

WSMV.com

Group Home Operates Without License

Police Have Responded To More Than 100 Calls About Home's Kids

Reported By Regina Raccuglia

POSTED: 1:53 pm CDT March 10, 2009

UPDATED: 12:45 am CDT March 11, 2009

LaVERGNE, Tenn. -- A group home for foster children in LaVergne is known around town as a hot spot for trouble, and the home has been operating for almost a year without a business license.

 **Video: Operating Group Home Wasn't Licensed**

Driving down Zither Lane, you'd never be able to tell that it is one of the Rock of Refuge homes for teens in foster care.

"The time between 2006 to now, we've answered over 180 calls to those houses concerning those kids," said Chief Ted Boyd, LaVergne Police Department.

The Department of Children's Services places the kids there from areas as far as Memphis. The list of crime calls from the home include assault, gang-related activity, runaways and arson.

Lori Usinger co-owns of the Rock of Refuge and said calls to police were caused by one group of troubled teens who have since moved from the home.

Police said 43 percent of the trouble calls from LaVergne High School was associated with kids at the Rock of Refuge.

"We did have some pretty rough kids over at LaVergne High," said Usinger.

The LaVergne Records Department said the home's business license expired in June 2008. Usinger denies the home is trying to expand, but issues with the business branching out have been raised.

"A lot of questions have been raised," said Boyd.

In the large neighborhood, it's hard to tell which houses the Rock of Refuge call home, but neighbors have complained since almost the start of the business.

But above the neighbor complaints and police reports, both sides have said the kids who call this place home deserve a chance at a fresh start.

"My biggest concern is making sure that these kids have all the help they can have," said Boyd.

The LaVergne records department is set to serve the Rock of Refuge a delinquent letter before the end of the week.

Those running the home weren't paying the proper taxes on the state money they receive for taking in the teens.

Related To Story



Video: Operating Group Home Wasn't Licensed

Copyright 2009 by [WSMV.com](http://www.wsmv.com). All rights reserved.
This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Got a story idea? E-mail newstips to news@wsmv.com or call the newsroom 24/7 at 615-353-2231.