



Youth worker charged with dealing crack

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Federal agents have arrested an employee of the Knox County schools and a home for troubled teens on charges of dealing crack cocaine, but their methods are drawing criticism from the agency that runs the group home.

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency arrested Fred Bennett outside Cooper House, a group home for teen boys in the Fourth and Gill neighborhood. Bennett is under a federal indictment with two other men for distributing and possessing with intent to distribute crack.

"I'm just really dismayed this was the choice of location," said Kate O'Day, executive director of Child and Family Services, which operates Cooper House for boys ages 13 to 17. "This had nothing to do with our operation. If we'd been contacted we would have cooperated fully."

Bennett is an evening worker at the home. He's also a teaching assistant at Knox County's Ridgedale Alternative School, a facility for youth with disciplinary problems. Officials said he's on leave from both jobs.

O'Day said Bennett has passed background checks and that the teens did not actually see the arrest.

Read the full story Wednesday online and in the News Sentinel.



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