

\$6M Settlement Reached in Phila. Foster Home Abuse Case

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Emily B. Marks (L) and Nadeem A. Bezar (R) of Kline & Specter. Courtesy photos

Attorneys for a woman who was sexually assaulted and raped while in the care of a Philadelphia foster home in the early 2000s obtained a \$6 million settlement Monday in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas.

The woman, F.W., who was represented by attorneys at Kline & Specter, was placed in a foster home through the Methodist Family Services of Philadelphia in July 2002 when she was 11 years old.

For two years, she faced attacks in the home by a male child in the home, though the Methodist Family Services of Philadelphia knew he had physically and sexually assaulted his siblings in a previous foster home, according to the complaint.

The primary argument in the case was that Methodist Family Services failed to properly investigate the home and to monitor and supervise it while F.W. was living there.

According to Kline & Specter's press release, the owner of the foster home would ignore F.W.'s complaints about her attacker, who turned 18 in April 2004.

F.W. was removed from the home after she became pregnant when she was 12-years-old and underwent an abortion in July 2004.

"Even in light of a 12-year-old becoming pregnant," the press release wrote, "No one at Methodist Family Services reacted to the clear and obvious signs of sexual abuse."

Emily Marks and Nadeem Bezar of Kline & Specter represented F.W.

Marks said a challenge in the case was piecing together case information dating back to the early 2000s.

"It was really a motivating factor in this case to be able to put it together and get accountability for what was done to F.W." Marks said, "And tracking down the witnesses and the records we used to piece the case together."

Bezar noted the lasting impact of cases like this.

"Unfortunately, people sometimes forget the impact of harm, particularly when it's so far in the past," Bezar said. "Even more unfortunate, this kind of harm has a lasting impact. I am glad we were able to do the necessary investigation to uncover the evidence needed to be successful in pursuing this matter for F.W."

Attorneys at Philadelphia firm O'Hagan Meyer, who represented the Methodist Family Services of Philadelphia, did not respond to inquiries for comment.