

Pat Quinn
Governor



Richard H. Calica
Director

Illinois Department of Children & Family Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, December 13, 2012

CONTACT: Dave Clarkin, Spokesperson
312-814-6847

DCFS INVESTIGATION UNCOVERS ANIMAL HOARDING

35 dogs discovered in residential home in Glenview

CHICAGO – The Glenview Police Department today announced charges against two parents for animal hoarding and child endangerment stemming from an investigation by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. A DCFS field investigator's visit to a Glenview home regarding allegations of neglect led to the discovery of 35 dogs on Friday, December 7th. The family's three children were relocated to the home of a loving relative while the animals are being removed under a DCFS safety plan.

The correlation between child and animal endangerment led to legislation in 2009 that requires cross-reporting between DCFS and the Illinois Department of Agriculture, which oversees animal safety. Sponsored by State Senator Don Harmon (D-Chicago) and State Representative Susana Mendoza (D-Chicago) and signed by Governor Quinn, Public Act 96-494 requires staff of the Department of Agriculture, local animal control officers and animal welfare investigators to report suspected child abuse and neglect to DCFS. It establishes a parallel system for child welfare staff to report animal abuse to the Department of Agriculture.

Animal hoarding can create a dangerous and potentially life-threatening environment for children. In 2011, DCFS investigated allegations of abuse in Berwyn where the hoarding of more than 200 animals in a home was tied to the death of 14 year-old Matthew Degner and the endangerment of his four siblings. In addition, experts have found that child abuse occurs in 80 percent of the homes where animal abuse is occurring and children are present. In extreme cases, child abusers will harm or use threats of harm against a child's pet as a means of inflicting mental injury on the child or coercing their silence about abuse.

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Arrangements are still being made to relocate the discovered dogs, but animals rescued by Glenview authorities are typically available for adoption through the Animal Welfare League at (708) 636-8586 or www.animalwelfareleague.com.

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About Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Founded in 1964, DCFS has the primary responsibility of protecting children and strengthening families through the investigation and intervention of suspected child abuse or neglect by parents and other caregivers. Over the last four years, DCFS received more than one million calls to our Child Abuse Hotline, offering and coordinating services wherever needed to help children remain in their homes safely. In instances where children must be removed from the home for their safety and well-being, DCFS makes every effort to return them safely to their homes as quickly as possible. When that simply is not possible, DCFS is equally committed to pursuing adoption by loving families to provide children with the permanent, safe, and nurturing homes they need and deserve to reach their fullest potential. As part of its duties, DCFS licenses and monitors all Illinois child welfare agencies and more than 14,000 day care centers, homes, group homes and day care agencies in the state.

100 West Randolph, 6-200 • Chicago, Illinois 60601-3249
312-814-6847 • 312-814-8783 / TTY

