



The City of New York  
Department of Investigation

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### **DOI ARRESTS CITY PARKS DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEE ON CHARGES OF STEALING \$1,800 IN REGISTRATION FEES**

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation ("DOI"), announced today the arrest of THEODORA D. HAWKINS, an employee of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation ("DPR"), on charges of stealing \$1,800 in DPR registration fees from the Queens playschool where she worked. The office of Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown is prosecuting the case.

DOI Commissioner Rose Gill Hearn said, "This defendant pocketed registration fees that should have gone to the City-run playschool – scamming customers and the taxpayers, according to the criminal complaint. Thanks to the notification from the Parks Department, DOI was able to shut down the corruption and reinforce that any individual, including a municipal employee, who steals City funds risks arrest and prosecution."

THEODORA HAWKINS, 41, of Queens, is charged with Grand Larceny in the Fourth Degree, a class E felony, and five counts each of Petit Larceny and Falsifying Business Records in the Second Degree, class A misdemeanors. 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.

HAWKINS has been a full-time employee with DPR since March 1999 and receives a salary of approximately \$38,265 as a Recreation Specialist at DPR's Breininger Playschool in Queens. As part of her job duties, HAWKINS was responsible for collecting registration fees from parents and recording the transactions in DPR records.

DOI began its investigation after it was notified by DPR in the fall about allegations involving missing records of registration fees at Breininger Playschool.

According to the criminal complaint, on five occasions between September 2007 and March 2009, three parents gave HAWKINS checks and money orders totaling \$1,800 to enroll their children at the playschool. DOI's investigation found that two of the children never attended the playschool. In addition, the investigation found that HAWKINS failed to record the payments on daily transaction sheets and, instead, cashed the checks and money orders and used the \$1,800 in proceeds to pay her personal expenses. DPR will repay the stolen fees to the individuals.

Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked DPR Commissioner Adrian Benepe and Queens County District Attorney Richard A. Brown, and their staffs, for their assistance on the investigation.

The case has been assigned to Deputy Bureau Chief Robert Hanophy of the Queens County District Attorney's Office.

The investigation was conducted by DOI's Office of the Inspector General for DPR.

Criminal complaints are accusations. Defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty.

**Get the worms out of the Big Apple. To report someone ripping off the City, call DOI at (212) 825-5959.**