

Suit claims sexual harassment at Catholic Charities-run Brooklyn care center

Three women filed a \$6 million lawsuit alleging Catholic Charities Neighborhood Services tolerated a hostile work environment and ignored their complaints. They'd worked for years at an adult day care in Brooklyn but problems began in 2012 when supervisor Oyewale Owolodun targeted a secretary, according to court documents.

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ANDREW SAVLICH/NEW YORK DAILY NEWS

Month after month, three women workers at a Brooklyn adult day care center say, they were subjected to a disturbing series of sexual come-ons by a male supervisor.

When they complained to his bosses, they say they were told to just quiet down and get back to work. The reaction was somewhat shocking, they say, given their employer: Catholic Charities, the do-gooder group run by the Catholic Diocese that “promotes unity among all persons by seeking to develop caring communities.”

“I trust in the church and I trust in my God. I say I’m a victim of sexual harassment and there is no response. It’s not right,” said Jenny Mejia, 45. Last week she joined her two colleagues in filing a \$6 million suit claiming Catholic Charities Neighborhood Services tolerated a hostile work environment and ignored their complaints.



Catholic Charities of Brooklyn and Queens, which owns the center where the sexual harassment allegedly happened.

The three women worked for years without incident at the Carmen Aquilone Day Center in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, which serves adults with developmental disabilities.

The problems began in the summer of 2012, when supervisor Oyewale “Wally” Owolodun targeted Jeanette Grullon, a secretary, the suit alleges.

Standing at the nurses station one day, the lawsuit claims, Owolodun told another employee he wanted to “make babies” with Grullon.

Sandra Pozo, an assistant, said Owolodun once “referred to himself as a nurse and told [her] that he wanted to give her ‘injections,’” the suit says.

Mejia claims that Owolodun made sexual comments and would “shimmy” toward her “in a sexual way,” trying to touch her.

All three women complained to Catholic Charities Human Resources, and all three say they were rebuffed at every turn.

In late July, Mejia’s lawyer, Jeffrey Goldman, sent a letter to Catholic Charities of Brooklyn & Queens CEO Robert Siebel. Days later, human resources staff members interviewed Mejia, but asked her questions about whether anyone had discriminated against Owolodun, who is African.

Owolodun recently left Catholic Charities, but only after nearly a year of complaints.