

NEWS | COVER STORY

Family filing fed suit vs. district in abduction

THE FAMILY of the little girl allegedly abducted from Bryant Elementary School and raped last year will file a federal civil-rights lawsuit against the School District of Philadelphia, the family's attorney said.

The complaint will be filed within the next month, attorney Thomas Kline said.

The girl, who was a 5-year-old kindergartner at the West Philadelphia school when the alleged abduction took place, was taken from her classroom by a woman dressed in full Muslim garb posing as her mother.

Police said the girl was taken to a residence about two blocks from the school and was sexually assaulted.

At 4:40 the next morning, a 27-year-old sanitation worker named Nelson Mandela Myers found the girl half-clothed and shivering in an Upper Darby playground.

"We're convinced this was a breakdown, and a breakdown that went far

beyond ordinary negligence," Kline said of the security at Bryant. "It's already been admitted by the school district that they violated practices, policies and procedures."

Christina Regusters, then 19, who worked at an after-school program that the girl attended, was arrested. She is charged with kidnapping, rape of a child, conspiracy, aggravated assault and related charges.

Both her lawyer, W. Fred Harrison Jr., and Kline have contended that she was not the sole alleged perpetrator.

Regusters is being held at the Northampton County Correctional Facility awaiting trial.

— Solomon Leach



Regusters



Nelson Mandela Myers (center) found the abducted girl half-clothed and shivering in an Upper Darby playground.

DAVID MAIALETTI / STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER