



Justice Center for the Protection of People With Special Needs

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Former Hillside Teaching Assistant Pleads Guilty to Endangering Teen

Case investigated and prosecuted by the Justice Center

Irondequoit, NY-- NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs Special Prosecutor Patricia E. Gunning today announced the guilty plea of a former Hillside Children's Center teaching assistant who admitted he harbored a teen at his Irondequoit home for several days. The defendant allowed the girl to stay in his home, in his bedroom, even though he knew the Children's Center had been looking for her.

"Those who work with at-risk youth, like this defendant, should take this conviction as a reminder that they have a duty to the children in their charge," said Special Prosecutor Gunning. "Staff members who choose to disregard such obligations and instead endanger youth will be held accountable."

Michael Guetti (DOB: 11/17/90) appeared before Town Justice Joseph T. Genier and pled guilty to one count of Endangering the Welfare of a Child, a class "A" misdemeanor. Guetti is scheduled to be sentenced on September 13, 2016. As a part of a plea agreement, the defendant will be placed on probation. An order of protection was issued for the victim. Guetti also waived his right to appeal any Justice Center administrative findings.

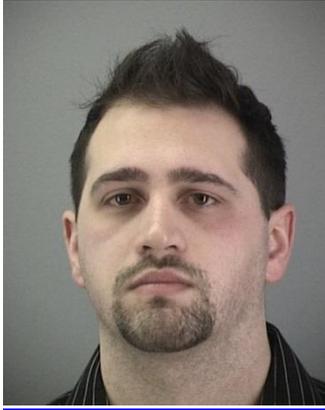
Justice Center Assistant Special Prosecutor Jennifer Whitman prosecuted the case.

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. 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.

Hillside Children's Center is licensed by the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS). 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 for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), the Office of Mental Health (OMH), the Department of Health (DOH), the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), and the State Education Department (SED).

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Michael Guetti (DOB: 11/17/90)