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Cheryl Rae Sheppard receives prison sentence, must repay more than \$360,000 after stealing from kids' camp

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced that 61-year-old Cheryl Rae Sheppard received a 32 month prison sentence and was ordered to repay \$363,911.90 in restitution after she embezzled from a non-profit camp for kids with Type 1 diabetes.

"It is remarkable the extent of this fraud," said Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney Sam Leineweber, who prosecuted this case. "Cheryl Rae Sheppard had complete and unfettered access to the financial accounts belonging to the Gales Creek Camp Foundation."

Sheppard pleaded guilty on October 31, 2018 to two counts of aggravated theft in the first degree and one count of felony computer crime.

A representative of the foundation told the court during sentencing, "[This] has had a huge impact on the Gales Creek Camp Foundation financially but what has been worse was that betrayal of trust. We have spent the past two years rebuilding relationships, trust and respect with our vendors, donors, volunteers, service organizations, community partners and most importantly, our camp families."

Another representative said, "While I will never fully comprehend the conscious choices [Sheppard] made repeatedly to deceive and defraud [the] Gales Creek Camp, it is my hope that while incarcerated Ms. Sheppard will seriously think about the people she has negatively impacted and her incarceration will serve as a deterrent to anyone else who would think to do the same."

This investigation started in July 2016 when a financial institution called the Gales Creek Camp Foundation to confirm the organization wanted to close its money market account. At the time, board members were under the impression that there was approximately \$600,000 in the account. During the conversation, the organization learned there was only approximately \$75,000 remaining in the account, and that Sheppard was attempting to transfer the remaining funds.

This case was assigned to the Portland Police Bureau's White Collar Crimes Unit. During the investigation, law enforcement learned that Sheppard wrote herself checks using funds that withdrew from the Gales Creek Camp Foundation bank accounts. Additionally, law enforcement learned Sheppard would use the organization's checks to pay vendors but then deposited those checks directly into her own bank account. The Portland Police Bureau obtained casino records that showed from January 2009 through January 2017, Sheppard spent 267 different days at the casino and played more than 3,200 gaming sessions using slot machines. Sheppard, according to the Portland Police Bureau, placed more than \$731,000 in bets and lost nearly \$150,000.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office encourages all businesses to take steps to protect themselves from financial theft. It is important that businesses have redundancies in place to ensure proper accounting for cash, checks and credit/debit card transactions. All businesses should undergo routine financial audits that are conducted by a person or organization separate from the primary accountant. If employees are expected to handle cash, including making nightly deposits, businesses should ensure that there is more than one employee present during cash counts and drop offs.

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