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Animal Rescue Group Staff Charged with Cruelty; More than 100 Animals Taken into Custody

A months-long investigation into the mistreatment of animals by an animal rescue organization in the Town of Round Hill has resulted in more than a dozen criminal charges against individuals involved with the operation of the Luck of the Irish Animal Rescue. In addition, Loudoun County Animal Services (LCAS) took more than 100 animals that were living in squalor into its custody for care.

The investigation began in February 2023 following an unrelated call for service to a home in Round Hill at which law enforcement observed a large number of animals living in deplorable conditions and alerted LCAS. Upon inspection of the conditions inside the home, Humane Law Enforcement Officers found 42 animals on the property that were housed in a manner that threatened their health and safety. Over the course of the investigation, 102 dogs, cats, rabbits and other domestic animals were transferred to LCAS. Nearly all the animals have since been placed.

“This case is particularly disturbing because the individuals involved are the very people who were entrusted by overwhelmed pet owners and rural shelters to look out for the welfare of animals,” said Chief of Humane Law Enforcement Chris Brosan. “Our investigation shows that they knowingly kept the animals in filthy conditions and allowed their health to suffer, while continuing to acquire more animals.”

Nicole Metz, 50, is charged with seven counts of animal cruelty, two counts of failure to acquire certificate of veterinary inspection, one count of allowing an animal with a contagious disease to roam, and one count of obstructing justice. Kimberly Hall, 51, is charged with eight counts of animal cruelty and two counts of failure to acquire a certificate of veterinary inspection. Alex Hall, 22, is charged with eight counts of animal cruelty. Metz served as the executive director of the Luck of the Irish Animal Rescue, which was formally known as Paw & Hoof Animal Rescue. Kimberly Hall served as the organization’s director of operations and Alex Hall was formerly the organization’s director of marketing.

A search of the Halls’ home, which appeared to be one of the sites from which the animal rescue was being operated, found all of the home’s floors covered with feces and urine. Officers also found most of the animals were confined to crates, some of which were stacked on top of each other. Many of the animals needed veterinary care. The officers’ investigation expanded to Metz’s home, which is located next door. Conditions in both locations were found to be unsanitary, hazardous and consistent with hoarding.

An initial civil hearing on April 7, 2023, resulted in the Luck of the Irish Animal Rescue being dissolved, and Metz being prohibited from serving as staff or a volunteer for any animal-related business or nonprofit for a period of one year.

In addition to charges of animal cruelty, Kimberly Hall and Metz are alleged to have brought animals into Virginia without the required documentation for the importation of the animals. The Humane Law Enforcement Officers' investigation revealed text messages that indicate Hall, Metz and their associates brought a number of animals from out of state to shelters in Northern Virginia, including cats with contagious diseases and dogs that had attacked or killed other dogs, inaccurately claiming them to be strays found in the local community. These communications have prompted a search for the whereabouts of approximately 100 additional animals that were received by the rescue from various sources and are presently unknown. Some are presumed to be buried in the suspects' yards based on their communications and the execution of additional search warrants by officers that substantiated this finding.

Hall and Metz are currently scheduled to face the charges in General District Court on July 12, 2023, at 10:00 a.m. The charges against the suspects include both class 1 and 3 misdemeanors in the Commonwealth of Virginia. A class 1 misdemeanor carries a maximum penalty of up to a \$2,500 fine per count and one year in jail, while a class 3 misdemeanor carries a maximum fine of up to \$500 per count.



Dogs in cages at one of the homes searched by Loudoun Humane Law Enforcement Officers during an animal cruelty investigation.

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