

TEEN WAS PUT IN MOTELS SOCIAL WORKERS SAY IT WAS THE ONLY OPTION

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Child advocates said Thursday they were shocked to learn that the state Department of Social Services had let a troubled 16-year-old girl live alone in a string of welfare motels before she was killed.

"Oh my God -- and there are all kinds of places that would have taken her," said Rosemary Sarri, a professor of social work at the University of Michigan who has studied juvenile delinquents.

"I'm sick," said state Rep. Sharon Gire, D-Mt. Clemens, who chairs the House Committee on Social Services and Youth. "We really have failed."

Kathy Moore , who was placed under DSS supervision in 1989 for truancy and a theft charge that was later dropped, was fatally shot Tuesday in a struggle with a Detroit police officer.

Chuck Peller, a spokesman for DSS Director Gerald Miller, said Moore was one of 289 youths in a special "independent living program" for 16- and 17-year-olds.

He said DSS contracts with private agencies to place the youths in homes or apartments. He said no others are living in motels. The youths receive daily phone calls or visits from a social worker and are encouraged to participate in counseling.

Margaret Anzinger, a spokeswoman for Wayne County social services, said Moore was placed in the first of four welfare motels in early June because she was "totally out of control" and unable to live in a group home.

Described by social workers in case records as loud, rowdy, antisocial, combative and heavily involved in alcohol and drugs, she was evicted from several motels and was living at the Embassy Motel in Oak Park when she died.

Roger Swaninger, executive director of Spectrum Human Services in Livonia, which made the placement for DSS, said he could not discuss the case because of confidentiality laws.

Neither he nor Anzinger would say whether the agency had tried to place Moore in her own apartment.

Anzinger said Moore was placed in detention once -- for six months in 1989 and '90 in Flint -- on a theft charge that was later dropped for lack of evidence.

Because she had truancy problems and could not be controlled by her mother, she was sent to Vista Maria, a Dearborn Heights residential program. She stayed for almost a year, but ran away and was missing until March, when she was returned to DSS.

Moore lived from June 12 to Aug. 28 in Room 47 at the Cavalier Motel on Woodward Avenue in Highland Park.

Her stay was short, but she had enough time to draw on the walls, pull a sink off its base in one room and blacken the eye of a neighbor, people at the motel said Thursday.

Room 47 still shows signs of her. Near the bathroom, Moore wrote on the wall in lipstick, "I love you, Bay. Please come home soon," in reference to an old boyfriend.

Moore and a friend used fingernail polish to write their names on the television set and the wall behind it.

Moore stayed shorter periods at three other motels, two in Detroit and one on 8 Mile Road in Oak Park.

State legislator Gire and professor Sarri said that despite Moore's troubles, social workers should have been able to get through to her and help her change.

"I'm not willing to throw in the towel on a 16-year-old," Gire said.

Family sues policeman

Attorneys for Moore's family Thursday sued the police officer who shot **Kathy Moore** to death, asking for damages in excess of \$10,000.

The suit in Wayne County Circuit Court alleges the shooting by Officer Charles Smith was negligent and unnecessary.

A police board of review has been set up to investigate whether Smith acted properly.

Free Press Staff Writer Roger Chesley contributed to this report.

Caption: Photo JULIAN H. GONZALEZ

S: Sixteen-year-old **Kathy Moore** for a time lived in Highland Park's Cavalier Motel under state supervision. She was fatally shot Tuesday.

Memo: SEE ALSO METRO FINAL EDITION PAGE 1B

Edition: METRO EDITION

Section: NWS

Page: 1B

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