

FOR MEDIA RELEASE, OCTOBER 8, 2014

Federal Civil Rights Lawsuit Vs. Westchester County NY, DSS and Staff Filed
by Client of The Foundation of the Child Victims of the Family Courts

A Federal Civil Rights law suit has been filed in US District Court, Southern District of NY, White Plains NY, on behalf of plaintiff Ms. Latonia J., and her minor child D.J., clients of The Foundation for the Child Victims of the Family Courts, v. Westchester County NY and the Department of Social Services (DSS), alleging deliberate indifference to the Plaintiffs' Constitutional rights, and pain and suffering for a period of over ten years. Plaintiff has asked to be awarded compensatory damages for alleged improper placement, improper medicating and withholding of appropriate education and psychiatric therapy for the child.

Westchester, New York October 8, 2014

A Federal Civil Rights lawsuit has been filed in United States District Court, Southern District of New York, White Plains NY, on behalf of plaintiff Ms. Latonia J., on behalf of her minor child D.J., clients of The Foundation for the Child Victims of the Family Courts. (Case 7:14-cv-07635 NSR; Complaint # 14 Civ. 7635 filed before Judge Roman.)

Defendants in the suit are Westchester County NY, and Rosa Hazoury, Elke Knudsen, and Lisa Colin, Esq. Defendants Hazoury and Knudsen are employees with Westchester County's Department of Social Services (DSS). Defendant Colin had initially been appointed by the Family Court of Westchester County to represent the interests of Plaintiff DJ in a neglect proceeding against the Plaintiff, held before the Family Court.

The suit, brought by the Rubino Law Firm of Manhattan, alleges, "This is a civil rights action, pursuant to 42 U.S.C. §1983, in which plaintiffs seek damages to redress the deprivation, under color of state law, of rights secured them under the Fourth, Fifth, Eighth, and Fourteenth Amendments of the United States Constitution. Defendants removed plaintiff Latonia Jones' infant child from her custody, without her consent, and proceeded to neglect the infirm child for eight years."

The Foundation for the Child Victims of the Family Courts is a 501- C3 not-for-profit organization registered in New York. It is composed of an association of attorneys, forensic law investigators, therapists, counselors, pediatricians and other professionals who are dedicated to directly assisting parties who have been harmed by the abuses of the Family Court system, Social Service agencies and Child Protective Services across the country. Its main offices are located in Manhattan.

The Federal suit alleges that since May 2005 until the present day, the DSS Defendants committed wrongful acts against Plaintiffs including negligence, intentionally and negligently inflicting emotional distress, violating Plaintiffs' Constitutional and civil rights, plus assault, false imprisonment, neglect and abuse, and violations of NY State education law.

The lawsuit alleges a history of gross negligence and professional malpractice on the part of the Westchester Dept. of Social Services, regarding how it allegedly mishandled the removal of plaintiff Latonia J.'s children from the home, how it misdiagnosed the subject minor child, neglected to find proper treatment facility placement for the child, over-medicated, restrained and repeatedly separated the child from the mother, and failed to provide appropriate psychiatric therapy, family therapy, facilitation of contact with siblings or appropriate education for the child. Additionally, DSS allegedly failed to provide reasonable and proper counseling and preparation to ensure a successful foster home placement for the subject child throughout years in their care.

The suit identifies the County and the DSS Defendants, in their official and individual capacities, as allegedly engaging in legal malpractice, failing to exercise professional judgment, and of deliberate indifference to the Plaintiffs' constitutional rights, thus maliciously causing the violation of such rights. As such, the Plaintiff has asked to be awarded compensatory damages for the alleged pain, suffering, emotional distress, loss of dignity, humiliation, and deprivation of basic human needs and rights endured by herself and her child.

The Foundation for the Child Victims of the Family Courts is focused on supporting the beleaguered parent who is fighting to have his or her fair day in Court on behalf of a child, who is far too often the unwitting victim of adult and official actions. The Foundation for the Child Victims of the Family Courts can be reached at 866-553-6931, e-mail staff@fcvfc.org website <http://www.fcvfc.org>.

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