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Second dog attack in days injures toddler

Date: 2007-09-05
Author: Lindsey Cole

A two-and-a-half-year-old girl has 16 stitches in her wrist. Her mother is in shock after witnessing a dog viciously attack her baby girl. This is the description Brad Algar, the manager of the Peterborough Humane Society, gave after hearing about yet another dog attack that happened Saturday morning outside a Paterson Street home.

According to Mr. Algar, the toddler and her mother were walking along the street when a black Labrador type dog came running off a property, circling around the mother and child.

The dog grabbed the child by the arm as the mother tried to lift her off the ground. That's when he latched onto her wrist, Mr. Algar says, adding the mother did not want to be identified in this case.

"The dog broke out through the front door. He was running full tilt."

The girl was rushed to hospital where doctors closed the wound, using 16 stitches to do so.

This is the second vicious dog attack on a child in less than a week.

Ten-year-old Shyanne Hnatiak was bit last Thursday by a pit bull-type dog, causing 10 stitches to her face.

The light in her eyes is gone and the once vibrant skin now houses bright red stitches and scars that could last a lifetime, her mother Susan Hnatiak says.

"She's 10 years old and she doesn't look the same," says Ms Hnatiak.

"She can't smile."

Shyanne's mother was babysitting at her Cameron Street home at the time when Shyanne and her friend went out wandering to play. They went into the backyard to play with the dog. The animal wasn't muzzled or leashed.

That's when Ms Hnatiak heard the screams.

"I heard a very shrieking, curdling scream and her friend yelling 'it's bad. It's bad. Shyanne's been bit,'" her mother recalls.

That's when she called 9-1-1. The rest, she says, is a blur.

SPCA officers were on scene for both incidents and spoke with the owners of both dogs. The owners of the pit-bull type dog made the decision to have it put down Friday, Mr. Algar says.

Later that day it was destroyed.

"I'm glad it's being destroyed because the way it was going (Thursday) night I would have done it myself," Ms Hnatiak says her voice trembling.

"She's my little girl and she wants to be a model. My daughter's a very bright, outgoing lady and it's all gone."

Mr. Algar says they are still investigating what happened and taking statements in both incidents, but adds the owners of the Labrador mix are also going to euthanize the animal, as they too have small children.

"They acknowledge it did happen. This black lab forced the door open and b-lined it." Since the dog ran out of the house, Mr. Algar explains, there will be charges laid for running at large, meaning the dog was loose with no muzzle or leash.

"Labs and shepherds don't normally do this. Running out and attacking like that is a concern."

Mr. Algar adds that both lab and pit bull bites are at the lower spectrum in terms of frequency but says these two instances were very serious.

However, he adds, the pit bull attack was more contained, as the dog was in a fenced-in backyard where the children chose to play.

"This lab came out of nowhere and did it. This girl (the mother) had one dog circling her. It's running out trying to find the prime opportunity and taking it."

He also says he knows the owners feel awful about what happened, but the charges still have to be laid.

"I have no doubt they feel bad. The court will decide not me."



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