



Justice Center for the Protection of People With Special Needs

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Indictment Unsealed in Abuse Case Involving Individual with Disabilities *Justice Center Investigating and Prosecuting Case*

Ballston Spa, NY - NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs Special Prosecutor/Inspector General Patricia E. Gunning today announced the arrest and indictment of a Saratoga County woman on felony endangerment charges for allegedly mistreating an adult with physical disabilities in her care.

Sabrina Allen (DOB: 9/30/94) of Lake Luzerne, who was employed as a direct support professional at a community residence operated by AIM Services, Inc. was arraigned in Saratoga County Court on February 18, 2016, before the Honorable James A. Murphy, III on a five count indictment charging her with:

- One count of Endangering the Welfare of a Vulnerable Elderly Person or an Incompetent or Physically Disabled Person in the Second Degree, a class "E" felony;
- 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 Assault in the Third degree, a class "A" misdemeanor; and
- One count of Reckless Endangerment in the Second Degree, a class "A" misdemeanor.

Allen surrendered to authorities and bail was set at \$15,000 cash/\$30,000 bond. She has been terminated from her position.

"The Justice Center works tirelessly to ensure that staff members are held accountable when mistreatment occurs," said Special Prosecutor Gunning. "Caretakers who consciously disregard the safety of vulnerable New Yorkers in their care will be thoroughly investigated and prosecuted when there is sufficient evidence to justify doing so."

The charges in this case stem from an incident which occurred in October 2015, when a service recipient was injured when he was thrown from his wheelchair onto the floor of a van while being transported. The defendant is alleged to have disregarded the victim's warning that his chair had not been properly secured in the vehicle. The defendant also refused to respond to the man's demand to call 911. The victim was left lying on floor of the van in pain for approximately 10-20 minutes before staff members at the residence where he lives sought medical assistance. The victim suffered a fractured leg.

The arrest was the result of an investigation conducted by the Justice Center. Justice Center Assistant Special Prosecutor Rachel Dunn is prosecuting the case.

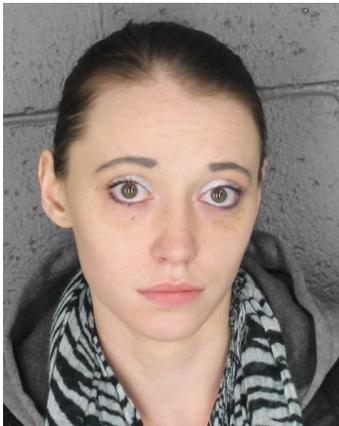
The Justice Center and its statewide hotline and incident reporting system began operations on June 30, 2013. It is staffed 24-hours a day, seven days a week by trained professionals who receive reports of allegations of abuse and neglect of people with special needs. Once a report is received by its 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.

The facility is certified by the NYS Office for People With Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD). OPWDD is one of six state agencies which have programs 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 Department of Health (DOH), the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), 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.



Sabrina Allen