



# Justice Center for the Protection of People With Special Needs

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## **Former Northeast Parent & Child Society Aide Pleads Guilty to Felony Sex Charge** *Case Investigated and Prosecuted by the Justice Center*

Albany, NY – NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs Special Prosecutor Patricia E. Gunning today announced the guilty plea of a Castleton man, who has admitted he had sexual contact with a teenager in his care while employed as a therapeutic aide at Northeast Parent and Child Society. The provider agency is certified by the NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).

Jarrett L. Coleman (DOB: 08/14/68) appeared before the Honorable Andrew G. Ceresia, Acting Albany County Court Judge on July 8, 2016 and pled guilty to the top count of Criminal Sexual Act in the Third Degree, a class E felony. The defendant will be sentenced on September 2, 2016 to one year in jail, if he meets the conditions outlined by the court. Coleman will be required to register as a sex offender. He also agreed to waive his right to challenge any Justice Center administrative finding, including a determination that may place him on the Justice Center's Staff Exclusion List. The defendant had previously been terminated from his position.

Coleman admitted he signed the victim out of the group home where she was receiving services, gave alcohol to her and engaged in sexual activity in a hotel room. Under the law, youth placed in an OCFS facility cannot legally consent to sex.

"This plea and promised sentence should send a message to those who would seek to sexually abuse at-risk youth in their care," said Special Prosecutor Gunning. "The defendant in this case has been held accountable for his conduct and the plea agreement responded to the needs and wishes of the victim who was spared the anguish of a trial."

The case was investigated by the Justice Center, with assistance from the Schenectady and Albany Police Departments. Justice Center Assistant Special Prosecutor Rachel Dunn prosecuted the case.

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.

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. 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.

OCFS 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 Office of Mental Health (OMH), the Office of Persons With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the Department of Health (DOH), the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) and the State Education Department (SED).

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Jarrett L. Coleman (DOB: 08/14/68)