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Children's home agrees to pay woman for abuse in 1960s

Associated Press

February 01, 2002

VALPARAISO, Ind. -- A woman who was sexually abused at a Valparaiso children's home during the 1960s has reached a settlement with the home.

The Shults-Lewis home has agreed to pay Teri Throneberry, 50, of Culver an undisclosed amount and has offered her an apology, said her attorney, Gregory Bowes.

"We know that Ms. Lee (Throneberry) was abused," wrote Jackie Barger, Shults-Lewis executive director. "These offenses occurred on our watch and we want to take responsibility for what happened to her."

Despite this admission and the financial settlement, Bowes said Shults-Lewis still denies it has any legal liability for the abuse.

The facility had challenged Throneberry's claims about having blocked out the memories until about 11 years ago and had argued that the lawsuit was filed so long after the fact that she no longer was entitled to any damages.

"Although we know we can never help her (Throneberry) recover the childhood she lost, we hope the money we are paying her helps her find her way back to health," Barger said in the apology.

A civil jury trial by Throneberry against Shults-Lewis Family Services ended in a mistrial in September when her attorney developed a blood clot behind his left knee and could not continue.

During that trial, Rodney Grantham, the house father at the home, admitted he touched, fondled or had intercourse with Throneberry and another girl up to 100 times each.


Barger said in a statement that the home's abuse prevention plan is different today than it was in the 1960s.

"To the children we have yet to serve, we extend our sincere promise that we will do as much as we can to ensure that no one we have hired will do any harm to them," the statement said.

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