

Expelled GBHS student shares ordeal

BY PAM BRANNON
Gulf Breeze News
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The last three months have been the most scary and stressful of Gulf Breeze High freshman Arica Kuaile's life, she says. That's what made her develop a program she hopes to bring into the high school to try to help other students.

Kuaile said when she gave into what she refers to as "heavy peer pressure" the morning of April 23 she knew she shouldn't have taken a couple pills from her mom's prescription bottle of Xanax. And she said she knew she shouldn't take them to school. But, she said she had absolutely no idea that taking those two pills to give free to another person who had been asked for them would get her expelled from school, or that it could be considered a felony crime in Florida.

Kuaile and her family had been going through some unusual situations at home. Kuaile and her mother had both been prescribed medication - her Mom's prescription was for Xanax. She said when she mentioned at school one day that she was taking a medication to calm nerves, a girl asked if she knew anyone that took Xanax. When Kuaile said "my mom," she said the pressure started for several days from that girl for Kuaile to "bring her a couple pills". One morning, while getting ready for school, she decided to grab a couple pills so the girl would stop pressuring.

But on the way to school, Kuaile said, she got scared about taking the pills into the

school building. She was afraid of "getting into trouble." But, her idea of getting in trouble would have meant being called to the principal's office, maybe some detention or suspension, and having them call her Mom.

She said she saw a boy on the school bus that she knew had "gotten into trouble" the week before for having and/or smoking marijuana at school, so she said she asked him if he would take the pills and get rid of them for her. He was still in school after the marijuana incident, so Kuaile said she never thought two Xanax pills would be "that big a deal."

The boy said sure. She said she felt nervous, but better. That is, until a deputy arrived at her classroom door a short time after school and took her to the Dean's office.

"I knew it had to be because of those pills," she said.

She said she was so scared and just wanted to call her mom, but was told the dean would call her mom - which he did, about five or six hours later, her Mom says the official reports show. In the meantime, the deputy and dean were investigating.

Kuaile found out that the boy she gave the pills to on the bus had thought it would be funny to place them in a drink of his buddy's. When the buddy saw little pills floating in his drink, he got very nervous and told school officials. His parents were called and got him to the hospital to make sure he had not taken anything that could hurt him. That's when the pill trail led immediately back to Kuaile.

Arica said that day in the dean's office was scary, first being asked right away to write

a statement, then being handcuffed a few hours later when she tried to text message her mom. Then she was told she was being expelled from school, so go clean out her locker. Her mother immediately looked up the school rules, including the Student Code of Conduct that the school officials were referencing.

"That Code is 72 pages long," she said. But she was confused herself, she said, when she saw that the code called for a 10-day suspension for possession or distribution, with a hearing during that time to decide if the student should be expelled.

"She was basically expelled that day, without a hearing, and the hearing we did have was not within the first 10 days. So we didn't know what was happening," she said. "Here is a 3.0 grade student, who had never been in any legal trouble, being expelled on the spot. I could not believe it."

Kuaile's mom said at the hearing she showed the board the Florida Statute 893.149 they list in their code of conduct, saying it is unlawful for any person to "knowingly or intentionally" possess a "listed chemical with intent to unlawfully manufacture controlled substance." And it is a felony. If a student is found guilty of something that would be a felony for an adult, they would be expelled automatically. Neither Kuaile nor her mother had any idea that Xanax was on such a list, and she pointed out that her daughter was not going to "manufacture" anything, and not going to sell it, or even take a pill herself.

At first they were told Arica

would have to go before judge with criminal charges, but shortly after the hearing with the suspension board they received a call saying she would not be going to court. They told her she could be placed in a special diversion counseling program called IDDS - and the counselor checks on her twice a week.

"But even though she was not going before a judge she was still expelled," her Mom said. "They did not even listen at the hearing, but I thought 'OK, I will go to the school board for appeal'. I did - twice - and found out they didn't want to hear from us either. The decision had been made basically at the school that day before I even knew it."

