



Justice Center for the Protection of People With Special Needs

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Staten Island Aide Arrested for Attempting to Assault Person with a Disability *Case being investigated and prosecuted by the Justice Center*

Staten Island, NY-- NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs Special Prosecutor Patricia E. Gunning today announced a woman who was employed by Crossroads Unlimited, Inc. was arrested and charged with five counts, including felony endangerment for allegedly punching a man with an intellectual disability in her care.

Rosita Dejesus (DOB: 09/20/68) of Orlando, Florida was arrested on a criminal complaint and charged 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 Endangering the Welfare of an Incompetent or Physically Disabled Person in the Second Degree, a class "A" misdemeanor;
- One count of Attempted Assault in the Third Degree, a class "A" misdemeanor;
- One count of Menacing in the Third Degree, a class "B" misdemeanor; and
- One count of Harassment in the Second Degree, a violation.

"Violence against individuals in care must not be tolerated," said Special Prosecutor Gunning. "Defendants, such as this one, who disregard their obligations to individuals with disabilities by intentionally attempting to injure them, will be charged."

The charges in this case stem from an incident that occurred on February 11, 2016, in which the defendant is alleged to have repeatedly punched this vulnerable victim in the face and body. Dejesus was arraigned in Richmond County Criminal Court before the Honorable R. Rajeswari. Bail was set at \$1,000. The defendant was terminated from her position.

The case was investigated by the Justice Center and is being prosecuted by Justice Center Assistant Special Prosecutor Edwin Ferguson.

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.

The facility where the alleged abuse occurred is licensed by the NYS 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 Office of Mental Health (OMH), the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), the Department of Health (DOH), the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) 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.



Rosita Dejesus (DOB: 09/20/68)