

Woman passed herself off as nurse

Sentenced two years for working in care homes without qualifications

Dianne Wood, Record staff

KITCHENER — She came with a clean police record check and a professional-looking name tag bearing the title “RN.”

Long-term care homes in four Ontario cities — including Kitchener — had no idea the woman calling herself Eva Klein wasn’t a real nurse.

Her actual name is Eva Okello. She stole the identity of Klein, a nurse practising in Toronto, a Kitchener court heard Wednesday. Under Klein’s name, Okello got nursing jobs at long-term care homes in Kitchener, Hamilton, Mitchell and London.

She was hired through employment agencies in the health-care field run by her

boyfriend, Paul Matthew, who was convicted in the matter in Kitchener last month and sentenced to a year in jail.

Okello, 37, was sentenced to two years in prison after pleading guilty to five offences in Kitchener and Mitchell. They included personating Klein to get work as a nurse, conspiring with someone else to commit personation and fraud, and common nuisance endangering the health and safety of others.

Okello worked periodically as an RN at

Lanark Heights Long Term Care home between April and September, 2011. Officials there didn’t know she was on bail for similar offences in Hamilton at the time.

She was paid \$50 an hour for a total of \$14,750. Her lawyer, Hal Mattson, said Matthew got most of the money — Okello, he said, got about \$12 an hour.

While at Lanark, Okello was in charge of other nurses and personal support workers.

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PETER LEE, RECORD STAFF

Moving in with Isabel Reid (left) has made a “huge, huge difference” in Dora Fernandes’s life.

A place to call home

Adults with developmental difficulties flourish with the support of host individuals and families

Linda Givetash, Record staff

CAMBRIDGE — Meeting Dora Fernandes, a funny and joyful woman, it’s hard to imagine she was ever known for never having a smile on her face.

But before she moved in with Cambridge resident Isabel Reid in December 2010, Fernandes was not social and often isolated herself.

“It’s made a huge, huge difference in Dora’s life. People said before she came to live with me, they never saw Dora smile,” Reid said.

Fernandes, who has a developmental disability, previously lived in a group home. The busy house bustling with other residents was too overwhelming for her.

When Community Living Cambridge announced they were launching the Associate Home Program — allowing adults with

developmental disabilities to move in with single adults or families in the community — Fernandes was one of the first people to sign up.

For Reid, a registered nurse who worked with special-needs students at a school board, the opportunity to help someone by opening up her home was a no-brainer.

“I’ve worked in this field all my life,” she said.

Humble about her desire to help others, Reid said, “I think that you get a lot more satisfaction out of helping someone than you ever give to a situation.”

Reid previously housed international students from Conestoga College during their terms in the region, so she was accustomed to having new people living with her.

Before moving in, Fernandes and Reid had organized several outings together, such as swimming and dinners, and had a sleepover

to make sure they were the right fit for one another.

Don Crowther, manager of the program, said that many visits with a home provider and home sharer is part of the standard process of ensuring the joint living situation will work.

“The application is quite vigorous ... you want to make sure there’s compatibility and support for the people moving out,” he said.

Along with a background check, many other factors, about issues such as children, pets and location, are also considered before a match is considered.

A counsellor through Community Living Cambridge works with the associate home family throughout the move-in process to help ease the transition.

The home provider also receives rent to cover costs associated with having another person in the home.

Once a strong match is made, there are myriad benefits for both home providers and sharers.

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Former social worker’s conduct ‘despicable’

Greg Mercer, Record staff

KITCHENER — A former social worker at Grand River Hospital has been kicked out of his profession after being convicted of sexually assaulting two young female clients.

A discipline committee of the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers has ruled that Mark John Bergen’s behaviour while working in the hospital’s psychiatric ward was “especially despicable.”

Bergen, 59, worked in Grand River’s child and adolescent mental health unit until he was fired in 2006 over his sexual relationship with a suicidal teenager. In November 2008, a judge sentenced him to three years in prison, calling him a “Lothario in carpet slippers” and a “self-absorbed, middle-aged drunk.”

The judge convicted Bergen of abusing his position of authority to exploit and seduce the troubled teenager, then 18. The teenager met Bergen when she was at the hospital for therapy; that relationship soon changed after the teen moved in with him.

He was also found guilty of sexually assaulting a former client in her early 20s. He was accused of groping and kissing the woman, then grabbing her neck when she resisted.