She was told to start school this year at the Learning Academy, the alternative education center for expelled students. But Kuaile's mom went to tour the Academy and says she will not send Kuaile there. She said she has since discovered that any student sent to the Learning Academy does have the option of doing a Virtual School online, with a teacher and assignments and online help from the teacher.

"It isn't publicized, but it is an option", she said. So that is what Kuaile will do when school starts. "We just want to get her back into her regular classrooms at Gulf Breeze as soon as we can," her mother said. "They said we might be able to get her back sometime this semester. Then she will take steps to implement her new program to help other students not have to go through what she has gone through."

Calendar of Events

Thursday, Aug. 16
No meetings scheduled as of press time

Friday, Aug. 17
No meetings scheduled as of press time

Saturday, Aug. 18

Sunday, Aug. 19
Seeing Sea Life at Naval Live Oaks, 2 p.m.

Monday, Aug. 20
City Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Gulf Breeze City Hall, 1070 Shoreline Drive, Gulf Breeze
Santa Rosa County Commission Meeting, 9 a.m., Commissioner's Board Room, 6495 Caroline Street, Milton

Pot Luck Dinner, Santa Rosa County Democrats will hold a pot luck dinner and meeting at Woodlawn Beach Middle School, 1500 Woodlawn Way at 6 p.m. with program starting at 6:45 p.m. Speaker is James Bryan about Veterans' Benefits. Reservations: 932-6044 or 572-6029.

Tuesday, Aug. 21
The Republican Club of Santa Rosa County Monthly Meeting and Dutch Treat Dinner, 6:30 p.m., Cocardie's, 8649 Gulf Blvd., Navarre Beach. The guest speaker is Greg Brown, Property Appraiser for Santa Rosa County. This meeting is open to the public. For additional information please contact Morgan

Lamb, President at 850-939 2409 or morganlamb@bell-south.net

PJC Seniors meeting 2 p.m., PJC Main Campus, Student Services Center. Open to Florida residents over 60 years of age. Social hour is 1-2 p.m. Annual dues are \$8. 471-113

Wednesday, Aug. 22
Santa Rosa Island Authority Board Meeting, 5 p.m., SRIA Administrative Office, 1 Via De Luna, Pensacola Beach
Navarre Beach Pier public workshop 6 p.m., Holley Navarre Middle School, 1976 Williams Creek Rd.

Thursday, Aug. 23
School Board Meeting, 6:30 p.m., School District Administrative Offices, 5086 Canal Street, Milton
Santa Rosa County Commission Meeting, 9 a.m., Commissioner's Board Room, 6495 Caroline Street, Milton

Upcoming: Saturday, Aug. 25 - Swenson Park Old Fashioned Community Picnic, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

To put an item in the calendar, send the information to news@gulfbreezenews.com with the subject "calendar." Please include a phone number for information.

BROWN: Assessments must go down

Continued from page 1A

ees in his office, and they assess 100,000 properties each year. "Making the justification for our decision is tough with that small a staff," he said.

Brown said he looked at the market declines for the first quarter of this year, and tried to make the state take that into consideration. He said this area of Florida is different from the rest of the state. "In our post-Ivan, post-Dennis, post-Katrina environment, we are definitely different from south Florida. And Chris and I both know property values here are not what they used to be," Brown said.

Brown also made another 'bombshell' announcement to the Board of Realtors, concerning the new Super Homestead Constitutional Amendment that voters will cast ballots on next January. It will affect not only county coffers, but also the state

school boards. "No one knew at first if this bill would affect the schools if it passes. So I called the Dept. of Revenue and asked. They said yes, it would - that there is nothing in the bill to directly exempt the schools. So they will be affected greatly."

Brown said that means if that constitutional amendment passes, the Santa Rosa School Board will lose \$14-million overnight. "The legislators in Tallahassee are saying 'trust us - we won't leave the schools hanging. We will find money to make up that difference'. But the legislators are calling a special session in September because their sales tax revenues have been falling, and they may make more cuts, so where will they find 'extra' money next year to help the schools?" Brown said.

