoot the dogs if necessary, said South Bend police spokesman Capt. Phil Trent.

The report confirms the dogs attacked Moore and Hannah, and that both received injuries, Trent said.

It is unclear if the owner will face any disciplinary action.

Moore said the dog's owner owns the small bus parked in front of the house he has lived in for about the past two years and added that the dogs stayed in there at times.

The bus has not been parked there for the past couple of days, and The Tribune has been unable to find the owner for comment.

Moore said she has not received an apology from the owner.

Moving on

In the days since the attack, both Moore and Hannah are still in pain, but Moore said in some ways she feels fortunate.

Neither Moore nor her daughter received any broken bones or cuts to the face. Moore did have four stitches to her left arm, while her right arm was swollen "like a baseball" Sunday night.

Neither has been able to sleep well since the attack, and Hannah continues to have nightmares.

Moore is talking to a lawyer to pursue whatever action they deem necessary.

Meanwhile, Moore said she is thankful to the neighbor who helped Hannah shortly after the attack and other neighbors who expressed their concerns.

An e-mail was sent to residents of the Chapin Park neighborhood to pray for the family as well as offer baby-sitting and casserole dishes as they recover from their injuries.

"I don't know how I'll heal," Moore said.

She is relieved, though, that she no longer has to deal with the dogs that attacked her and her daughter.

Staff writer Sarah Michalos contributed to this report.

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