

Teen sent to PEC home

BAYFIELD: Grandparents wonder why local facility not chosen

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The grandmother of a teenaged boy being housed at a youth residential treatment facility in Prince Edward County, wants to know why he can't be treated closer to home

The 14-year-old Cole Harbour boy, who was the subject of a recent Supreme Court of Nova Scotia case regarding his care, suffers from attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and related behavioural problems.

He was recently enrolled at the Bayfield Treatment Centre in Consecon by the Nova Scotia Department of Community Services.

His grandmother -- who cannot be named in order to protect the boy's identity -- told The Intelligencer she wanted the boy to get help, but did not expect him to be moved out of the province.

"All we did was ask for help, not for him to be shipped away," she said.

She said she and her husband asked Community Services for help with the boy, whom she admits suffers from considerable behavioural issues, last year.

As reported by the Halifax Chronicle-Herald, Community Services originally made arrangements for the boy's treatment at a facility in Utah after the Nova Scotia Supreme Court ruled it was permissible to send him there for treatment unavailable in his home province.

However, after arrangements at both Cinnamon Hills Youth Crisis Centre and Provo Canyon School fell through, the boy was moved to Bayfield - a decision Patrick Eagan, the family's lawyer, says shows a definite motive.

"It's just somewhere to shove this kid," he said.

"It appears to my clients that they [community services] just wanted him as far away as possible."

Eagan said his clients are concerned with how little information they are receiving on the treatment the boy is receiving at Bayfield.

He also said they know little about what is being planned for the boy's education moving forward.

"Whatever they plan to do, we don't really know until September, when he's back in school," he said. "He needs help, and he doesn't need to be hanging around Ontario waiting for school to start."

Eagan said the boy is under the temporary care of the Nova Scotia minister of community services, and, as such, the current arrangement is open-ended.

While there is potential for a review hearing sometime around October, he said, the ministry has the right to keep the boy in their care for another year-and-a-half.

"They can keep him in care until he's 16," he said. "Against his will."

The grandmother says there has been an incident of mistreatment in his time there, although at this point those assertions remain unproven.

However, she said contact with the boy since the move to Bayfield has been limited and she and her husband feel cut off from information about their grandson.

"The department of community services will not communicate with us," she said. "They're shutting us out."

Lawyers for the Department of Community Services in Nova Scotia and the CEO at Bayfield could not be reached for comment.

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