

Webster Parish non-profit director pleads guilty to stealing more than \$1 million from feeding program

Western District of Louisiana

SHREVEPORT, La. – United States Attorney David C. Joseph announced today that Myrna Thomas Quarles, 59, of Cotton Valley, Louisiana, pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark L. Hornsby for taking more than \$1 million from a federal feeding program meant to provide meals to economically disadvantaged children during the summer months when they are not in school.

Quarles was the director of Greater Horizons Developmental Services, a non-profit headquartered in Webster Parish. Greater Horizons received reimbursements from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Summer Feeding Service Program (SFSP), which was administered through the State of Louisiana. From 2014 through 2015, Greater Horizons submitted reimbursement claims that greatly inflated the number of eligible meals provided. Once Greater Horizons received the money, Quarles wrote checks that were payable to vendors and other third parties, but instead of sending those checks to the vendors, Quarles deposited that money into her personal bank account, which resulted in her theft of \$1,103,148.92 from federal feeding program. Additionally, Quarles used a Greater Horizons credit card for approximately \$370,000 in personal spending. Purchases included real estate, farm equipment, a restaurant, air travel, cruises and designer luxury items.

Quarles faces 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release, a \$250,000 fine and restitution. **A sentencing date of January 16, 2020, was set.**

The FBI, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Inspector General, and State of Louisiana, Office of State Inspector General, conducted the investigation. Assistant U.S. Attorney Brian C. Flanagan and First Assistant U.S. Attorney Alexander C. Van Hook are prosecuting the case.