

Tragic Death of Woman with Autism Raises Many Questions



Tiffany Pinckney
March 22, 1982 – April 2, 2005

Tiffany Pinckney was a 23 year old woman with autism who died of starvation in her sister's home. Tiffany was found deceased in the basement with a weight of 84 ½ pounds from her previous weight of 180 – 200 pounds. Tiffany's brother-in-law pled guilty to criminal negligence causing death and was sentenced to 2 years house arrest. Tiffany's sister was charged with manslaughter, criminal negligence causing death, and failure to provide the necessities of life. On February 1st, 2008 Justice Joseph Fragomeni found Tiffany's sister guilty of all three charges with a conviction on the manslaughter charge. This tragedy has raised many questions. However, central to all the questions is the critical need for (1) **increased awareness of the issues surrounding abuse of adults who are vulnerable**, and (2) **improved mechanisms for the reporting and investigation of abuse of adults who are vulnerable**. Effective models for this sort of legislation protecting vulnerable adults exist in some other Canadian provinces. Further community discussions are planned to discuss potential improvements in reporting mechanisms for abuse of adults. Tiffany's death was a tragedy but an additional tragedy would be if we did not take the issues raised and give thorough thought and care to make improvements for others who are vulnerable like Tiffany. Those we serve deserve the best thought we can bring to these discussions. If you wish more information contact Gail Jones at 905-457-1130 ext. 202.

Gail Jones is the Director of Community Supports with Kerry's Place Autism Services, Central West Region. Gail knew Tiffany and has been advocating for community and government discussions on the issues relating to adults who are vulnerable to abuse.