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Former youth pastor facing charges allowed to volunteer at North Syracuse church

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(<http://connect.syracuse.com/staff/meisenst/index.html>) By Marnie Eisenstadt |

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on November 09, 2013 at 5:45 AM

By Marnie Eisenstadt and Jeff Stein

A youth pastor facing trial for sexually abusing a minor in another state worked as a children's worship leader at a Central New York church while he was under investigation.

Shaun M. Ross, 32, has been charged with two counts of sexually abusing a minor in Maryland. He was arrested in July in Frederick , Md., according to court records. The charges stem from activity that began in 2008 in the community near Baltimore, records say.

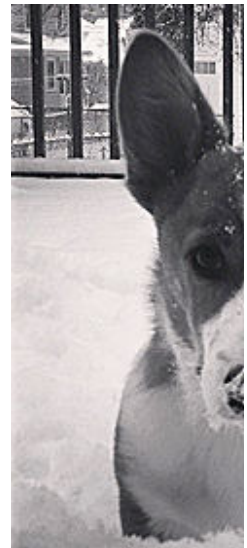
Ross was the director of student ministry at the Calvary Assembly church in Walkersville, Md. The Rev. John Kenney, the pastor at that church, would not comment on Ross or the investigation.

"Please know that we have zero tolerance for misconduct of any staff," Kenney wrote in an email.

Ross and his wife have been living in Clay with his father, the Rev. Terry Ross, for about a year. Terry Ross is the senior pastor at the **Victory Christian Center**

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(<http://www.vccsyracuse.com/#!contact/cgbd>) in North Syracuse. In April, Shaun Ross and his wife, Brandi, were put in charge of children's programs at the Victory Christian Center, according to the church's Facebook page.

"We are excited to announce that Shaun and Brandi Ross will be assuming leadership in our Children's ministry," reads a post from April 1. "Bring your children this Sunday for Kidz Revolution! They will love it!"

A phone message left at the Ross residence was not returned.

Administrators at the North Syracuse church's parent church were aware of the charges pending against Shaun Ross. The church is a member of the Foursquare denomination. Dan Ussery, who oversees the Foursquare churches in the Northeast, said the Rev. Terry Ross and Shaun Ross told the church about the charges.

"Pastor Terry Ross and son Shaun disclosed that Shaun had been accused of sexual misconduct while serving on the staff of a church in the Baltimore, Maryland, area and that charges are pending," Ussery wrote in a statement.

Ussery wrote that Shaun Ross and his family had been living with Terry Ross for the past year. Shaun Ross was allowed to attend Victory Christian Center and play music on the church worship team, Ussery wrote.

Ussery said Shaun Ross was not allowed to work for the church and was not supposed to have any contact with children or teens when he was volunteering at the church. Ussery did not respond to follow-up questions about the North Syracuse church's announcement welcoming Shaun Ross to be a leader in the church's youth ministry.

Rick Trunfio, first chief assistant district attorney for Onondaga County, said his office is aware of Shaun Ross and the charges he is facing. Shaun Ross is not supposed to have any contact with children, Trunfio said. He said an investigator from sheriff's office has been in touch with the Victory Christian Center and Ross' father.

Ross' trial is set for January in Frederick, Md.

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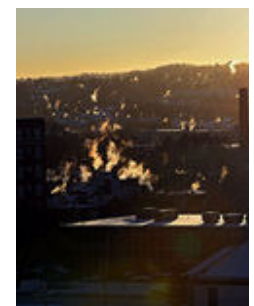
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