



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 7, 2024

CONTACT INFO. :

Office of the Mayor

Patricia Resende

Dir. of Communications & Project Mgt.

(401) 435-7500 Ext 11013

presende@eastprovidenceri.gov

East Providence residents donate \$1K to RI SPCA in memory of Niko

EAST PROVIDENCE, RI – Mayor Bob DaSilva, together with Chief Chris Francesconi, presented a check in the amount of \$1,000 to RISPCA Director Wayne Kezirian and Humane Law Enforcement Special Agent Earl Newman.

The donation comes after the unsolved death of Niko, the beloved family pet of an East Providence family.

The East Providence police investigated the circumstances surrounding the injury and ultimate death of Niko who went missing from his family’s Lakeside Street home on Tuesday, January 24, 2023. That same evening, Niko, a husky, was found on the side of the road on Forbes Street with an injury. A veterinarian later determined that Niko had a pellet, possibly from a pellet gun, lodged in his head.

There was an outpouring of support from the community to find out what happened to Niko and to determine who had shot Niko. Police asked for anyone with information to contact detectives. Several members of the community offered financial support. Mayor Bob DaSilva said the donations from residents would go towards a reward for anyone who had information that lead to an arrest. Mayor DaSilva pledged at that time that if no information was received in a year, the funds would be donated to the Rhode Island SPCA.

“While it is unfortunate that we don’t know who is responsible for Niko’s death, we are thankful to the many families and individuals who reached out to offer assistance and financial support,” Mayor Bob DaSilva said.

“I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all who contributed to the reward fund established following Niko’s death,” RISPCA Dir. Wayne Kezirian said. “While it is unfortunate that a responsible person was not identified, the RISPCA will put those contributions to good use as we continue our battle against animal cruelty.

“The funds received today will be used to increase the number of humane education programs the RISPCA presents to children at schools, libraries and community organizations in Rhode Island,” Kezirian added. “Each year we present programs to several thousand young people and many of those programs are presented in East Providence.”

The RISPCA’s school programs include content related to animal welfare, animal behavior and animal care and, importantly, foster empathy and compassion. In the summer of 2023 the RISPCA presented a series of children’s programs in the East Providence library system and it plans to do that again in 2024. This summer, that series of programs will be dedicated to Niko’s memory.

“The residents of the City of East Providence are fortunate to have leadership and a police department that are remarkably caring and compassionate when dealing with issues related to animal cruelty,” Kezirian said. “I appreciate the continued support the RISPCA receives from Mayor DaSilva and from the members of his leadership team and we look forward to continuing to work with them as needed well into the future.”



A \$1,000 check in memory of Niko, a husky that was shot and killed in Riverside, was presented to the RI SPCA. The donation was made possible by community members throughout Rhode Island, Massachusetts and as far away as San Antonio, Texas.