



# Justice Center for the Protection of People With Special Needs

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## **Former Manhattan Caregiver Charged with Endangering Person with Disabilities in Her Care**

*Case Being Prosecuted by NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs*

Manhattan, NY – NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs Special Prosecutor Patricia E. Gunning announced the arrest of a former employee of the Shield Institute, Inc. on charges of endangerment and harassment for striking a person with profound disabilities who was wheelchair-bound.

June Callender (DOB: 02/01/56) of Brooklyn, was charged with:

- Attempted Endangering the Welfare of an Incompetent or Physically Disabled Person in the First Degree, a class A misdemeanor;
- Endangering the Welfare of an Incompetent or Physically Disabled Person in the Second Degree, a class A misdemeanor; and
- Harassment in the Second Degree, a violation.

“This victim is completely unable to care for himself or defend himself,” said Special Prosecutor Gunning. “Defendants, like this one, who target the vulnerable, will be held accountable.”

Callender, an assistant habilitation specialist, was terminated from her position at the Shield Institute, Inc. The Justice Center led the investigation and Justice Center Assistant Special prosecutor Edwin Ferguson is leading the prosecution. Callender was arraigned before the Honorable Joanne Watters of Manhattan Criminal Court and is scheduled to return to court on June 28.

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.

Shield Institute, Inc. is licensed by the 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 Children and Family Services (OCFS), 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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*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.*



June Callender (DOB: 02/01/56)