



# NEWS RELEASE

From New York State Inspector General  
**Catherine Leahy Scott**

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Contact Bill Reynolds: 518-414-1299

## **STATE EMPLOYEE PLEADS GUILTY TO STEALING FROM RESIDENTS OF STATE-OPERATED GROUP HOME**

New York State Inspector General Catherine Leahy Scott announced that a group home supervisor employed by the New York State Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) has pleaded guilty today to stealing funds from residents she supervised and utilizing a state issued credit card to make personal purchases.

Lynn Knightner, a 43-year-old Developmental Assistant Grade 2 from Blasdell, pleaded guilty to the misdemeanor charges of Petit Larceny, and Falsifying Business Records in the Second Degree today in Erie County Court. At the time of the defendant's plea she made full restitution.

“Those providing supervision, counseling and care in group homes are responsible for helping vulnerable persons, and their integrity should be above and beyond reproach,” said Inspector General Scott. “The defendant's actions were an egregious and deplorable abuse of her authority, and I am pleased that our investigation has resulted in her being held accountable for her actions.”

In September 2012, Knightner purchased three tickets with a state credit card to a “How to Train Your Dragon Spectacular” event at the First Niagara Center in Buffalo. At that time, she represented to OPWDD that the tickets were for staff members who would accompany residents to the event. Additionally, she purchased six more tickets with the moneys belonging to six developmentally disabled residents of the group home in West Seneca.

The investigation found that neither staff members nor residents attended the show. Knightner admitted to the Inspector General she took the tickets so she and her family could attend the event. Upon discovery of the misuse of the state credit card and theft of residents' money, Knightner was immediately relieved of her duties as supervisor.

Knightner pleaded guilty to the charges before the Hon. Kenneth F. Case of Erie County Court. She is scheduled to return to court January 8, 2015 for sentencing. Inspector General Scott thanked OPWDD for its assistance in the investigation and Erie County District Attorney Frank A. Sedita, III and his staff for prosecuting this case.

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