



Porterville Police Department : Press Release : May 13th 2009

Crime: **Extortion, Forgery**
Location : Alternative Services / 215 N. D Street, Porterville
Date/Time: April 13, 2009 / 1:30 p.m.
Suspect(s): Hector Vargas Gonzalez, 32 year old male Porterville resident
Victim: Multiple confidential Alternative Services clients

Synopsis: On March 13, 2009, allegations were brought to the Porterville Police Department that a **counselor at Alternative Services was accepting money from clients in exchange for forging documents** regarding the completion of court ordered programs. One client was specifically alleging that he had been forced to pay the money under threat of failing the program should the client not comply with the demands. At the same time these allegations were brought forth to the Police Department they were also brought forth to the management of Alternative Services.

Alternative Services management personnel began an internal investigation and identified multiple clients who alleged to have paid counselors money in exchange for having documents forged. This information was supplied to police detectives investigating the allegations and Alternative Services immediately removed the accused counselors from their positions.

Detectives from the Police Department's General Investigations Unit conducted the investigation into this incident and interviewed multiple clients and staff regarding this matter. To date **six clients** have been found who allege to have paid a combined total of **\$2,760.00 to a single counselor** in exchange for the forging of documents regarding the completion of court ordered programs.

The counselor alleged to have taken money from the clients was identified as **Hector Vargas Gonzalez**, a 32 year old male Porterville resident. After allegedly accepting money from various clients Mr. Gonzalez then forged documents relating to the completion of court ordered programs pertaining to the clients. It is believed that during this time Mr. Gonzalez solicited the assistance of two other counselors who may or may not have known of Mr. Gonzalez taking money from clients.

On May 13, 2009, **Mr. Gonzalez** was contacted by detectives from the Porterville Police Department and he **was arrested without incident**. Mr. Gonzalez was booked with the Tulare County Sheriff's Department on charges of extortion and forgery.

The case remains under investigation and anyone with any information regarding this matter is urged to contact Detective Mark Lightfoot at (559) 782-7412 or Detective Sergeant John Hall at (559) 782-7421.

Investigating Detective(s)
Detective Mark Lightfoot

Detective Supervisor
Sergeant John Hall