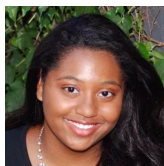


## Harvest Center director accused of illegally entering homes to evict low-income tenants

*Colin Pinkney's accusers say he entered their homes while they were away as part of an effort to evict them from transitional housing.*



BY OLIVIA RICHARD

JUNE 4, 2019



Colin Pinkney, executive director of The Harvest Center, a nonprofit that provides aid to low-income families, was arrested Friday and booked on two separate misdemeanor charges of breaking and entering. His accusers allege that Pinkney entered their homes illegally in an effort to intimidate and evict them.

The Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office issued the dual arrest warrants after Devonne Moise and D'asia Feaster alleged that Pinkney "willfully and unlawfully" entered their homes and violated their privacy.

Moise and Feaster both previously worked at Jackson Park Ministries. Both said Pinkney terminated their employment following the incident.



Colin Pinkney (Source: Mecklenburg County Sheriff's office)

Moise alleges that Pinkney entered her home while she was away, surprising her two sons, ages 7 and 11. Once inside, she alleges, Pinkney began screaming at her sons and going through her personal documents, creating a scene that terrified her children.

“My sons called me crying, saying, ‘Mr. Colin’s here, Mr. Colin’s here, and he’s yelling and shouting and going through the place,’” Moise told Qcitymetro. “They were terrified, and I just kept thinking, how can this be happening right now; this isn’t real life.”

### **A court date set**

Feaster described a similar incident. She alleges that Pinkney entered her home while she was admitted to a hospital and went through her personal documents and belongings. While there, she alleges, he left a notice of eviction and job termination on top her medical bags.

Pinkney surrendered himself into the custody of Mecklenburg sheriff’s deputies Friday evening, where he posted a \$500 bond for each warrant and was released to await trial, set for August 5.

Clark Neilson, board chairman of The Harvest Center, told Qcitymetro that Pinkney would not be commenting at the advice of his attorneys.

Neilson said the charges were unwarranted, adding: “All of our staff have a lot of





Two women who live in transitional housing owned by The Harvest Center allege that the organization's executive director illegally entered their homes in an effort to evict and intimidate them. (Photo: Olivia Richard for Qcitymetro)

confidence in Pinkney and stand behind him in this situation.”

## Eviction Looms

In December, The Harvest Center made local headlines when it **announced a merger with Jackson Park Ministries**, another nonprofit seeking to assist the poor. At the time, the two organizations said the merger would provide relief to more than 20 families in need of transitional housing.

Both Moise and Feaster are tenants in the transitional housing property once owned by Jackson Park Ministries. Each is challenging Pinkney's attempt to evict.

“If a judge doesn't stay our writ of eviction during this process, we will have nowhere to go,” Moise said. “We'll be homeless and have to go to the shelter.”



“Keep Out” signs were seen in the windows of several buildings owned by The Harvest Center of Charlotte, which provides transitional housing to low-income residents. (Photo: Olivia Richard for Qcitymetro)

Feaster said it was ironic that she and Moise now face eviction at a time when Charlotte is focused on addressing a shortage of affordable housing.

On its website, The Harvest Center’s mission statement says its goal is to “create a community where individuals affected by homelessness, poverty and unemployment are empowered through transitional programs and transformed by the Love of Christ.”

In an official statement provided to Qcitymetro, Nielson addressed the allegations:

“Regarding the questions you have asked about the false charges made against our Executive Director, Colin Pinkney. There is absolutely no truth to the claims against Colin and we are confident that these charges will not stand. Under Colin’s

8/3/2019

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leadership, the Harvest Center is doing important work to help families and individuals in need of housing in our community.”