

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Berks County Animal Response Team Activated to Assist with 340 Dogs Seized in Cruelty Investigation

At the request of Humane Society of Berks County, lead agency for the Berks County Animal Response Team (Berks CART), the Pennsylvania State Animal Response Team and the Berks County Emergency Response Agency have activated Berks CART for the first time. Activation of Berks CART allows for the use of the Berks CART volunteer and resource network to provide for the care of the animals seized overnight. “We are very pleased to have been prepared to assist in this emergency,” said Karel Minor, Humane Society Executive Director and Berks CART Coordinator. “Berks CART was established to help animals victimized through natural or man made disasters. For the 340 dogs involved, this certainly qualifies.”

The dogs were seized as a result of a cruelty investigation in southern Chester County by officials of the Chester County SPCA and the Bureau of Dog Law Enforcement. Officials originally expected to find 100 animals. However, after a full search of the scene 340 dogs were found, far more than the Chester County SPCA could house. A request went out to area animal welfare organizations, including the Humane Society of Berks County. “We realized that this constituted a substantial animal emergency and that the Berks CART was the best way to provide the needed resources to care for the animal victims,” said Minor. Upon activation of Berks CART, the Humane Society notified volunteers and other resource providers of the emergency. Housing for several dozen of the dogs is being provided at the Humane Society’s Reading shelter and additional arrangements are being made with other area kennels and shelters through Berks CART.

Corporate supporters are also helping. VCA Animal Hospitals immediately provided nearly 100 kennel cough vaccinations to Chester County SPCA, which ran short due to the unexpected seizure. VCA has also committed veterinary resources to ensure the

health of the animals being transferred to Berks County. Other Berks CART volunteers and Humane Society staff are aiding in the processing of the dogs, vaccinations, microchipping, and cleaning of the animals until the cruelty case is resolved or the animals' final status is determined. "One agency could never have the staff or resources to handle a crisis this size, let alone an even bigger one," said Minor. "By working together through Berks CART we will be able to provide for the emergency needs of these animals."

Individuals or businesses interested in volunteering or supporting Berks CART should contact the Humane Society of Berks County or the Pennsylvania Animal Response Team. More information is available at both groups' websites, www.berkshumane.org and www.pasart.org. Support opportunities range from volunteer time to resource and financial support.

The Humane Society of Berks County serves all of Berks County and surrounding communities. It is a private, non-profit organization funded through donations and service fees. In addition to serving as the lead agency for Berks CART, HSBC enforces Pennsylvania's animal cruelty laws, offers adoption services, spay and neuter services, humane education, pet behavioral counseling, and helps stray, injured and mistreated animals. The Humane Society is located at 1801 N. 11th Street, Reading.

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