



INSPECTOR GENERAL REPORT

2005-12-0580

December 20, 2006

RIPLEY COUNTY CONVERSION

Inspector General David O. Thomas, after an investigation by Special Agent Mike Mischler, reports as follows:

This investigation involved an employee of the Ripley County Department of Child Services Division of Family Resources (DCS) in Ripley County, Indiana.

Since 1983, Ripley County DCS has sponsored a program to assist less fortunate families in Ripley County at Christmas. The program requires a great amount of time for organization and planning. In July or August, area families who seek assistance are required to complete a one-page questionnaire. Sheryle Jean Pickett, an employee of Ripley County DCS, was in charge of this program for at least the past five years.

“Community Partners” are people willing to donate their time and money to shop for the needy families. They would contact the Ripley County DCS representative Sheryle Jean Pickett and she would assign a family to the Community Partner volunteer.

The investigation revealed that on December 5, 2005, Sheryle Jean Pickett received a \$50 check from Louann Menchhofer, a Purdue Extension Representative from Osgood, Indiana. However, Pickett deposited this check in her personal bank account rather than with the program. Pickett was confronted about this on December 7, 2005 by the DCS Director. After this confrontation, Pickett went to the local Wal-Mart store and purchased a \$50 gift certificate and attempted to give this to the DCS Director.

Pickett was interviewed by Special Agent Michael Mischler to give her the opportunity to explain what had happened. Pickett admitted that she had deposited the \$50 donated check with her husband's payroll check in their personal account.

These facts were presented to the Ripley County Prosecuting Attorney's Office which resulted in the filing of the criminal charge of conversion, a class A misdemeanor, in March of 2006. Charges remain pending as of this report date.

Dated this 20th day of December, 2006.



David O. Thomas, Inspector General