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## **Woman Who Ran DSS Childcare Scheme and then Fraudulently Applied for Habitat for Humanity Home Pleads Guilty**



**ALBANY, NY-** District Attorney P. David Soares announced today that SHANELL GARDNER, 35, of Troy, pleaded guilty to (1) Count of Welfare Fraud in the Second Degree, a

Class C Felony, before Honorable Judge Roger McDonough in Albany County Supreme Court yesterday afternoon.

Between 2009 and 2011, GARDNER defrauded the Albany County Department of Social Services by fraudulently submitting documents claiming that payment was owed for child care. During that time however, GARDNER was depositing the money in to her own account and not paying for childcare. In this same time period, GARDNER also concealed income on her applications of food stamps, ultimately illegally obtaining \$3,000 in food stamp benefits. GARDNER was arrested in July 2013 for these crimes.

After being charged for DSS welfare fraud, GARDNER went on to submit forged employment records to Habitat for Humanity in an attempt to obtain a Habitat for Humanity home that she had previously applied for. The fraudulent documents indicated that she was still working and had sufficient income to pay a mortgage, which in fact she did not.

Trial was scheduled to begin in this matter on Monday July 14, 2014.

GARDNER faces 3 to 9 years in State Prison when sentenced on September 15, 2014. GARDNER will also be ordered to pay full restitution to the Department of Social Services in the amount of \$53,332.

Financial Crimes Unit Bureau Chief Daniel Lynch and Assistant District Attorney Matthew Peluso prosecuted this case.

For more information please contact Cecilia Walsh (518) 275-4710.

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