

HTC Surround™ for just **1¢** [Get It Now](#) • free shipping • online only

The Miami Herald > News > Florida > Florida Wires

Florida Wires

Thursday, 03.31.11 Welcome Guest • Login • Register

Current: 84°
90° / 70°
Weather Forecast

HOME DELIVERY **EXTRA**
Sunday's Miami Herald
6 months for just \$20!

Miami-Dade | Broward | Florida | Legislature | Americas | Cuba | Haiti | Nation | World | Politics | Action Line | Obituaries | WLRN

Posted on Wednesday, 03.30.11

Share 0 email print comment

Suit: Adoption agency didn't say kids were abused

Like 1

BY DAN SCANLAN
THE FLORIDA TIMES-UNION
JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- Andrew Dolan and Suzanne Tyler just wanted a "forever family" when they adopted a son and daughter in 2009 through

Related Content

- <http://www.jacksonville.com>

Family Support Services of North Florida.

Then the Vancouver, British Columbia, couple learned the boy and girl, now 6 and 8 respectively, had been in four foster homes and a failed adoption, suffering physical and sexual abuse the agency never disclosed to the Canadian parents. As they deal with a boy they say punches his nanny and a girl who threatens to kill her adoptive mother, the couple has sued the Jacksonville agency. Filed Tuesday, the lawsuit seeks money to care for the children, plus damages for pain and suffering. It says the agency failed to keep track of JD and WD, as they are named in the lawsuit, or advise the new parents of abuse.

"What FSS did to them and us as adoptive parents is inexcusable, it's horrible," Dolan said at a news conference. "We are going to demand answers from FSS and the state of Florida."

Family Support Services is a nonprofit organization that handles state adoption and foster care in Duval and Nassau counties as part of a contract with the Florida Department of Children and Families. CEO Jim Adams said he couldn't comment on the lawsuit because he hadn't seen it. But he said staff members "take care of our kids and always have" and wondered if this might be part of a statewide effort to kill bills in the Legislature that would offer private agencies like his the same limited liability that state agencies have now.

"It is a sad state of affairs for someone to use children for state agenda," Adams said. "If anyone in my organization is responsible in any way for creating a situation for a child, we will immediately terminate them. We ... bend over backward to provide rapid quality care to children."

The children were taken from their birth mother in early 2005 and placed in Annette S. Smith's foster home for 19 months. The lawsuit says they were repeatedly physically and sexually abused and made to eat feces, urine and soap. They were removed from there in October 2006 after another child in the home told police his "foster mother hit me with a belt," according to Smith's Nov. 29, 2006, arrest report. The report did not include any indication of the abuse against JD and WD in the lawsuit. The state shut down the foster program at the home after the investigation, said the parents' Jacksonville attorney, Brian Cabrey. Cabrey said he is a former Children and Families attorney.

"My clients were told the reasons why that home was closed were unknown," Cabrey said. "Records reflect that home was closed due to physical abuse on our clients' children and/or other foster children."

Cabrey would not share which records he was referring to, saying it would come out in the litigation.

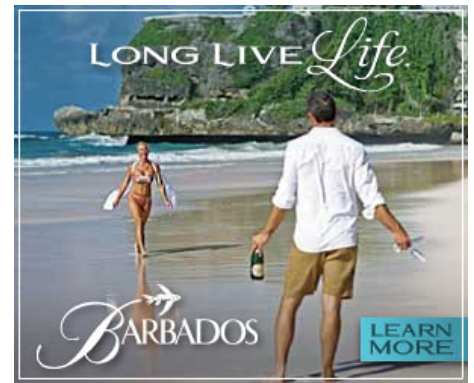
Children and Families spokesman John Harrell said his agency interviewed the five foster children in Smith's home, but heard no statements of the abuse referred to in the lawsuit. Smith was later found guilty of child abuse against the 4-year-old boy, according to court records. The children then spent six months in a second foster home, five more in a failed adoption to a Virginia couple and were sent to two more foster homes in Nassau County.

In early 2009, Dolan and Tyler saw the siblings in an adoption registry and began the adoption process. Only after it was finalized in August 2009 did the children start telling parents and therapists what they had been through.

