



Department of Justice

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CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER OF THE BLUEGRASS TO RECEIVE FUNDS RESULTING FROM FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S FORFEITURE AND SALE OF RESIDENCE OWNED BY TWO MEN CONVICTED OF CHILD ABUSE

*Local law enforcement partners that participated in the criminal prosecution
to share forfeited funds with local Children's Advocacy Center*

LEXINGTON, Ky. – The United States Attorney's Office, the Department of Justice Criminal Division's Money Laundering and Asset Recovery Section, the FBI, the Fayette Commonwealth Attorney's Office, the Lexington Police Department, and the Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass (CAC) jointly announced today that a portion of proceeds from the sale of the Lexington residence owned by two men convicted of child abuse will be shared with the CAC.

Beginning in 2014, the Fayette Commonwealth's Attorney's Office prosecuted brothers Jack and Jerry Cassidy for possession of child pornography and for the sexual abuse of six minor victims, which dated back to the 1970s. The Cassidys met their abuse victims through volunteer work in the Lexington community. The victims were 15 years of age or younger at the time of the abuse and much of that abuse occurred at the brother's Lexington residence, which is located on Mason Headley Road. The Lexington Police Department's investigation of the case began when emergency personnel and police were called to the residence in August 2014. Upon their arrival, the police found that the Cassidys had documented their abuse of victims, in diaries and other writings, and had evidence of that abuse on display in the house.

Both brothers entered guilty pleas to nine criminal counts, which included possession of child pornography, sexual abuse, sodomy and indecent and immoral practices (a pre-penal code offense). Fayette Circuit Court Judge Kimberly Bunnell has sentenced both men to 20 years in state prison, the maximum allowed by Kentucky law.

In 2015, the United States Attorney's Office filed a civil forfeiture action against the Mason Headley residence, asserting that the home had facilitated the interstate transport of minors for the purpose of sexual assault. Federal civil asset forfeiture law allows the federal government to file lawsuits against property that has been used to facilitate a violation of federal law, or is otherwise the proceeds of a federal criminal violation. The Cassidys agreed to the forfeiture of their residence, which was then awarded to the federal government and eventually sold by the United States Marshals Service.

Through the federal government's asset forfeiture equitable sharing program, the FBI is permitted to share up to 80 percent of the net proceeds of forfeited assets, with the local law enforcement partners who participated in the investigation and prosecution of the case. In turn, local law enforcement partners are each permitted to transfer their shared funds, up to \$25,000 per year, to community-based organizations that serve a law enforcement purpose.

In this case, the FBI has shared the maximum amount allowed from the sale of the residence with its two local partners in the investigation: the Lexington Police Department and the Fayette Commonwealth Attorney's Office. Both of these partners have elected to transfer the maximum amount of their shared funds to the CAC this year (\$50,000 in total), with remaining shared funds being transferred next year.

The CAC is a community-based organization that advocates on behalf of children alleged to have been abused; assists in the coordination of investigations of child abuse, by providing a location for forensic interviews and medical examinations; promotes the coordination of services for children alleged to have been abused; and provides, directly or by agreement, services that include forensic interviews, medical examinations, mental health and related support services, court advocacy, consultation, and training.

"These men committed appalling offenses against minor victims and used their home to facilitate their criminal conduct," said Carlton S. Shier, IV, Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Kentucky. "We were able to use the tools available to us under federal law to forfeit an instrument of their cruelty and, with the assistance of our valued law enforcement partners, convert it into a genuine benefit to future child abuse investigations in our community and the provision of essential services to victims of child abuse."

"Under Kentucky law, our office could not obtain forfeiture of the property where these horrible acts occurred," said Lou Anna Red Corn, Fayette Commonwealth's Attorney. We are fortunate in Lexington to have law enforcement agencies that work together like this, and as result of these shared funds, we are turning something horrible into something healing for child sexual abuse victims."

"Detectives in our Special Victims Section utilize the Children's Advocacy Center nearly every day," said Lexington Police Chief Mark Barnard. "The CAC provides a nurturing, friendly and safe environment to observe child interviews and meet with families and counselors. Our partnership with the CAC plays a necessary and important role in investigating and prosecuting crimes against young victims. Central Kentucky law enforcement agencies have come to rely on the CAC, so this financial contribution to support its mission of reducing the trauma experienced by child victims of sexual abuse was simply the right thing to do."

"The Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass is honored to receive these funds," said Winn Stephens, Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Center of the Bluegrass. "We are going to change the narrative of this story. What started as a horrible crime will ultimately result in helping hundreds of children overcome the abuse they suffered. These funds will also be utilized to aid in the investigation and prosecution of child abuse cases and to make sure other individuals who hurt our most vulnerable citizens are swiftly brought to justice."

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