



Justice Center for the Protection of People With Special Needs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 15, 2016
Contact: Diane Ward, Office of Communications
(518) 549-0200
diane.ward@justicecenter.ny.gov

Hillside Teaching Assistant Arrested for Sexually Abusing Resident

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 a teaching assistant employed by the Hillside Children's Center in Rochester was arrested and arraigned on charges for allegedly driving a resident who went AWOL to his Irondequoit home where he and the teen engaged in sexual activity.

"Sexual involvement between staff and a youth receiving care is not only unethical it is illegal," said Special Prosecutor Gunning. "Workers, like this defendant, who prey on vulnerable individuals entrusted to their care, should be on notice that the Justice Center will prosecute these cases to ensure they are held accountable for their misconduct."

Michael Guetti (DOB: 11/17/90) of Irondequoit was arraigned in Irondequoit Town Court before the Honorable Joseph T. Genier on a criminal complaint charging him with:

- One count of Endangering the Welfare of a Child, a class "A" misdemeanor; and
- One count of Sexual Abuse in the Second Degree, a class "A" misdemeanor

The charges in this case stem from an investigation conducted by the Justice Center which revealed the defendant engaged in inappropriate sexual contact with a female resident of Hillside who went AWOL. The defendant is alleged to have driven the victim to and from Buffalo before driving her to his home where the two spent more than one night together.

Guetti pled not guilty to the charges and was released on his own recognizance. He is due back in court on May 24, 2016. The defendant was suspended from his position. Justice Center Assistant Special Prosecutor Jennifer Whitman is prosecuting 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

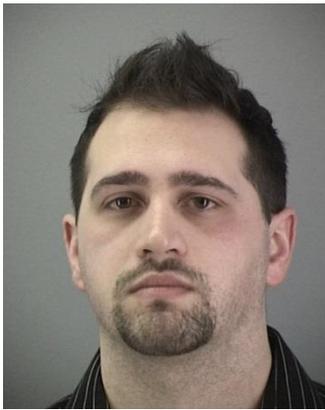
families, personal representatives and guardians receive guidance and information about the reporting and investigation process and support during criminal cases and court proceedings.

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).

###

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.



Michael Guetti (DOB: 11/17/90)