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News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 1, 2009

Vacationer Takes Photos of Kids Playing With Rabid Bat

-Search expands to include a girl after photo sent to LCHD -

Fort Myers, FL – The search to identify youth who were seen playing with a rabid bat on Ft. Myers Beach pier has expanded to include a young girl. Several photos of kids playing with a rabid bat were forwarded to the Lee County Health Department from an out-of-state health department.

A vacationer from out-of-state anonymously notified their local health department, which in turn contacted the Lee County Health Department. The photos show a young girl with medium length brown hair, wearing a bright pink bikini, with black, pink and white beads braiding into her hair.

“We know the message about these youth who played with a rabid bat is reaching the nation. The fact that a vacationer from another state contacted the Lee County Health Department is a great sign that the efforts taken have had some success” said Dr. Judith A. Hartner, M.D., M.P.H., M.P.A., Director of the Lee County Health Department.

For those individuals that were visiting Ft. Myers Beach Pier in Florida on Monday, June 15th and have any information on how to contact the girl or remaining youth seen handling a bat, please contact the Lee County Health Department at (239) 332-9501. The phone number will be operational 24-hours per day/ 7-days per week.

Also, three boys that were seen handling a rabid bat on Monday, June 15th are still unidentified. Since rabies is a fatal disease, the Lee County Health Department is trying to locate the young girl, as well as, continue the search for 3 remaining youth in order to administer rabies vaccinations.

On Monday, June 15th, at approximately 4:00pm, an eyewitness saw some youth estimated to be between 10-12 years of age handling, playing and kissing a bat at the Ft. Myers Beach pier. Rabies is a fatal disease. There is no known cure for rabies, only vaccination. Therefore, it is critical that any youth who were playing with the bat on Ft. Myers Beach pier are vaccinated as soon as possible.

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For more information concerning rabies and how it spreads please refer to the Florida Department of Health website: <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/medicine/rabies/rabies-education.html> and at the Centers for Disease Control website: <http://www.cdc.gov/RABIES/bats.html> or <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvrd/kidsrabies/>

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