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Moraga Police Arrest Sexual Assault Suspect

By Sophie Braccini

Moraga Police investigators Sgt. Brian South and Cpl. Kevin Mooney, with the assistance of the San Bruno Police Department and the Missoula Police Department in Montana, investigated a case of sexual assault that led to the arrest of the suspected perpetrator. The Moraga Police Department case began when the victim and her mother, who used to live in Moraga, reported on Jan. 28 that a male person related to them had been sexually assaulting the now 17-year-old girl over a period of 10 years in two different states.

"They came to us and we immediately started the investigation," says acting Moraga Chief of Police Jon King. "The two Moraga officers collaborated with other police departments, and professionals from the District Attorney's office who have special training for these kinds of cases. Their support was essential."

King says that the suspected perpetrator, 62-year-old Walter Melville, was charged on Feb. 23 with suspicion of 13 felonies and the judge signed a warrant for his arrest. The police arrested him in San Bruno where he now lives, and he was booked into the San Mateo County Jail for the outstanding warrant.

"I can't praise that young girl enough for her courage," says King. "Our society is still plagued with such crime. It is very traumatizing and it takes a lot of courage to come forward and report it. She is an example for other victims." According to King, the alleged assaults began before the girl was 7 years old. He believes that programs such as those conducted in Lamorinda by the Child Abuse Prevention Council are important. "Anytime we can help kids have a voice and become able to say no, in this area [of sexual abuse], or drugs and alcohol, and get help when they need it, that's fine," said King.

Anyone with information about this case is asked to contact South at (925) 888-7052.

Reach the reporter at: sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

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