

## **Man Sues Agency, Alleges Abuse in '80s at Tacoma Group Home**

A man who claims he was sexually abused at a Tacoma group home for boys 30 years ago has sued the agency that ran the facility.

The plaintiff, identified only by the initials M.H., last week filed suit in Pierce County Superior Court against the nonprofit organization Gateways for Youth and Families. He seeks unspecified monetary damages for “pain, suffering and mental anguish,” among other things.

Gateways issued a statement Thursday through executive director Charity Woolbright.

“We have just been served with this complaint. It is too early to form an opinion about it at this point,” the statement read. “This claim is based on allegations that is 30 years old. The allegation is from a time when Children’s Industrial home (now Gateways) was providing care for extremely troubled youth.”

The statement went on to say the organization continues to fulfill its mission of “providing a community safety net and transforming families so they can thrive.”

The plaintiff contends he was a resident of Gateways home for boys between 1983 and 1985. During that time, the lawsuit alleges, a Gateways employee repeatedly abused him. Another Gateways employee witnessed some of the alleged abuse but did not report it, the lawsuit contends.

“GYF employees and agents engaged in a pattern and practice of neglectful supervision and management that caused child residents such as M.H. to be abused,” the plaintiff’s attorneys, Lincoln Beauregard and Ashton Dennis, wrote in a civil complaint.

Two years ago another man sued Gateways and the State of Washington, making similar allegations. He settled out of court, and the state paid him \$25,000, court records state.

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