The Santa Rosa County Commission will lose \$12 million overnight.

Brown said on the surface the Super Homestead looks great for

taxpayers. Better than the homestead exemption now allowed under the current Save Our Homes (SOH). But Brown said it might not be all it's cracked up to be for homeowners, especially after the first year of exemptions. He is going to place on his website within the next two to three weeks, he said, a side-by-side accounting of both programs to show taxpayers what the new amendment would really mean down the road on their particular property.

If passed, the amendment would allow a drastic cut in taxes on most homestead properties immediately, according to Brown. After the first year the property tax will go up or down, depending each year the market values. So the second year it could go way up again, higher than the Save Our Homes (SOH) current exemption allows.

People already in the homestead exemption program with

SOH will have the option to stay with that program, instead of going with the new Super Homestead. But once a property is sold it automatically goes into the new program. "It will be difficult for you realtors, I know, to try to explain to potential buyers why they are purchasing a home with exactly the same value and house payment as the people next door, but their taxes are different - maybe higher. And people will not understand how their millage rate for the county may go down, but their property taxes may go up any given year," Brown said. "It will take 60 percent of the voters in January to approve the change. It is a very complex issue. But when a person with a \$200,000 home hears that first year they could get a \$1400 decrease in their property taxes, it will be difficult to explain to them why it might not be a good idea in the long run to vote for the change."

IMPACT: Fees upheld for Baptist Healthcare

Continued from page 1A

lated by the county on an annual basis. We just wonder if we are at an impasse, since we are still so far apart. Or if commissioners have any ideas on how to break the impasse. What we wondered was if we could wait until the building actually opened to see what traffic numbers were, and then submit that research."

But commissioners did not like that option. Commissioner

John Broxson of Gulf Breeze said, "If we start doing that, we will open a can of worms that will never get closed. Every business will want to do that."

County Chair Tom Stewart said Baptist should keep working with the staff on its appeal. Stewart



Stewart

the direction you need to progress with is to try to show the staff are you actually expanding more service customers, and if so how many and how soon. Or are you expanding the ability to meet the needs of the customers you already have."

Commissioner Goodin said, "For facilities like this, I think we should also be taking into consideration which came first - the chicken or the egg. Would people like these even be will-

ing to build a facility like this if the impact wasn't already there - and are they really adding any impact to the community and roads." He said it might be worth looking at as a new formula process for facilities like this one in the county.

Since January 1, 2006, all new development in Santa Rosa County required to pay impact fees which will be applied toward the construction cost for new road capacity.

Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office Report

Information provided by the Santa Rosa County Sheriff's Office.

Felonies	8/7/2007
8/2/2007 Hull, Stephen Joseph, 1900 block of Melissa Oaks Drive, Gulf Breeze, possession of methamphetamine, possession of cocaine, methamphetamine production	Windham, Alice Fay, 43, W/F, 5700 block of Capitol Drive, Gulf Breeze, possession of a controlled substance without a prescription
8/3/2007 Glowacki, Marek Henry, 18, W/M, 2100 block of Frontera Street, Navarre, larceny, less than \$5,000	Berry, Warren Lee, 19, W/M, 2200 block of Calle De Marbella, Navarre, violation of probation
8/6/2007 Papajohn, Todd Andrew, 35, W/M, 200 block of Pensacola Beach Road, Gulf Breeze, violation of probation	Dauria, Kathy L., 44, W/F, 6700 block of Flintwood Street, Navarre, aggravated assault
	Mulkey, Tracy Napoleon, 42, B/M, 2400 block of Pawnee Drive, Navarre, violation of probation
	8/8/2007 Anderson, Daniel Clifford, 42, W/M, 1700 block of Eagle Bay,

