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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Troop Leader Charged With Thefts From Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts



Montgomery County District Attorney Risa Vetri Ferman and Upper Providence Township Police Chief Mark Toomey announce the arrest of Heather Lynn Belford for Theft of \$3,411.28 from Cub Scout Pack 27 during her role as Committee Chair/Cub Master. She is also being charged with Theft of \$7,318.88 from Girl Scout Troop 7343 and the Girl Scouts of America of Eastern Pennsylvania during her role with them as Troop Leader.

Belford is charged with multiple counts including felony theft, theft by deception, receiving stolen property and access device fraud.

Cub Scout Pack 27 is comprised of an average of fifteen Scouts and meets actively during the school year, holding meetings at the Oaks Elementary School located in Upper Providence Township, Montgomery County. The defendant was the Committee Chair of the pack between May and June of 2014. Throughout her term as Committee Chair, the defendant withdrew money from ATM machines and conducted point of sale transactions for personal gain using the Pack's PNC Bank card. She had been issued the card to pay for Cub Scout related supplies or activities. The thirteen unauthorized transactions were found to have occurred during the month of June of 2014, and combined for a loss of \$3,411.28.

Belford is also charged in connection with a similar scheme involving Girl Scout Troop 7343. The Troop is comprised of an average of eight to ten Girl Scouts and meets actively during the school year, also meeting at the Oaks Elementary School. The defendant was the Troop Leader from August of 2013 through June of 2014. Using her position as Troop leader the defendant withdrew money from ATM machines and conducted point of sale transactions for personal gain using the Troop's TD Bank card. She had been issued the card to pay for Girl Scout related supplies or activities. Between April and June of 2014 a total of forty-one unauthorized transactions occurred involving the Troop's TD Bank account. During this time the accounts were replenished by the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania Operations Fund. These transactions combined for a loss of \$7,318.88 by both the Troop and the Girl Scouts of Eastern Pennsylvania.

The defendant was arraigned this afternoon by Magisterial District Judge Cathleen Rebar. The defendant's bail was set at \$5000 unsecured and a preliminary hearing is scheduled for February 4, 2015 at 9 AM.

The theft is impacting the Cub Scouts ability to engage in their youth programs. The District Attorney's Office will seek restitution in the case, but anyone willing to help out financially in the short term by making donations to Cub Scout Pack 27 can contact them through <mailto:pack27cubmaster@gmail.com> or to the Girl Scouts at <http://www.gsep.org/community/support-girl-scouts.php>. Also, if community youth groups or youth sports league volunteers would like training on fraud prevention they are encouraged to contact the District Attorney's Office at 610-278-3098 or can request a program via the District Attorney's Office website at <http://www.montcopa.org\da>.

This case will be prosecuted by the Captain of the Economic Crime Unit, Assistant District Attorney Mark Antonacio.

Approved for release:

Kevin R. Steele

CRIMINAL CHARGES AND ANY DISCUSSION THEREOF, ARE MERELY ALLEGATIONS AND ALL DEFENDANTS ARE PRESUMED INNOCENT UNTIL AND UNLESS PROVEN GUILTY.