

Three New Sex Abuse and Coverup Lawsuits Filed against Ignite Life Center in Gainesville

The lawsuits also name the Orlando-based District Council of the Assemblies of God Church overseeing ILC

Horowitz Law attorneys Adam Horowitz and Jessica Arbour have filed three new sexual abuse and coverup lawsuits against Ignite Life Center in Gainesville, Florida, as well as the Florida Multicultural District Council of the Assemblies of God.

According to the Complaints, the three plaintiffs were sexually abused by Gabriel Hemenez, a church leader at Ignite Life Center Church. The abuse is alleged to have occurred while the three teenage boys attended the Ignite Summer Internship, a summer camp operated by the Defendants, in July 2021.

These are the first of several lawsuits that Horowitz Law attorneys plan to file against Ignite Life Center and the Florida Multicultural District for the sexual abuse of children at the Gainesville church. The lawsuits are now pending in Orange County, Florida, Circuit Court.

H.C., the mother of one of the plaintiffs, says she is filing the lawsuit on behalf of her teenage son because she wants the leaders who failed her son to be held accountable, and to protect kids everywhere in the future. "As a mother and a believer in Christ, I am filing this lawsuit to expose a broken system and provoke change at Ignite Life Center. I've experienced firsthand with this type of negligence does to a young life, to our household, and to the people closest to us. It has been devastating and the wounds it has caused cut very deep. It is my hope that this lawsuit holds Ignite Life Center and the Assemblies of God Church accountable for their poor decisions, bad behavior, and, most importantly, the lives they have damaged. Because of the carelessness of this leadership, some of these children may never recover, and some will never return to church again."

Jessica Arbour, an attorney at Horowitz Law representing the three plaintiffs, said "the abuse of children within a close-knit church community is devastating to those children, their families, and to an entire community faced with the idea that their church leaders have not always lived up to their word that children are safe and protected. I applaud these brave young men for coming forward to break the silence on their experience, and for living their biblical teachings: what is done in the dark will always come to light."

Hemenez was arrested for abusing these three Plaintiffs, as well as a fourth boy, in July 2023. Last week, he pled guilty to sexually abusing two of the boys in Alachua County as part of a plea deal with prosecutors to avoid trial. He was sentenced to five years in prison followed by eight years of sex offender probation and supervision. He will also be a registered sex offender for the rest of his life.

Christian Vargas, another church leader and son of head pastors Mark and Lisa Vega, was also arrested for sexually abusing multiple children at the church last year. In recent weeks, Noel Cruz, a church leader and son of assistant pastor Joey Cruz, was arrested for sexually abusing a child as well.

For more information, including copies of the filed Complaints, please contact [Adam Horowitz](mailto:adam@adamhorowitzlaw.com) (adam@adamhorowitzlaw.com) or [Jessica Arbour](mailto:jessica@adamhorowitzlaw.com) (jessica@adamhorowitzlaw.com) by email or by calling (954) 641-2100.