Navarre, battery on officer or EMT	Road, Navarre, violation of probation
Keister Christopher Lindsey, 33, W/M, 2100 block of Mar Mar Lane, Navarre, driving on a suspended license	Cox, Danette, Hicks, 40, W/F, 3000 block of Ferris Drive Navarre, failure to appear
8/9/2007 Foster, Ryan Jacob, 18, W/M, 1600 block of Guam Lane, Gulf Breeze, burglary, larceny, less than \$5,000	DUI
	8/7/2007 Irvine, Joshua Tyler, 24, W/M, 2200 block of Edgewood Drive, Navarre, DUI
	8/9/2007 Tiffin, Thomas Jeffrey, 42, W/M, 5500 block of Millbend Place, Gulf Breeze, resisting an officer, aggravated assault, driving on a suspended license
8/12/2007 Coleman, Gregory Earl, 38, B/M, 2200 block of Tom Street, Navarre, aggravated assault	Williams, Holly Belinda, 49, W/F, 3000 block of Holly Point Road, Navarre, DUI
	Windham, Alice Fay, 43, W/F, 5700 block of Capitol Drive, GULF Breeze, DUI

Elected Officials CONTACT

GULF BREEZE ELECTED OFFICIALS 1070 Shoreline Dr., Gulf Breeze, FL 32561; (850) 934-5100	DIANE COLEMAN, Dist. 3 (850) 939-5538
Mayor LANE GILCHRIST (850) 932-5565 mayor@ci.gulf-breeze.fl.us	HUGH WINKLES, Dist. 2 (850) 623-6299
BEVERLY ZIMMERN (850) 932-4717 bzimmern@ci.gulf-breeze.fl.us	DIANE SCOTT, Dist. 1 (850) 623-0413
CARL HOFFMAN (850) 932-4948 choffman@ci.gulf-breeze.fl.us	FLORIDA STATE REPRESENTATIVES
J.B. SCHLUTER (850) 232-0939 jschluter@ci.gulf-breeze.fl.us	GREG EVERS (R) District Office: 5424 Willing St., Milton, FL 32570 (850) 983-5550 greg.evers@myfloridahouse.gov
RICHARD FULFORD (850) 932-5135 rfulford@co.gulf-breeze.fl.us	DAVE MURZIN (R) District Office: Suite 22B, 7100 Plantation Rd., Ste. 3, Pensacola, FL 32504 (850) 494-7330
SANTA ROSA COUNTY COMMISSION 6495 Caroline Street, Milton, FL 32570; (850) 932-1340 or 983-1877	C.V. "CLAY" FORD (R) District Office: 1804 W. Garden St, Pensacola, FL 32501-4418 (850) 595-5550
JOHN BROXSON, Dist. 5 (850) 932-2617 comm-broxson@co.santa-rosa.fl.us	RAY SANSOM (R) District Office: 348 SW Miracle Strip Pkwy., Bldg. C, Ste. 12, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548-5257 (850) 833-9328
GORDON GOODIN, Dist. 4 (850) 939-1274 comm-goodin@co.santa-rosa.fl.us	FLORIDA STATE SENATOR
DON SALTER, Dist. 3 (850) 983-1877 comm-salter@co.santa-rosa.fl.us	DON GAETZ (R) District Office: 217 Miracle Strip Pkwy., Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548 (850) 897-5747 SunCom 277-5009 don.gaetz.web@flsenate.gov
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TOM STEWART, Dist. 1 (850) 983-1877 comm-stewart@co.santa-rosa.fl.us	JEFF MILLER (R) Pensacola Office: 4300 Bayou Blvd., Ste. 17C, Pensacola, FL 32503 (850) 479-1183 Toll Free: (866) 367-1614
SANTA ROSA COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 5086 Canal St., Milton, FL 32570; (850) 983-5000	U.S. SENATORS
ED GRAY III, Dist. 5 (850) 932-6287	Senator MEL MARTINEZ (R) 315 E. Robinson St., Landmark Center 1, Ste. 475, Orlando, FL 32801 (407) 254-2573
JOANN J. SIMPSON, Dist. 4 (850) 994-5446	Senator NELSON, BILL (D) US Court House Annex, 111 N. Adams St., Tallahassee, FL 32301 (850) 942-8415