



Goodman woman pleads guilty in teen center sex-abuse case

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— By Jeff Lehr

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A former night supervisor at a residential center for troubled teens has pleaded guilty to one of five sex-abuse charges she was facing with respect to three boys in the program.

Jana E. Carter, 46, of Goodman, changed her plea to guilty in Jasper County Circuit Court on a single count of second-degree statutory sodomy. She has been facing three counts of second-degree statutory sodomy and two counts of second-degree statutory rape concerning alleged acts with boys who were staying at the Scott Greening Dependency Center at 818 W. Fourth St. in Joplin, when she worked there in 2008.

The plea change was part of an agreement with the Jasper County prosecutor's office that would dismiss the other counts and limit the prison time Carter might be required to serve at no more than five years.

Circuit Judge David Dally heard the plea change Friday and ordered the completion of a sentencing-assessment report on the defendant.

Carter was accused of having oral sex with two 16-year-old boys and a 14-year-old boy at the residential center, and of having sexual intercourse with two of the boys. All the incidents allegedly took place during October 2008, about a month after Carter began working there as a night supervisor.

The center serves teens with alcohol and drug problems.

The boys testified at preliminary hearings last year that Carter would enter their bedrooms at night and engage in sexual activity with them. The incidents remained a secret until two of the boys were caught sneaking out of the house at night, according to the boys' testimony at the hearings.

The center's director gathered all the boys of the home a few days later and asked them to write down everything they had done wrong while in the program. One of the boys reported alleged contact with Carter, and they all began talking about it. The youngest of the three boys testified that all but one or two of the eight or nine boys staying at the home reported having similar sexual contact with Carter.

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