



**United States Attorney David M. DeVillers
Southern District of Ohio**

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Officials of federally funded Washington Court House domestic violence shelter
indicted for converting shelter funds to personal use
*Defendants allegedly used shelter money for personal expenses including
vacations, food*

CINCINNATI – The former executive director and bookkeeper of My Sister’s House, a domestic violence shelter in Washington Court House, were arrested today on charges contained in an indictment alleging that the two spent thousands of dollars intended for the operation of the shelter on personal expenses for themselves, including food, a trip to Disney World and Universal Studios for their daughters, and thousands of dollars in purchases from Avon, Thirty-One and iTunes.

Agents arrested Crystal Chrisman, 52, the former executive director of the shelter, at her home in Columbus, and Jaime Cardinal, 44, the shelter’s former bookkeeper, in Washington Court House. They were transported to federal court in Cincinnati for initial appearances and released by Magistrate Judge Stephanie Bowman until further court hearings are scheduled.

The indictment charges each defendant in Count One with conspiracy to commit theft concerning programs receiving federal funds, and in Count Two with theft concerning programs receiving federal funds. If convicted, the defendants face up to five years’ imprisonment on Count One and up to ten years imprisonment on Count Two, plus up to a \$250,000 fine for each count. If convicted, the defendants could be ordered to pay full restitution of the amounts allegedly stolen, to forfeit any assets they bought with stolen funds and to serve a term of supervised release. The allegations refer to activity occurring between January 2014 and October 2016.

“The indictment alleges that the purpose of the conspiracy was for the defendants to unlawfully enrich themselves by converting funds intended for the shelter to their personal use,” said David M. DeVillers, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio. “They allegedly achieved their objective by misusing debit cards connected to shelter accounts for personal purchases at restaurants, auctions, craft stores, and bowling alleys among other places - including purchases made when few, if any, victims lived at the shelter.”

“These two individuals allegedly stole DOJ funds intended to help victims of domestic violence and used it for personal gain. The Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General is committed to deterring abuse of DOJ programs for victims of violence. We will continue to root

out these kinds of selfish schemes,” said William J. Hannah, Special Agent in Charge of the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General Chicago Field Office. The defendants allegedly committed the crimes between January 2014 and October 2016. My Sister’s House received more than \$10,000 annually in federal grant funds, including grants under the Violence Against Women Act, the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act and the Victims of Crime Act. The grants are intended to be used to pay for salaries and benefits of staff and for shelter operations, including supplies and shelter maintenance.

David M. DeVillers, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio; and the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General announced the indictment. Assistant United States Attorney Julie Garcia is representing the United States in this case.

An indictment merely contains allegations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless proven guilty in a court of law.

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If you have media questions, contact Jennifer Thornton at jennifer.thornton@usdoj.gov.