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Rabbi Karp charged with sex crimes in Maryland

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Rabbi Ephraim Karp

Posted: Wednesday, January 21, 2015 1:42 pm | Updated: 1:17 pm, Fri Jan 23, 2015.

ED WITTENBERG | STAFF REPORTER ewittenberg@cjn.org | 0 comments

Rabbi Ephraim Karp, director of spiritual living at Menorah Park Center for Senior Living in Beachwood, was arrested Jan. 15 in New York on an active felony warrant from Maryland.

According to the Queens, N.Y., district attorney's office, Karp has been charged by the state of Maryland with perverted practice, sex offense, sex abuse of a minor and sex abuse. He is listed in court records as Frederick M. Karp and a release from the Baltimore County Police Department linked the charges to the alleged abuse of a juvenile female over a period of time.

Karp, 50, was arrested at 9:25 p.m. Jan. 15 at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York as a fugitive from justice on the warrant issued by the District Court of Maryland, Baltimore County, according to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey Police Department.

He was arraigned Jan. 16 in Queens Criminal Court and has a hearing set for Jan. 22 in the same court. As of Jan. 21, he was in custody at the Anna M. Kross Correctional Facility in East Elmhurst, N.Y., according to the New York Department of Correction website.

Karp will likely be extradited to Maryland after his Jan. 22 court appearance because he faces charges there, said Ikimulisa Livingston, spokesperson for the Queens district attorney's office. She said the crimes he is charged with probably occurred in Maryland.

Karp is president of Neshama: Association of Jewish Chaplains, formerly known as the National Association of Jewish Chaplains, and was en route to the annual NAJC conference in Jerusalem at the time of his arrest, a spokesperson for Menorah Park said. The conference is set for Jan. 26 to Jan. 29.

In June 2013, the organization's national board, which includes Karp, was at the Pearlstone Center in Reisterstown for a conference, about 25 miles from Baltimore.

In a statement, however, Baltimore County Police said there was no evidence that any incidents of abuse occurred at any Baltimore-area Jewish facilities.

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Steven R. Raichilson, executive director at Menorah Park, issued this statement Jan. 21:

“On Jan. 20, we learned that Rabbi Ephraim Karp has been charged in Baltimore County, Md., with a series of offenses accusing him of sex abuse that allegedly took place in Maryland. We do not have further details regarding the charges, but we continue to be assured by local authorities that there is no connection between these charges and Rabbi Karp’s work for Menorah Park.

“We were tremendously saddened by this development. Rabbi Karp joined us seven years ago with solid recommendations. We conducted a thorough background check and no issues or concerns surfaced during that process.

“We have no reports of anything inappropriate happening between Rabbi Karp and anyone in our community, but have urged anyone who has any concerns to bring them forward on a confidential basis so they can be pursued by the proper authorities.

Karp’s employment status at Menorah Park is under suspension, a spokesperson for Menorah Park said.

Beachwood Police Chief Keith Winebrenner confirmed that police from Baltimore County came to Beachwood on Jan. 15 looking for Karp, but said he could not provide any more details.

“I know he was arrested in New York, but I don’t know what he was arrested for or if he has been charged with anything,” Winebrenner said. “He’s still under investigation.”

Karp, of Beachwood, came to Menorah Park in 2008. He is one of two full-time Orthodox rabbis in the nursing home’s spiritual living department.

Before coming to Menorah Park, he was community chaplain for seven years for the Jewish Federation of Monmouth County in New Jersey, where he founded its joint chaplaincy program.

Karp, who grew up on Long Island, N.Y., was ordained at the Ayshe Avraham Rabbinical Seminary in Spring Valley, N.Y., in 1998. He earned a bachelor’s degree from the State University of New York at Stony Brook and a Master of Social Work in international and community development at Monmouth University in West Long Branch, N.J.

Marc Shapiro of the Baltimore Jewish Times contributed to this story.

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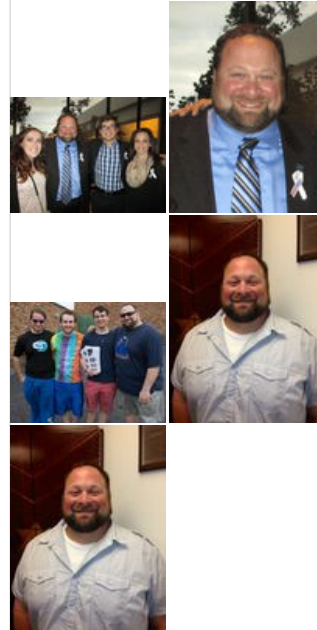
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