

Mother claims young son housed with manor's patients

By JOHN JOHNSTON
Gazette staff writer

The Brothers of the Good Shepherd had their own residence licensed as a foster home for boys in 1983 and 1984, but two youths instead were housed with mentally retarded men, one boy's mother claims.

In late May 1984 the boy, then 10, was placed in the foster home for two weeks, said the mother whose identity is being withheld to protect the boy.

The boy's mother and her new husband, who live in Pike County, said they visited the boy several times while he was at Good Shepherd Manor where the mentally retarded men are placed.

"I was appalled at them putting a sensitive child ... in with these men," she said. She said her son shared a room with a 16-year-old. Neither of the boys is mentally retarded.

Another boy, age 12, was permitted to sleep in the house where the brothers stayed, she said.

She said she was concerned that residents were allowed into the boys' room.

Good Shepherd Manor, which houses 101 mentally retarded males, is currently under investigation by the Pike County Sheriff's Department for alleged physical and sexual abuse of residents.

Until last Friday, the home was run by the Brothers of the Good Shepherd, a Roman Catholic order based in Albuquerque, N.M. The five members of the order at the facility have been relieved of their duties by Bishop James Griffin of the Diocese of Columbus pending the results of the investigation.

Roger Hyden, director of Pike County Children's Services, confirmed that the home of the brothers was licensed as a foster home. "It was licensed to handle four male children 10 to 18 years of age," he said.

Hyden said Brother **Fintan Shaffer** applied for and received approval for the house to be used as a foster home. The license, which was issued by the county, was in effect from June 1983 until July 1984, he said. **Shaffer**, the former administrator at Good Shepherd Manor, reportedly left the facility in July or August 1984.

A spokesman for the order said **Shaffer** is on a leave of absence. Attempts to reach **Shaffer** in New Mexico have been unsuccessful.

The boy's mother said she complained to both Pike County Children's Services and the Ohio Public Welfare office. She said she was told by the state office that the boy was being housed in a facility separate from the residents.

Hyden, who has been director of Children's Services since August, said, "There has been no ongoing case involving **Shaffer** or Good Shepherd. If we get a complaint we investigate it."

Hyden added, "Anything concerning the foster home specifically I cannot release."

Monsignor Lawrence Corcoran, sent by Griffin to head a transition team at the facility, said Tuesday he was unaware the home had been used as a foster home. "The records are all locked up by the sheriff," he said.

Dr. David L. Jackson, acting director of the Ohio Department of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, ordered the investigation last week after learning that allegations of abuse made in August 1984 by former residents were not properly investigated.

Since the investigation began, one employee has resigned at Sheriff Dixon's request after taking a lie-detector test.

Dixon said he became aware Tuesday that the home had been used as a foster home. Asked if his investigation would be broadened, he said "We would, I'm sure, check into it."