



Hernando County Sheriff's Office

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Media Release

From: Cpl. Michael Terry
Deputy PIO, 352-797-3608

Re: Child Recovering After Being Attacked by Family's Dogs – 2025-00245344

Date: July 17, 2025

On 07-11-2025, at approximately 7:46 p.m., the Emergency Communications Center at the Hernando County Sheriff's Office received a call from an off-duty reserve deputy regarding an animal bite at a residence in Weeki Wachee.

Deputy Stephen Murphy, who also works as a Paramedic for Hernando County Fire Rescue, advised he was approached by a neighbor holding her 5-year-old son. The child was bleeding profusely from the head, neck, and body. The mother came to the home after having seen Deputy Murphy's patrol car in his driveway.

The mother advised her son was attacked in backyard by the family's three Great Danes.

Deputy Murphy immediately grabbed his medical kit from his patrol vehicle and began performing lifesaving measures on the child until additional medical units could arrive on scene.

The child was transported by a medical helicopter to a trauma center in Tampa for further treatment of his life-threatening injuries. Following extensive treatment at the hospital the child is now walking and in the beginning stages of the rehabilitation process.

During an interview with the mother, the woman advised she was suffering from a cold and had been lying down when the attack occurred. She further advised her husband, had recently left to go to the store.

The couple has 6 children between the ages of 5 and 17.

The couple's 6-year-old son had been outside with his 5-year-old brother when the attack occurred.

The mother advised when she heard screaming, she ran outside and saw the dogs pulling at her son. She advised she yelled the dogs at which time they ran away.

She advised their family have owned the dogs for three years and that the dogs had never shown any aggression toward the children.

All three dogs were removed from the home by animal control officers. They were taken to animal services on a 10-day quarantine.

Sheriff Al Nienhuis said, "This is a horrific situation no matter how you look at it. Thank the Lord a dedicated and well-trained first responder, who is never really off duty, especially with a marked unit in the front yard, was able to take quick action to prevent an even more tragic outcome."

"When something like this happens, there is often a lot of discussion about the event. One thing is for sure, any medium or large breed dog, regardless of breed, has the potential to cause serious harm or death, especially to very young children. This is true even if the dogs are raised from puppies with those same young children. It is just too easy for a young child to scare, frustrate, or accidentally hurt the dog. This often results in some form of attack."

"We must remain vigilant when it comes to monitoring interactions between our pets and young children so that tragic incidents like this one don't occur in the future."



**Reserve Deputy
Stephen Murphy**

Hernando County Crime Stoppers / Anonymous Tips

If you have information on this case, please contact Hernando County Crime Stoppers. You will remain anonymous!

Hernando County Crime Stoppers can be reached by phone at 1-866-990-TIPS (8477) or **TIPS from a cell phone.

You may also submit your tip via the internet at <http://www.hernandocountycrimestoppers.com> .

You will remain anonymous and also be eligible for a reward up to \$5,000 cash!