The fallout from those convictions continued this week when Bergen was found guilty of professional misconduct by his former profession’s regulatory body. He was also fined \$5,000.

Bergen was stripped of his certificate of registration, and will have to wait five years for the slim chance he could have it granted again. “It conveys in the strongest terms that the committee found this conduct particularly egregious,” said Glenda McDonald, registrar and chief executive officer of the social workers’ college.

“We wanted to give a message to our members and the public that this kind of conduct is taken extremely seriously.”

Bergen will also have a hard time finding work as a social worker anywhere else in Canada. The Ontario regulator has contacted its provincial counterparts about their decision, and is doing everything it can to publicize Bergen’s dismissal.

Bergen didn’t take part in the college’s disciplinary process, and was assumed to have denied the allegations, McDonald said.

“Mr. Bergen’s behaviour was especially despicable because it involved young and vulnerable clients, involved a lack of care and professionalism, and was characterized by the trial judge in the criminal matter as ‘the grossest abuse of a position of trust and flagrantly unethical conduct,’” the college’s discipline committee wrote in its ruling.

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Almost every teacher that I know personally is a wonderful individual — generous, kind, hard-working, knowledgeable. So how come they can turn into such boneheads when they act as a group?

I’m referring to the way that unionized public school teachers are using kids as human shields in their current war with the provincial government.

I felt sick as I read about a school trip that students at Edna Staebler Public School in Waterloo were looking forward to — and had raised \$7,000 for, so that all students could afford it — that now may not happen because of teachers’ job action.

Senior students are bitterly disappointed that the four-day trip they’ve planned to Camp

Some advice for unhappy teachers



Tawingo in Huntsville in February is now “on hold.”

The teachers are angry at the provincial government because of the Putting Students First Act, which has restricted their right to strike and imposed certain kinds of job conditions on such

things as unpaid days off and sick days. The government is doing this because it is in dire financial straits.

Some local elementary teachers have responded by declining to volunteer for extracurricular activities, like the trip planned for Edna Staebler students. They have also kept report card comments to the bare minimum.

Secondary school teachers are still running extracurricular activities, but are refusing to do things like take their turn at lunch supervision or substitute for absent colleagues, even though that’s part of what they’re paid to do.

As a result of that job action, the school board has put a hold on plans for field trips, some sports events, and other special

events (such as the federal-provincial simulated conference) that require a teacher to be out of the building during the school day. “We have to be cautious about our commitments in the future,” given the situation, said Mark Schinkel, the board’s executive superintendent for human resources.

Can’t the teachers see that the worst possible strategy for them is to withhold extracurriculars, or cause them to be withheld? They will only lose what little sympathy the public has for them.

Once the government figures out that there isn’t any public support for the teachers, it will do whatever it wants.

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Associate Home Program has waiting list

► **Community** continued from B1

"Everyone that moves in is quite happy within a quick amount of time," Crowther said. Fernandes's smile while she and Reid reflect on their time living together attests to the benefits. "I think she's become much more social," said Reid. "She participates in all the activities (at

home)." And Reid is thrilled to have another member in her family. "We're almost like sisters." Reid's son and his family live next door. With her other children also in the city, frequent family gatherings gives Fernandes a strong sense of belonging. "My granddaughter was born a few days after Dora moved in here, so she's never known anything but

that Dora is a part of the family," Reid explained. "And Dora, the first time she held the baby ... it was an incredible moment. She just loved it." Their location also allows Fernandes to maintain her independence walking or taking the bus to her two jobs and travelling in the city for leisure. "If you need anything in the (Cambridge Centre) mall, Dora

will tell you precisely where to go," Reid said. Fernandes loves trips to the mall to see the stores and the many people shopping. But Fernandes did not spend nearly as much time out in the community while she lived in the group home, Reid said. Fernandes and Reid's success story explains why there is a waiting list to place other adults currently living in group homes into

the Associate Home Program. "It's an amazing transition into a wonderful life, that's happening with everyone we place," said Crowther. There are 10 associate home families in the city and Crowther looks forward to more people signing up and opening their homes to help the program grow. lgivetash@therecord.com



PETER LEE, RECORD STAFF

Crash under investigation

A woman was seriously hurt in a rollover west of New Hamburg at about 2 p.m. Wednesday. The driver lost control on the 37th Line, near Perth County Road 102. She was rushed to hospital in Kitchener, and later transferred to Hamilton. The single-vehicle crash is still under investigation. The driver was alone in the vehicle.

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