



6-year-old recovering after dog-bite incident

By Cass Rains Staff Writer

— A 6-year-old Enid boy is recovering after suffering multiple wounds to his face Saturday after being bitten by a neighbor's German shepherd.

The boy, Nathan Edwards, spent several hours in the emergency room of St. Mary's Regional Medical Center Saturday, receiving more than 50 stitches to his face, his father said Wednesday.

"He's got lacerations all over his face," Eric Edwards said of his son's injuries. "It's the worst thing I can imagine as a parent."

Edwards said his son received so many stitches he "quit counting after 50."

"He's been through a tremendous trauma," Edwards said. "The scars and injuries were just horrific.

"He's probably going to have to have reconstructive surgery at some point."

According to an Enid Police Department report, Nathan and the dog owner's son were playing fetch Saturday with the 2-year-old dog, which bit the boy when he reached down to pick up a stick in front of the dog.

Gary Keeling, the dog's owner, said the dog has been quarantined since Sunday and been seen by, and remains under the care of, a veterinarian.

"I have an order from the health department, and the health department has signed off where it's at," Keeling said.

Keeling said the dog was not going to return to Enid and would not again be his family's pet.

Instead, Keeling said he has been in contact with an organization that could take the dog and train it for police or military purposes. He said he would donate the dog for that purpose.

If that does not work out, Keeling said he would have the dog put down.

"Everyone was so upset; we were upset," Keeling said. "The dog is never coming back to Enid. We'd never value the dog over a child."

Edwards said he wants to see the dog put down.

"I contacted (Keeling) and asked him to put the dog down and he refused to do it," Edwards said. "I can't believe a responsible parent would not voluntarily have the animal put down.

"Until that dog is put down, I won't rest easy."

This was not the first time the dog bit a child.

On Dec. 1, 2006, the dog bit another boy, age 9, in the neighborhood of Woodlands Drive, according to another EPD report.

That time, a boy was playing with the dog and tried to take away a food bowl when the dog bit the right side of his face. The 9-year-old's father, Don Jacks, said he didn't perceive it as a vicious attack.

"The Keelings were very straight up with us and did everything they said they would do," Jacks said. "I have confidence in them as people. They followed through with their word."

Jacks said his son received two or three stitches following the bites.

"They did everything they could to make it right," Jacks said of the Keelings. "It's a shame it happened again."

Keeling said, "I don't really recall that incident."

Edwards said the first incident should have served as a warning the dog was too dangerous to be around children.

"These people knew this dog was prone to biting kids on the face," he said. "It's just totally reckless and irresponsible."

Edwards wants people to be aware how dangerous large dogs can be and the damage they can do, especially to children.

"I don't think people need to have dangerous animals around children," he said.

"Our family is very grateful to everyone who has prayed for us and given us support."

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