



Justice Center for the Protection of People With Special Needs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 18, 2016
Contact: Diane Ward, Office of Communications
(518) 549-0200
diane.ward@justicecenter.ny.gov

Long Island Caregiver Arrested for Punching 3 Individuals with Developmental Disabilities in His Care

Case investigated and prosecuted by the Justice Center

Plainview, NY-- NYS Justice Center for the Protection of People with Special Needs Special Prosecutor Patricia E. Gunning today announced an Elmont man, who was employed by a day habilitation program for people with developmental disabilities operated by IRI, was arrested and arraigned on felony endangerment charges for allegedly abusing three men in his care.

“Individuals receiving services deserve to feel safe and be treated with dignity and respect,” said Special Prosecutor Gunning. “The Justice Center and the District Attorneys of this state will prosecute staff, like this defendant who abuse the people who they have been entrusted to care for.”

Dandy Theodore (DOB: 08/16/86) was arraigned on April 15, 2016 in Nassau District Court before the Honorable William Hohausser on a criminal complaint charging him with:

- Three counts of Endangering the Welfare of an Incompetent or Physically Disabled Person in the First Degree, a class "E" felony;
- Three counts of Endangering the Welfare of an Incompetent or Physically Disabled Person in the Second Degree, a class "A" misdemeanor;
- Three counts of Attempted Assault in the Third Degree, a class "B" misdemeanor;
- Three counts of Menacing in the Third Degree, a class "B" misdemeanor; and
- Three counts of Harassment in the Second Degree, a violation.

The charges in this case stem from an incident investigated by the Justice Center which alleges the defendant punched three service recipients. All three victims were taken to Franklin Hospital in Valley Stream for evaluations.

Theodore pled not guilty to the charges and was released on his own recognizance. He is scheduled to return to court on April 26, 2016. The defendant has been terminated from his position. Justice Center Assistant Special Prosecutor Allison Warga 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.

IRI is certified 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).

###

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.



Dandy Theodore (DOB: 08/16/86)