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Former Children's Village residents allege sexual and physical abuse by staff and residents in 10 lawsuits filed by Greenstein & Milbauer

WHITE PLAINS, NY (October 21, 2020) — The Children's Village residential treatment center in Dobbs Ferry was created in 1851 to provide a safe and nurturing shelter for troubled boys, but former residents said that instead of receiving protection and care they were violated and abused.

As of last month a total of 10 lawsuits have been filed on behalf of 10 former residents of the Children's Village who have accused staff, administrators and older residents at the home for troubled boys of sexual and physical abuse over a 25-year period from about 1970 to 1995.

The victims, who were all emotionally disturbed young boys when they were placed at the Children's Village by courts or child welfare agencies, were physically brutalized, raped, and humiliated by older residents. Similar sexual abuse was perpetrated by staff, including teacher aides, counsellors, and a former executive director. When the boy complained to social workers or other staff about the physical and sexual abuse, they were either ignored or threatened with violence.

"These children were typically brought to The Children's Village to remove them from abusive or neglectful condition in their families' homes with the goal of healing their traumas. Instead, their victimization continued and escalated to horrifying proportions," said Robert Greenstein. "These victims have endured—and continue to experience—fear, shame and pain. It has taken them years to step forward and tell their stories."

The lawsuits accuse The Children's Village of negligence in its hiring, training, and supervision, among other failures. The accounts of abuse by the former residents are harrowing:

- Yosiyah Ishmael-Maurice Roberts arrived at The Children's Village around 1977 when he was about 9 years old. Soon after settling into the Howard Cottage he was forced to shower in front of a counsellor who made him bend over and spread his buttocks. Then a former executive director of The Children's Village befriended Roberts. Eventually the administrator forced Roberts to sit on his lap and subsequently guided the boy to masturbate him. Afterwards, the former executive director passed Roberts to another administrator who tried to anally rape the boy.
- Scott Sartory arrived at The Children's Village when he was 6 years old around 1985. Sartory was also forced to shower and expose his rectal area to employees. He was eventually befriended by a Children's Village employee who adopted him around 1989 and then moved him into his home in Queens, where Sartory was brutally sexually abused. He ran away from the home and became a homeless youth until he reached adulthood.
- Anthony Bruno arrived at The Children's Village when he was 4 or 5 years old around 1989. The same employee who adopted Sartory also became Bruno's foster father. Bruno was forced to make pornographic videos by his foster father, who also brutally sexually abused him at his foster father's home. Like Sartory, Bruno eventually ran away from home.

- Chynna Valentin arrived at The Children's Village when Valentin was 9 years old around 1972. At one point Valentin's penis was abused by older boys to the point where Valentin had to be rushed to Westchester Medical Center for emergency treatment.

The cases are being heard by Justice Steven M. Jaeger at the Nassau County Supreme Court in Mineola. The case were filed under the provision of the Child Victims Act. Last year, Governor Cuomo signed the Child Victims Act to ensure survivors of childhood sexual abuse have a path to justice, including the ability to file a case which had already been time-barred or expired for a one-year period. The window to file an expired or time-barred case was set to close August 14, 2020, but due to the disruption of the legal system by the pandemic the deadline has been extended until August 14, 2021.

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