

Beverly animal rights activist to receive award - Beverly - Your Town - Boston.com

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By Sean Teehan, Town Correspondent

Kim Hyder, 52, of Beverly is one of two recipients of the award, which will be presented during the school's animal rights day on April 23, said Diane Sullivan, the school's assistant dean.

"We have quite an extensive animal advocacy program," Sullivan said, adding that when they were among the first law schools in the country to offer animal rights classes.

Hearing about Hyder's case through media reports, Sullivan and Massachusetts School of Law associate dean Michael Coyne took it on free of charge and had all charges dropped in October, Sullivan said.

Hyder earned the nomination because the award, which is in its fifth year, is awarded to "somebody who has done something extraordinary to help the lives of animals or one particular animal," Sullivan said.

"I don't think it was anything that special that I did," said Hyder who added she hoped others would do the same thing if put in her position. "I feel honored to have another opportunity to highlight my activism," Hyder said in an interview today.

Circumstances surrounding Hyder's arrest began when an 11-year-old student in an acting class she teaches in Salem brought in a dog, saying he was babysitting the miniature Grayhound mix named Bruno.

As the evening wore on, he began revealing to me why he had the dog," Hyder said in a September interview.

Hyder's student told her he witnessed one of Brunos owners kick the dog in the head and throw a knife at it, she said. The child also told Hyder the alleged abuser threatened him with the knife, warning him not to tell anyone what happened, she said.

Another child, who also said he witnessed the incident, corroborated the story to Hyder, she said.

The 10-year-old brother of the pet's 15-year-old owner later came to Hyder's class in an effort to retrieve his dog, according to Hyder.

I said, Did you kick the dog in the face and throw a knife at him? and he started crying she recalled.

After she refused to return the dog, several family members of the boy gathered in front of the classroom door, demanding the dog back. She replied that they would have to call the police, Hyder said.

The boy's sister, who police identified as the dog's owner, called police to the scene, Lieutenant Conrad Prosniewski, a spokesman for the Salem Police Department, said three days after the arrest.

Police arrived at the office building where Hyder teaches and interviewed the children, who said they witnessed the abuse, Hyder said. They also interviewed the alleged abuser and his family, she said.

Police found no physical evidence of abuse and ordered Hyder, who held the Bruno's leash, to turn the dog over to the family, Prosniewski said. Police later referred the matter to Animal Control to

investigate, he added.

Hyder, a member of Friends of Beverly Animals and host of two TV shows that feature animal issues on Beverly's local access channels (BevCam), refused to turn the dog over, put her hands out and told police they'd have to arrest her, Prosniewski said.

Police arrested Hyder and charged her with witness intimidation. The child who allegedly abused the dog was also summonsed to court.

Hyder will receive her award alongside a Newbury firefighter who rescued a dog who was drowning in freezing water after falling through ice, Sullivan said.

The awards will be presented at the Massachusetts School of Law's Andover campus at 12:30 p.m.