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News Release

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Duluth woman pleads guilty to mail fraud

A 44-year-old Duluth woman pleaded guilty yesterday in federal court to defrauding the First Witness Child Abuse Resource Center and its clients out of approximately \$120,842.

Patricia Ann Miller pleaded guilty to one count of mail fraud. She entered her plea Nov. 12 in Minneapolis before United States District Court Judge David Doty. Miller was charged on Oct. 28.

According to Miller's plea agreement, she admitted that from January 2003 through July 2007 she did knowingly execute and attempt to execute a scheme to defraud and to obtain money and property of the center and its clients, and admitted that she did knowingly cause items to be sent by the U.S. Postal Service. The center, located in Duluth, is a non-profit organization involving private and public agencies who are responsible for the investigation, medical intervention and prosecution of child maltreatment cases.

It was the purpose of the scheme, the plea agreement states, to trick First Witness into paying personal expenses by fraudulently representing the expenses to be business expenses. These misrepresentations were used by Miller to receive reimbursements from the center, which she used to maintain a lifestyle beyond her means.

On June 27, 2006, for the purposes of executing the scheme, Miller allegedly caused the mailing of a credit card payment for charges she incurred in Duluth.

Miller faces a potential maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. Judge Doty will determine her sentence at a future date. This case is the result of an investigation by the Duluth Police Department and the United States Postal Inspection Service, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Ann M. Anaya.