

## 16 HORSES TAKEN INTO PROTECTIVE CUSTODY



The Kauai Humane Society rescued 16 horses in emaciated, thin and dehydrated condition from a property off Maalo Road in Lihue Sunday, May 30th after investigating calls from concerned people about “skinny” horses.

Lara Butler-Brady, owner of Keapana Horsemanship, was issued citations for 16 counts of cruelty to animals in the second degree, each count a full misdemeanor and punishable by a maximum of 1 year in jail and/or \$2,000 fine.

“This is the largest cruelty case involving this many horses I know of in recent times here in Hawaii,” said Dr. Becky Rhoades, executive director of the Kauai Humane Society.

Four stunted, emaciated yearlings, four emaciated adult horses, two emaciated ponies, five very thin adult horses and one very thin adult pony were seized, Rhoades said. All the horses are in protective custody, some at a private pasture and others at the humane society.

Rhoades said she hopes Butler-Brady agrees to surrender the animals so they can be adopted out to good homes. If there is a criminal trial, the animals would be held by the humane society for many months before they can be adopted, Rhoades said.

KHS has been responding to complaints of negligence about Butler-Brady for years. Whenever humane officers visited the property, Butler-Brady had met the minimum standards of care by law, Rhoades said.

On May 22, KHS received an anonymous call about “skinny horses” at Butler’s location. Humane officer Jessica Venneman visited the property and observed very thin and some emaciated horses, some tethered with no access to water.

The next day Venneman brought \$400 worth of feed to Butler and offered for KHS to feed all her horses for 30 days for free and to provide free veterinary exams for all horses if Butler would agree to find new homes for them all within 30 days. Venneman said Butler refused and asked Venneman to leave.

“Last weekend we offered to help care for the horses and she refused. That’s when I knew we had to rescue them before they starved to death,” Rhoades said.

“Because she was not willing to work with us and the horses looked so bad, we got a search warrant signed by Judge Trudy Senda on Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup> to take the horses into protective custody,” Rhoades said.

Initial reports were that eight horses were on the property, but during an hours-long search of the more than 100-acre property that Butler-Brady leases from the Department of Land and Natural Resources, 16 horses were found.



Humane officers found several horses tied with ropes to trees without a nearby water supply. Most the horses were docile when approached by people, some walking toward the officers to accept rubs on their heads and offers of food. All were thin, most with ribs and hip bones protruding.

Karin Stoll, owner of Healing Horses and one of the helpers in the seizure, said she has noticed for many years that it seemed that Butler-Brady was not feeding her horses enough but that she wasn't willing to give them up.

“She loves these horses as best she knows how,” said Karin Stoll, “But sad to say she'd rather watch them starve than let them go.

“I think she keeps thinking she'll figure something out and that some miracle will befall her,” Stoll said. “And this (the rescue) is that miracle.”

Stoll said she hopes to adopt four of the horses to use in her business of providing equine facilitated psychotherapy and hippotherapy for adults and children with physical disabilities, cerebral palsy, who have suffered brain injuries, have autism, ADHD or other developmental disabilities.

Stoll said she has two rescue horses in her business now.

“You rescue the horse and you rescue the child. It sounds dramatic but it's true,” she said. “They relate, they resonate with each other. When the kid gets well and the horse gets well, what else can you ask for?”

Rhoades said caring for the horses will be costly to the Kauai Humane Society and that any donations to help offset the expense will be greatly appreciated. To donate, visit the society's website [www.kauaihumane.org](http://www.kauaihumane.org), mail a donation to P.O. Box 3330, Lihue, Hi 96766 with a note, “Care for the Horses” or call 632-0610.

The arraignment date for Butler-Brady is July 7<sup>th</sup> in Lihue District Court.

