



The City of New York  
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Release #16-2013  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 2013**

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### **DOI INVESTIGATION LEADS TO ARREST OF NONPROFIT EXECUTIVE ON CHARGES OF SELLING FAKE HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING CERTIFICATES**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Investigation (“DOI”), announced that a DOI investigation led to the arrest today of the President of United Family Services, Inc., a Brooklyn-based non-profit organization that provides child care training to day care providers licensed by the City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (“DOHMH”), for accepting approximately \$12,400 in exchange for providing false health and safety related training certificates to day care employees. DOI found and confiscated 52 fake health and safety training certificates. The office of Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes is prosecuting the case.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, “Falsifying vital training for day care workers is a serious offense and gravely undermines the requirements established to protect children in New York City. As charged, this defendant was pocketing thousands of dollars, as she passed off dozens of untrained workers as approved day care workers – unconscionable conduct given that these workers were supposed to be looking after children. DOI and the Kings County District Attorney’s Office will continue to work together to expose and stop these crimes.”

GAZEL GIBBONS, 51, of Brooklyn, N.Y., was charged today with numerous counts of Offering a False Instrument for Filing in the First Degree, Falsifying Business Records in the First Degree, class E felonies; and various misdemeanors, including Misrepresentation by a Child Care Provider, which is a class A misdemeanor. Upon conviction, a class E felony is punishable by up to four years in prison and a class A misdemeanor is punishable by up to a year’s incarceration.

According to the criminal complaint, between June 2009 and March 2012, the defendant was a health and safety trainer and accepted payment in exchange for providing training certificates to day care centers, even though the people named on the certificates had not received any such training required for employment at a day care center licensed by the City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (“DOHMH”). For example, one of the training certificates signed by the defendant falsely indicated that an individual had 30 hours of child care training in subjects, including child abuse identification and prevention, awareness of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome and shaken baby syndrome, safety and security procedures, and infection control and medical emergencies, and stated the curriculum met City and state requirements. The investigation found the defendant received \$400 for each fraudulent thirty 30-hour Early Childhood Development certificate and \$200 for each fraudulent 15-hour Health and Safety certificate she signed. Investigators found a notebook that belonged to the defendant, which contained entries showing 47 fake certificates had been issued in exchange for \$10,800. In addition, the investigation determined the defendant agreed to provide five fictitious training certificates for teachers in day care centers in exchange for payment of \$1,625.

The state Office of Children and Family Services (“OCFS”) sponsors programs to become an approved health and safety trainer. DOHMH licensed the day care centers where the day care employees who purportedly obtained training worked. The City Administration for Children’s Services (“ACS”) subsidizes child care costs in these day care centers. None of the day care centers associated with the fake certificates are currently operating.

DOI notified OCFS, DOHMH, and ACS about this matter. In addition, DOHMH will review certifications from United Family Services.

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Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked Kings County District Attorney Charles J. Hynes, DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Thomas A Farley, and ACS Commissioner Ronald E. Richter, and their staffs, for their assistance and cooperation in this investigation.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for DOHMH and ACS.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Annemarie McAvoy in the Rackets Division of the Kings County District Attorney's Office, under the supervision of Executive Assistant District Attorneys Gavin Miles and Eileen Ayzajian. Michael Vecchione is Chief of the Rackets Division.

A criminal complaint is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

*DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.*

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