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**INSPECTOR GENERAL RELEASES REPORT ON
MIRACLE PLACE CHURCH, RICKY SINCLAIR**

Investigation uncovers massive grant and hurricane relief fraud

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BATON ROUGE -- Today, the State Inspector General's Office issued a report detailing its investigation into the activities of Ricky Sinclair, the Miracle Place Church of Baker and its affiliated All The Way House drug treatment facility. The investigation revealed that Mr. Sinclair, acting on behalf of Miracle Place Church and All The Way House, submitted false information to several government agencies in order to access more than \$750,000 in public funds. These funds originated from the United States Government and were distributed by various departments of the State of Louisiana which administer payments and reimbursements.

The investigation revealed the following:

- Mr. Sinclair and Miracle Place Church staff at his direction made false statements on official FEMA labor documents, causing an overpayment for expenses related to the operation of a public shelter after Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The false documents that Mr. Sinclair submitted resulted in an approximate overpayment of \$81,000 in public funds.
- Mr. Sinclair made false statements on official FEMA documents in an attempt to cause an overpayment of labor, food, and equipment expenses related to the operation of a public shelter after Hurricane Gustav in 2008. Mr. Sinclair's original Gustav shelter reimbursement claim was \$1,700,000. Mayor Harold Rideau of Baker, Louisiana correctly identified most of the original claim as questionable and decreased it accordingly prior to submittal to FEMA.

Even with this reduction, Mr. Sinclair falsely claimed at least \$380,108 as Gustav related labor, food and equipment costs that neither he nor Miracle Place Church actually incurred. Inspector General investigators identified the false documents and notified FEMA prior to payment.

- Mr. Sinclair and other All The Way House staff members falsified Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) documents related to the All The Way House's application to become a state funded addiction service provider. Mr. Sinclair, his wife, and at least three other All The Way House staff members concealed criminal convictions during the DHH application process. Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair and All The Way House ultimately received \$258,000 in state and federal addiction services funds after having submitted the falsified forms.
- Mr. Sinclair and Miracle Place Church staff at his direction falsified documents claiming that the church had provided teen abortion prevention training through a program called Life Choice Project. They presented these documents for payment to Caring to Love Ministries, a private manager of the publicly funded program. This program is funded by the U.S. Government and administered by the State of Louisiana. Interviews with Miracle Place Church youth pastors and persons listed as having received the training revealed the training was not delivered. The false invoices resulted in Mr. Sinclair's receiving \$31,500 in public funds for work that was not performed.
- Mr. Sinclair exploited All The Way House clients for personal economic gain by using them during the construction of his personal residence. All The Way House clients were forced to perform labor to construct Mr. and Mrs. Sinclair's personal residence or risk being expelled from the program and the All The Way House facility. For some of these individuals, expulsion from the program could have exposed them to jail for violating court-ordered conditions of bond or probation. The contract associated with the All The Way House, entered into between Miracle Place Church and the State of Louisiana, prohibits contractors from personally benefitting from program participants.

Inspector General Stephen Street said: "This was deliberate and calculated fraud. Mr. Sinclair enriched himself by repeatedly using his church as a front to cheat public agencies out of hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayer money. The fact that much of this was done against the backdrop of two natural disasters is particularly reprehensible."

Inspector General Street added: "I want to thank the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Louisiana State Police, and the FEMA Office of Inspector General for their invaluable assistance with this investigation."

To obtain the full report, follow this link:

<http://oig.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/reports/2010/CID-10-003.pdf>