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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dogs Escape Starvation on Puerto Rico and Find Homes in New Jersey

May 11, 2020

Voorhees, NJ – Animal Welfare Association (AWA) recently formed a partnership in Puerto Rico with Leopoldina Roubian and her nonprofit Barks of Hope, to save stray dogs and transport them back to New Jersey for future adoptions.

Puerto Rico has experienced in the last few years, a hurricane, an earthquake and now the COVID-19 health and economic crisis, which has affected thousands of stray dogs who are now going hungry and are in desperate need of assistance. These “beach dogs” would normally find food by scavenging in trash bins or receive scraps from tourists and staff at beach side restaurants, but with travel bans, tourists are unable to visit the island, and residents are required to follow shelter in place guidelines. Current circumstances have made life for these dogs even more unstable.

Along with the increased urgency of evacuating the dogs off the island, the cost is higher. Typically, commercial airlines fly dogs to major cities along the East Coast for a reduced fee of approximately \$80. Unfortunately, with flights grounded, due to the pandemic, these reduced fares are unavailable; meaning a more expensive way of transportation is required.

“Unlike other dog rescues from the island, there were expenses. With fewer planes flying and no tourists to sponsor dog spots on commercial flights these dogs needed to travel on a special plane, with AWA being responsible for the cost”, says Maya Richmond, Executive Director of Animal Welfare Association.

AWA works with non-profits in Puerto Rico such as Barks of Hope to ensure vulnerable dogs are able to be transported stateside where medical care and a safe environment is available. In time, the dogs will be ready to meet their new families and enjoy a happier and healthier life.

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Animal Welfare Association, a private, non-profit, 501(c) 3 animal welfare organization, serves the people and animals of southern New Jersey. AWA is dedicated to eliminating animal suffering, promoting the importance of the human-animal bond, and improving the role of animals in the well-being of people. Through a variety of programs including adoptions, veterinary services, pet therapy, and humane education, in 2019 over 16,000 pets were served through AWA programming. AWA is South Jersey’s leader in progressive companion animal care.



Two of the dogs that were brought to New Jersey from Puerto Rico.