



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
NEWAYGO



MARIANNE UDOW  
DIRECTOR

JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

COURT REPORT

CHILD'S NAME: Alyssa Keast  
Amber Keast

DATE OF BIRTH: 1/22/2000  
8/18/2002

CASEWORKER: Lacey Gonzalez-Borstler

DATE: March 4, 2006

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NEWAYGO COUNTY  
CIRCUIT COURT

PROGRESS TO DATE

Alyssa and Amber Keast were returned to their foster care placement on December 16, 2005. On December 9, 2005 Erica Keast and her boyfriend Richard Wingfield submitted to a urinalysis test. Both tested positive for THC (Marijuana) use. On that same day, the DHS agreed to send the children home with Ms. Keast as the children were expecting to return to her home. The children were returned to Ms. Keast's care on the condition that she and Mr. Wingfield submit to another substance abuse test the following week. On December 15, 2005 Ms. Keast and Mr. Wingfield came to the DHS and proceeded to dispute their previous positive test results from the week before. They subsequently left the DHS office and did not complete another test. On December 16, 2005 Ms. Keast and Mr. Wingfield were advised that they needed to go to their family physician and complete a drug test. Both agreed to do this. Later that day this worker received a frantic telephone call from Mr. Wingfield stating that Ms. Keast had taken a "bunch of pills" (30-40 Flexeril) and an ambulance was on its way to the home. The children and Ms. Keast could be heard in the background crying. This worker went to the home and removed the children. They were placed back in foster care. Ms. Keast was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit and had to be monitored on a consistent basis. The following day Ms. Keast's condition stabilized and she ended up being admitted to New Focus for psychiatric treatment. Ms. Keast has the diagnosis as having Bi-Polar Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder and Generalized Anxiety Disorder. Ms. Keast is on several psychotropic medications to address her mental health needs. Ms. Keast was released from New Focus on or about December 23, 2005. She did not contact the DHS to inquire about her children's well-being until January 4, 2006.

On January 11, 2006 a meeting was held at the DHS office which included Ms. Keast's Community Mental Health worker Sally Fullmer and Alyssa and Amber's Infant Mental Health workers, Heather Stricker and Kelly Holm. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss Ms. Keast's and the children's emotional well-being and to discuss visitation between Ms. Keast and her children. Collectively it was concluded that the Infant Mental Health workers and Ms. Keast's CMH worker would observe a scheduled visit and determine whether or not it was in the best interest of the children to continue to have visits with their mother.

On that same day Ms. Keast, the CMH worker and this worker met and discussed visitation and Ms. Keast's cooperation with requested services. A visit was scheduled for January 17, 2006 but was canceled after Ms.



Keast called the DHS office and stated that the weather and road conditions were poor and she did not want her children out those conditions. The visit was rescheduled for January 10, 2006 as this was the first available date for all services providers to attend. Based on subsequent correspondence from service providers the DHS contacted Ms. Frisbee, the children's Guardian Ad Litem and expressed concerns regarding parenting time. Ms. Frisbee has filed a motion to terminate parenting time based on concerns expressed by the DHS, Infant Mental Health Workers and the foster parent.

There are many concerns that plague this case that would hinder any possibility of reunification.

The first and foremost concern is Ms. Keast's diagnosis of Bi-Polar Disorder, Borderline Personality Disorder and Generalized Anxiety Disorder. To address this diagnosis Ms. Keast was referred to Community Mental Health. The assigned therapist is Sally Fullmer. According to Ms. Fullmer, Ms. Keast was to start Dialectical Behavior Therapy Group (DBT) on January 27, 2006 and that Ms. Keast would be required to sign a contract and commit to services for at least a year. Ms. Fullmer has reported that Ms. Keast failed to attend this group. She further indicated that she had arranged for transportation for Ms. Keast to attend, however when another CMH worker went to the home to pick Ms. Keast up she sent her boyfriend to the door and he told the worker that Ms. Keast did not want to wait around for an extra hour at the CMH building before the group started. Ms. Keast has since signed a contract with CMH but will have to wait until mid March to start another group. In a conversation with Ms. Fullmer on February 22, 2006 she reported that she has made several phone calls to Ms. Keast but Ms. Keast had yet to return any of her messages. Additionally Ms. Fuller stated that it could take a year or more for a person with Borderline Personality Disorder to get a person vested in their treatment. It has become apparent with Ms. Keast's suicide attempt that her significant mental health needs impair her ability to parent the children and make appropriate decisions for the children and herself.

