



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 11, 2013

Contact: Diane Ward, Office of Communications

(518) 549-0200

diane.ward@justicecenter.ny.gov

Brockport Community Home Employee Arrested for Allegedly Abusing Resident

Incident Reported to NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs Hotline

Brockport, NY-- NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs Special Prosecutor Patricia A. Gunning announced today that Jacquelyn Bernabeu (DOB 07/20/89), who is employed as a Community Living Instructor at Lifetime Assistance Inc. has been arrested for allegedly abusing a non-verbal resident with significant intellectual disabilities following an investigation conducted by the Monroe County Sheriff's Office. The facility is a private provider certified by the NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD).

The incident first came to the attention of law enforcement officials when an administrator at the community home reported the incident to the Justice Center's Vulnerable Persons Central Register (VPCR) Hotline. A call center representative opened a case tracking file. Justice Center investigators contacted the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and provided assistance with the investigation.

Bernabeu, who lives at 96 Lake Vista Court, Rochester, NY was arrested September 9, 2013 on a Misdemeanor Complaint charging her with:

- One count of Endangering the Welfare of a Vulnerable Person, a class "A" Misdemeanor

According to the complaint, the defendant allegedly grabbed a resident by the ankles and dragged the individual down a hallway and into a bedroom. Bernabeu has been placed on administrative leave. She was issued an appearance ticket for September 30, 2013 to be arraigned on the charge in Sweden Town Court.

"Acts of violence by any member of our community is unacceptable, but it is particularly insidious when that violence is perpetrated against the most defenseless among us by someone entrusted with their care," said Monroe County District Attorney Sandra Doorley. "Care-facilities and group homes are not places where people are discarded, but places where they are nurtured, and I would like to thank Special Prosecutor Gunning and the NYS Justice Center for helping us ensure that criminal acts committed in such facilities will not be overlooked by law enforcement."

-Continued on page 2-

Page 2 –Brockport Community Home Employee Arrested for Allegedly Abusing Resident

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.

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

###

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.