



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Women Rescue Two Puppies from Sub-Zero Weather, Potentially Deadly Outcome

GRAND RAPIDS – Tuesday, January 13, as the temperature dipped below zero, a woman walking her dog near 44th and Division in Wyoming found two puppies huddled in a neighbor's front yard whimpering. The puppies – a six-month-old and a four-month-old – were extremely skinny, malnourished, and shivering. The four-month-old was barely conscious, the other extremely lethargic. The woman knocked on the neighbor's door, and they called Kent County Animal Control. Neither woman recognized the pups, who were brought into the neighbor's home to keep warm until help arrived.

Animal Control Officer Jessica Kooistra checked the dogs: no licenses, no microchips for either dog. She rushed them both to Animal Emergency Hospital on Plainfield Avenue. "The typical body temperature for a dog is 101°," said Carly Luttmann, shelter supervisor for the Kent County Animal Shelter. "Hypothermia sets in at 90° - this puppy had a temperature of 81.6° – which would be deadly in most cases." Dr. Brittany Denison at the Animal Emergency Hospital used an IV and warming blanket hoping to bring the younger puppy's temperature back up to normal, but was not sure that she would make it through the night. The older pup, while malnourished, was in otherwise good health. They've been given temporary names: Timmy (6 months) and Annie (4 months).

Animal Control returned to the Wyoming neighborhood to try to find the owner of the pups. No one in the neighborhood recalls ever seeing these dogs. It is possible that they made their way to the home where they were found, or were dumped off from a different location. "If anyone recognizes these young dogs, we would like them to come forward," Luttmann says. "These dogs were likely neglected, and criminal charges could be requested against the person who should have taken care of them in a responsible manner."

Investigating neglect, abuse and hoarding is a critical component of the Kent County Animal Shelter. Licensing of dogs helps pay for these cases to be investigated and helps lost pets be reunited with the proper owner. Last year, KCAS was involved in the investigation of 15 cases, ranging from a severe hoarding situation of 37 dogs, to the stomping to death of a cat. It is estimated that more than 120,000 dogs in Kent County are not licensed, and likely don't have microchips either. For information on licensing, go to www.accessKent.com/kcas.

Timmy and Annie are doing extremely well, given the circumstances in which they were found. Both are gaining weight – Annie went from just over 8 lbs. last week to 13 lbs. today. "Both pups are in the process of being adopted," Luttmann said. "We believe these dogs have a much better prospect of love and good health in the homes where they will be going."

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KCHD has been in the business of providing health services to Kent County since 1931. The Health Department is home to nearly 260 employees including public health nurses, sanitarians, health educators, technicians, public health administrators, and specialized staff at the Kent County Animal Shelter. The Health Department operates one main clinic and three satellite clinics located in Kentwood, Rockford, and Grand Rapids. To learn more about KCHD services, visit www.accesskent.com/health.