



## Justice Center for the Protection of People With Special Needs

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Contact [Bill Reynolds](#) (518) 414-1299

*An arrest photo is available at the bottom of the release.*

### **State-Employed Youth Division Aide Charged with Physically Abusing Child in His Care** *Case investigated and prosecuted by the Justice Center*

Kortright, NY – NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs Special Prosecutor Patricia E. Gunning announced a Clifton Park man, employed at the Sgt. Henry Johnson Youth Leadership Academy in Kortright, was arrested and arraigned in Kortright Town Justice Court on charges he abused an adolescent in his care.

“At risk youth reside in state care to receive counseling, education and other important services designed to assist them into becoming responsible adults in society,” said Special Prosecutor Gunning. “State employees, like this defendant, who ignore their responsibilities to care for these young people, instead choosing to attempt to injure them while using unlawful and dangerous techniques, will be held accountable.”

The complaint charges Timothy M. Rankins (DOB: 10/21/1968) of Clifton Park with:

- Endangering the Welfare of a Child, a Class “A” misdemeanor;
- Unlawful Imprisonment in the Second Degree, a Class “A” misdemeanor;
- Official Misconduct, a Class “A” misdemeanor;
- Attempted Assault in the Third Degree, a Class “B” misdemeanor;
- Menacing in the Third Degree, a Class “B” misdemeanor; and
- Harassment in the Second Degree, a violation.

The charges stem from an April 19 incident in which the defendant, a Youth Division Aide, allegedly grabbed the victim, a 14 year old child, and shoved him face down onto a desk and held him there. The defendant is then alleged to have shoved the victim’s face into a wall, restraining him and then lifting the victim’s feet off the ground at which time the victim screamed in pain.

Rankins was arraigned before the Honorable Yvonne J. Pagillo of Kortright Town Justice Court and released on his own recognizance for a return to court at a later date. Rankins was terminated from his position. The case, investigated by the Justice Center, is being prosecuted by Justice Center Supervising Assistant Special Prosecutor Linda E. Gafford.

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 Sgt. Henry Johnson YLA is operated by the state 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 of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS), the Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), Office of Mental Health (OMH), Department of Health (DOH), 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.*



*Timothy M. Rankins (DOB: 10/21/1968)*