Another concern is Ms. Keast's significant substance abuse history and continued use. The DHS referred Ms. Keast to substance abuse counseling with Joyce Dyksta with Arbor Circle. On or about September 15, 2005 Ms. Keast completed her counseling and Ms. Dykstra recommended in her discharge summary that Ms. Keast continue her mental health counseling as well as attend AA or NA to aid her in maintaining sobriety. Up until her being admitted into New Focus, Ms. Keast had not followed through with attending AA or NA meetings. Ms. Keast began attending AA on December 28, 2005. As previously stated above Ms. Keast and her boyfriend Mr. Wingfield tested positive for THC (marijuana) on December 9, 2005. Mark Smithey from Smithey Detention Services completed the testing and had been testing Ms. Keast for substance abuse for several months prior to this. Following Ms. Keast testing positive for THC and disputing the results she stated that she was not comfortable with a male drug testing her. To accommodate Ms. Keast the DHS referred her to Karen Kizer MA/LLPC for substance abuse screening and in-home counseling. This referral was initiated on January 4, 2006. Ms. Kizer reports that Ms. Keast has not showed for one scheduled session and canceled another with no explanation. Ms. Kizer reports completing three substance abuse screens on Ms. Keast. The first test was positive for THC. The second test was altered by Ms. Keast and the third test was again positive for THC. Ms. Kizer reports during her last meeting with Ms. Keast on February 28, 2006 Ms. Keast admitted to altering her urine sample using a bleach based cleanser and water. Ms. Keast also told Ms. Kizer that she has been associating with a person who she met at her AA meeting and has been using marijuana and alcohol with this person.

Parenting Skills also remain a concern. This was to be addressed by the Parents as Teachers worker Ellie Kar. Ms. Kar had been meeting with Ms. Keast and Mr. Wingfield to work on building their skills. However, Ms. Kar informed this worker that she had not seen or heard from Ms. Keast since November 2005. In a conversation with Ms. Kar on February 22, 2006 Ms. Kar reported that Ms. Keast had finally contacted her on February 15, 2006. Ms. Kar stated that she returned Ms. Keast's call but Ms. Keast had yet to call her back. Ms. Kar also informed me that



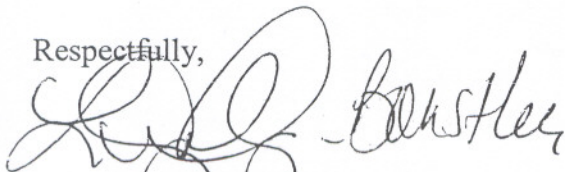
she had contacted the Parents as Teachers Social Worker Joy Jaquish as an additional support person to aid her in making contact with Ms. Keast.

In addition, Parenting Skills were to be addressed in the home by the Family Reunification Program with Catholic Social Services. A referral had been made in November 2005 and services began later in the month. The FRP staff had begun to set goals with Ms. Keast and Mr. Wingfield, however had to end services when the children were removed from the home in December as per their policy.

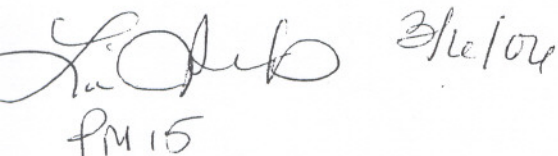
### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on Ms. Keast's failure to rectify the conditions that led to her children's removal from the home, it is recommended that Alyssa and Amber Keast remain temporary court wards referred to the DHS for placement and supervision and that the parental rights of Erica Keast are terminated.

Respectfully,



Lacey Gonzalez-Borstler  
Foster Care Worker  
Newaygo County DHS



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