



June 3, 2009

Cape Coral toddler undergoing surgery following dog bite

5:45 p.m.

Eighteen-month old Anicka Westover is currently undergoing reconstructive surgery at Health Park Medical Center as a result of a dog bite earlier this morning, her father Michael Gukeisen said.

Westover was transferred to Health Park from Cape Coral Hospital where she received X-rays of her injuries.

Her condition was reported as critical earlier this afternoon. Updates have not yet been reported.

1:15 p.m. update

JR Robbins, 32, a neighbor who lives a few doors down from the Gukeisens, said the family's dog never showed signs of aggression.

The Gukeisen's dog, a Siberian husky named Demon, bit their 18-month-old daughter this morning. Anicka Gukeisen was taken to Cape Coral hospital and is still in critical, but not life-threatening, condition.

Lee County Animal Services told Michael Gukeisen, 21, Anicka's father, the dog had to be quarantined. Plans were initially made for Gukeisen's brother to come and pick up the dog and take it back to North Carolina with him. Gukeisen said his brother can no longer afford to make the trip.

Gukeisen is now trying to make arrangements for Lee County Animal Control to pick up the dog.

Robbins has a Siberian husky of his own. He said he's worried about Anicka Gukeisen's condition, but he still feels comfortable having his husky around his two kids.

"Husky's are not normally aggressive toward people," he said. "If I saw a husky running down the street, I wouldn't be worried because mine's such a sweetheart."

Robbins said Anicka Gukeisen and Demon were very playful with one another.

Another neighbor, Lori Szrama, who has lived on the street for 27 years, said she doesn't know the Gukeisen family but the incident gives her "goosebumps."

"I feel sorry for the baby," said Szrama, who has a Boston terrier. "They had no business having a big dog with a little baby."

Karen Gassett, who has a 2-year-old daughter, said the incident worries her.

"It makes me extremely nervous," she said. "Anyone who has a dog with a chance of biting anyone needs to have a fenced in backyard."

12:40 p.m. update

Anicka Gukeisen, 18 months, is in critical, but not life-threatening, condition at Cape Coral Hospital after her family dog bit her in the face this morning, according to Anicka's father, Michael Gukeisen, 21.

Anicka received X-rays at Cape Coral Hospital and will be transferred to Lee Memorial Hospital for further care, her father said.

Gukeisen, who lives at 1418 NE 19th Street in Cape Coral, said his daughter regularly plays with the family dog, Demon, a 2-and-a-half-year-old Siberian husky.

Gukeisen fed his daughter breakfast, and then she went to hug the dog. He said he heard a growl and then he heard his daughter crying. He went to check on her and saw blood running from her face.

Gukeisen called an ambulance and then decided to drive to the hospital himself. The ambulance met Gukeisen and his wife near the intersection of Diplomat Parkway and Del Prado Boulevard and then drove them to the hospital.

Gukeisen said Animal Services told him the dog had to be quarantined. Gukeisen got the dog from his brother, who is coming into town today to take the dog back to North Carolina.
