



## Justice Center for the Protection of People With Special Needs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 20, 2016

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*An arrest photo is available at the bottom of the release.*

### **Children's Residential Program Assistant Manager Indicted for Physically Abusing Disabled Individual** *Case investigated and prosecuted by the Justice Center*

Suffolk, NY – NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs Special Prosecutor Patricia E. Gunning announced a Long Island man, employed by the Developmental Disabilities Institute Children's Residential Program in Smithtown, was arrested and arraigned in Suffolk County Court on a four-count indictment charging him with abusing an adolescent in his care.

"Those who assume the responsibility of caring for vulnerable New Yorkers, youth in particular, must be held accountable for endangering people in their care," said Special Prosecutor Gunning. "While there was no injury in this case, putting pressure to the neck is an extremely dangerous action that can have serious and potentially life-threatening consequences."

The complaint charges Nathaniel Grimes (DOB: 03/01/85) of Mastic Beach with:

- One count of Endangering the Welfare of an Incompetent or Physically Disabled Person in the First Degree, a class "E" felony;
- One count of Criminal Obstruction of Breathing or Blood Circulation, a class "A" misdemeanor;
- One count of Attempted Assault in the Third Degree, a class "B" misdemeanor; and
- One count of Harassment in the Second Degree, a violation.

The charges stem from a September 2015 incident in which the defendant allegedly struck the victim with his hand, shoved the victim into a wall and onto the ground and put pressure to the victim's neck with the defendant's hands.

Grimes was arraigned before the Honorable John J. Toomey of Suffolk County Court and released on his own recognizance. Grimes, who is due back in court on July 20, 2016, was suspended from his position. The case is being prosecuted by Justice Center Assistant Special Prosecutors Allison Warga and David Kim.

The Justice Center and its statewide hotline and incident reporting system began operations on June 30, 2013. It is staffed 24-hours a day, seven days a week by trained professionals who receive reports of allegations of abuse and neglect of people with special needs. Once a report is received by its Vulnerable Persons Central Register (VPCR) Hotline, it is logged and assessed. Serious cases of abuse or neglect are assigned to the Justice Center's investigation team or, when appropriate, to a local law enforcement agency for follow-up.

Through the services provided by the Justice Center's Individual and Family Support Unit, victims, their families, personal representatives and guardians receive guidance and information about the reporting and investigation process and support during criminal cases and court proceedings.

The Justice Center also maintains a statewide registry of all persons who have been found to be responsible for serious or repeated acts of abuse and neglect. Once placed on the registry, known as the "Staff Exclusion List" or SEL, they are prohibited by law from ever working again with people with disabilities or special needs.

Developmental Disabilities Institute Children's Residential Program is licensed by the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). OPWDD is one of six state agencies under the jurisdiction of the Justice Center. The Justice Center also oversees certain facilities or programs that are operated, licensed or certified by the, the Office of Mental Health (OMH), the Department of Health (DOH), the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), and the State Education Department (SED).

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*Editor's note: In compliance with Disciplinary Rule 7-107A of the Code of Professional Responsibility, you are advised that a charge is an accusation and that a defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty.*



Nathaniel Grimes (DOB: 03/01/85)