

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 10, 2013

## **Cat Abuser Pleads No Contest to Felony Animal Abuse Charges**

**Los Angeles, CA** – In December 2012, Nieves Rivera violently beat his girlfriend's cat, Umechan. Today, following an investigation and arrest by Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Los Angeles (spcaLA), Rivera pleaded no contest to one count of felony animal cruelty.

Umechan, whose name means "little plum," suffered from traumatic brain injury, missing teeth, and several other abnormalities consistent with blunt force trauma as a result of Rivera's attack. Rivera's girlfriend was not at home when the incident happened, and only learned of it hours later when she returned home from work to a bloodied cat, for whom she sought medical treatment. Umechan survived her injuries.

"Today's result reinforced that regardless of the object of abuse -- animal or human -- violence cannot be tolerated," said spcaLA President, Madeline Bernstein. "Today, the family cat is treated as a punching bag, who is the target tomorrow? The link between animal abuse, domestic violence and child abuse is real, proven by endless studies, and must be broken."

spcaLA offers services aimed at breaking the cycle of violence. spcaLA's internationally renowned program, Teaching Love and Compassion (TLC)™, helps instill empathy in youth from at-risk communities. spcaLA's Animal Safety Net (ASN)™ offers free boarding for the pets of domestic violence survivors, at no cost, so they may leave a dangerous situation without fear for their pets' safety.

Rivera's felony count may be reduced to a misdemeanor if he completes the court-mandated sentence including fines, 52 weeks of pet counseling, 45 days of community service, and restitution. He is also on probation for 3 years. The case was prosecuted by Los Angeles County Deputy District Attorney, Ani Bailey.

spcaLA is the only animal welfare organization in the City of Los Angeles that is also law enforcement. spcaLA Humane Officers routinely work with law enforcement agencies to investigate animal cruelty. In this case, LAPD Devonshire Division, and the Glendale PD, assigned to the Glendale Galleria station assisted spcaLA with the arrest.

*For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact Ana Bustilloz at 323-730-5300 x252, cell 323-707-1271 or [abustilloz@spcaLA.com](mailto:abustilloz@spcaLA.com).*

Since 1877, spcaLA has been the premiere independent, nonprofit animal welfare organization serving Southern California. There is no national SPCA, parent organization, or umbrella group that provides financial support to spcaLA. Donations run programs and services including Cruelty Investigation, Disaster Animal Response Team, Humane Education, and a variety of shelter services.