



News Release

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Project Guardian turns up heat on child abusers

♦ ***Surprise home visits and warrant arrests aim to keep kids out of harm's way.***

Wayne County and State of Michigan officials are teaming up this week to send a message to child abusers: *Project Guardian is looking for you.*

Starting last Thursday, for two days last week and now today, Sheriff's Deputies, along with the Michigan Departments of Corrections and Human Services, Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, and other local and federal agencies, assisted by the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office, have been hitting the streets to look for – and to check on – people who have physically or sexually abused young children.

This is the third year of Project Guardian which Sheriff Warren Evans and Prosecutor Kym Worthy announced three years ago. As part of the effort, officers and corrections agents have been going door to door to the homes of 200 convicted child abusers still on parole or probation in Wayne County to make sure they are not living with children if they have been ordered not to, or otherwise violating the conditions of their supervised release into the community.

During the second day of the operation, deputies arrested Anthony Cain, 26, who is on parole for 1st-degree Child Abuse. He was sentenced to serve 6-15 years in prison on April of 2002, and was paroled in March of this year. Cain could not be found living at the E. Grand Boulevard address provided to his parole agent as his home address. Deputies and MDOC agents on Friday conducted an unannounced visit to Cain's girl friend's home, on Pingree, where they found him living with her children. This is in direct violation of the terms of his parole. Cain was immediately taken into custody.

Sheriff Warren Evans said, "The focus of Project Guardian is as much on preventing child abuse and neglect as it is on making arrests. Stopping or preventing abuse can change the course of a child's life. Child abusers continue to attack and exploit our children. It's up to us to find new and more creative ways to intervene. Any effort to share resources to stop abusers from violating the law is beneficial."

Prosecutor Kym Worthy said, "Criminal sexual conduct defendants need to be closely monitored. We know that research shows that without proper supervision they are at risk of re-offending. It is important that law enforcement agencies have the resources to continue sweeps that focus on defendants that pose a significant threat to our communities. The apprehension of fugitives,

probation and parole absconders who commit child sex abuse and child physical abuse is vitally important to the safety of our children. Difficult financial times should not impact this important work."

According to the US Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 70 percent of child abuse victims eventually get into trouble with the law, whether as a juvenile or an adult.

Officers also have been serving warrants on some of the county's most recalcitrant child abusers who have violated the terms of their parole or probation, or who have failed to show up in court to face their charges. The total number of offenders arrested for outstanding warrants was 30.

Parolees who were found to be in violation of the terms of their parole were immediately taken into custody. Among the active parolees arrested during unannounced home visits in the first two days of Project Guardian were:

- Parolee Ned Milner, a 40 year old man originally convicted of CSC 2nd<13. Milner was arrested for possession of sexually stimulating material, possession of a cell phone with a camera, possession of a computer with sexually stimulating material. MDOC 442194
- Parolee Joseph Ellis, a 47 year old man originally convicted of CSC 3rd 13<15. Ellis was arrested for possession of 28.5 grams of marijuana, possession of drug scales, and possession of a cell phone with a camera. MDOC 164455.
- Parolee Kenneth Arquette, a 46 year old man originally convicted of Child Sex Abuse, Computer Crime. Arquette was arrested for possession of a computer. MDOC 587241
- Parolee Harold Degraffenreid, 49 year old man originally convicted of CSC 2nd <13, Assault w/Intent to Commit Sexual Penetration. Degraffenreid was arrested for possession of sexually stimulating material. MDOC 425079
- Parolee Joseph Smith, a 37 year old man originally convicted of CSC 1st <13. Smith was arrested for possession of sexually stimulating material. MDOC 263433.

In total, 8 active parolees on parole for child sex and child abuse offenses were arrested during home checks.

In addition, 4 child rescues were conducted with combined teams of Michigan Child Protective Service workers and Sheriff's Deputies. These 4 abused or neglected children were taken from negative environments into protective custody.

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