"They withdrew and then acted out with very bizarre sexual behavior," Dolan said. "... That's when the

Web Search Search

Top Searches: Obituaries | Horoscopes | Lottery | Calendar



1 Tip for a tiny belly :

Cut down a bit of your belly everyday by following this 1 weird old tip

Tip ▶

MORE FLORIDAWIRES

- 15 Neb. residents file claim over investment loss
 - Wind, rain bring tornado warnings to central Fla.
 - SC urges GOP to pull Fla. convention over primary
 - Central Fla. under storm watches
 - Florida Lotto jackpot rises to \$4 million
 - Strong winds pull cruise ship from Florida dock
- More

VIDEOS



details of their abuse really began to emerge. It was like a waterfall. Once it started flowing, it wouldn't stop."

Two police information reports were filed in mid- to late 2010 regarding the allegations of abuse revealed by the children after adoption. Nothing further was done by the state, Cabrey said.

Dolan said it became obvious the care their children needed was beyond what they could afford, so they sought a "significant" increase in their monthly adoptive stipend from Family Support Services. It was denied, which led to the lawsuit, Cabrey said.

Harrell said the agency is very concerned about these allegations and whether they are accurate.

"The family has not cooperated with our requests for information," Harrell said. "These allegations were not reported to us until years later, and they accompanied a request for an increased adoption subsidy."

Other agencies may be added to the lawsuit as the investigation continues, Cabrey said.

Information from: The Florida Times-Union, <http://www.jacksonville.com>

email print Share Twitter Like 1

Join the discussion

The Miami Herald is pleased to provide this opportunity to share information, experiences and observations about what's in the news. Some of the comments may be reprinted elsewhere in the site or in the newspaper. We encourage lively, open debate on the issues of the day, and ask that you refrain from profanity, hate speech, personal comments and remarks that are off point. Thank you for taking the time to offer your thoughts.

We have introduced a new commenting system called Disqus for our articles. This allows readers the option of signing in using their Facebook, Twitter, Disqus or existing MiamiHerald.com username and password.

[Read more about the new commenting system on MiamiHerald.com.](#)

0 Comments

ADD NEW COMMENT

Login



Type your comment here.

Real-time updating is **enabled**. (Pause)

SHOWING 0 COMMENTS

Sort by oldest first

M [Subscribe by email](#) S [RSS](#)

Acting Agency We have modeling & acting jobs available- Sign up for live updates. InstantCast.com	Alternativa a La Adopci3n Guardianship-S.I.J.S.- Legalizar Jovenes Indocumentados. En Espa3ol. www.nyley.com	Expedia.com Official Site Taking a Trip to Florida? Savings on Air, Hotel, and More. www.Expedia.com
---	--	--

ADS BY YAHOO!



VIDEO FROM OUR PARTNERS

NDN VIDEO

Please wait while loading this widget. If no content appears within 15sec, you may need to

ON FACEBOOK

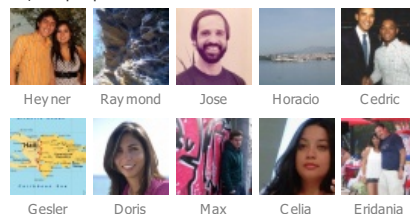
Find us on Facebook



The Miami Herald

Like

15,953 people like **The Miami Herald**.



Facebook social plugin

Recommendations

Sign Up Create an account or **log in** to see what your friends are recommending.



Alaska lawmaker's Sharia law proposal called divisive - Politics Wires

26 people shared this.



Tornado watch is on for central Florida - Weather

13 people shared this.



Gov. Scott to call for deep cuts at agency for disabled - Legislature

66 people shared this.

Facebook social plugin

QUICK JOB SEARCH

Enter Keyword(s)

Enter City

Select a State

Select a Category

• **Advanced Job Search**
Search by Category

powered by **careerbuilder.com**

NEWS

SPORTS

ENTERTAINMENT

BUSINESS

LIVING

OPINION

CLASSIFIEDS

SERVICES

Site Map +

RSS | My Yahoo | [Newsletters](#) | [Widgets](#) | [Mobile](#) | [Alerts](#) | [Twitter](#)

[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [About our ads](#) | [Copyright](#) | [About The Miami Herald](#) | [About the McClatchy Company](#) | [Corrections](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Work for Us](#)

Partners: El Nuevo Herald | Newspaper in Education | WLRN | Miami Herald News | CBS4 WFOR-TV | Mbre

Copyright 2011 Miami Herald Media Co. All rights reserved

Web2PDF

converted by Web2PDFConvert.com