

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
WESTERN DISTRICT *of* LOUISIANA

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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

Western District of Louisiana

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, January 16, 2020

## **Webster Parish Non-Profit Director Sentenced for Stealing More Than \$1 Million From Federal Feeding Program**

**SHREVEPORT, La.** – David C. Joseph, United States Attorney for the Western District of Louisiana, announced that a Cotton Valley woman was sentenced for stealing more than \$1 million from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Summer Feeding Service Program, a federal feeding program meant to provide meals to economically disadvantaged children during the summer months when they are not in school.

Myrna Thomas Quarles, 59, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Donald E. Walter to serve 71 months in federal prison. Judge Walter also sentenced Quarles, who pleaded guilty to theft of government property on September 18, 2019, to three years of supervised release following her confinement and ordered her to pay \$1,460,541.41 in restitution.

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, 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 totaled over \$1 million in theft from the federal feeding program. Additionally, Quarles used the Greater Horizons' checking account to pay for personal expenses that she charged to a Greater Horizons credit card totaling \$370,816.61. Purchases included real estate, farm equipment, a restaurant, air travel, cruises and designer luxury items.

"Quarles stole from a taxpayer-funded program meant to provide meals to children," stated U.S. Attorney Joseph. "My office will continue to aggressively prosecute this and other types of fraud. Today's sentence should send the clear message that the U.S. Attorney's Office and our law enforcement partners will bring justice to those who defraud the taxpayers and take advantage of the most vulnerable among us."

"Make no mistake – this was bold and shameless thievery of nearly \$1.5 million intended to feed hungry children," stated Louisiana Inspector General Stephen Street. "Ms. Quarles showed an outrageous lack of concern for the taxpayers and the children those funds were supposed to benefit. Today's sentence should send the message loud and clear that the party is over. If you steal from the public, you had better be prepared to go to jail. We will continue doing everything in our power to make sure of it. I want to thank United States Attorney

David C. Joseph and his staff for their usual outstanding work, as well as our partners at the FBI.”

The FBI, 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 prosecuted the case.

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**Topic(s):**

Financial Fraud

**Component(s):**

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

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