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Abuse at adult home: suit

BY RACHEL MONAHAN

A CANARSIIE ADULT HOME recruiter preyed on helpless mentally disabled residents, stealing thousands of dollars from them and placing them in "unnecessary or inappropriate" facilities, a federal lawsuit filed last month charges.

Employees at New South Shore Manor covered up for Blossom Helena Glass Reyes, who also earned a commission for each patient she sent to the home and used some of the resident's money for personal expenses, including paying her rent, the suit charges.

In a complex scheme that lasted at least seven years, Reyes "specifically targeted . . . residents with mental disabilities," the suit charges.

If the residents had any money, Reyes got them to "cede control over their finances" to her, the suit says.

In one case, Reyes allegedly

learned that two residents living at another home had won thousands of dollars in a settlement with the city. She "persuaded" one of them to move to South Shore and was able to get both men to sign over their bank accounts to her, the suit charges.

"The fact that somebody is putting [disabled people] in adult homes for their own profit rather than looking out for their good is really tragic to me," said Jean Phillips, a lawyer with MFY Legal Services, a not-for-profit law firm that provides legal services to the poor.

"It's particularly tragic that folks already in bad situations . . . have to be fighting off people like this who are looking for victims," she said.

According to the suit, when Phillips called the home to discuss the lawsuit with a female resident earlier this year, a worker impersonated her — and, the next day, the resident was sent to a hospital for phony treatment. "New South Shore took steps . . . to retaliate against her," the suit charges.

Mentally ill or disabled were allegedly targeted

New South Shore Manor is one of the city's more than 50 licensed adult homes.

Reyes, who also recruited for other homes, paid her landlord with one resident's personal check and wrote herself and her company other checks off the resident's bank account, the suit charges.

The suit also charges Reyes filed to another woman hospitalized in

Queens for anxiety, telling her that she had been evicted from her apartment — so that Reyes could earn a commission placing her in an adult home.

The suit also alleges that \$36,000 of the more than \$44,000 stolen by Reyes was taken from two residents who had gotten it in a settlement after the city shut down the Neponset Nursing home.

When one of the residents, Dominick Bonito, 61, who grew up in Cobble Hill, requested some of his own money to buy shoes, home workers refused — and employees stole \$364.78 of his money, the suit charges. Arnold Loebelson, 56, who grew up in Williamsburg, has also not received his settlement money, according to the suit.

New South Shore Manor officials did not respond to requests for comment. Reyes could not be reached for comment.