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Special Sections

Couple given probation in malnourishment case BY KAREN MANN SPECIAL TO THE LANDMARK

LEOMINSTER — The Holden couple charged with reckless endangerment of their 2-year-old son received three years probation in court Monday morning, along with a set of guidelines to follow regarding the care of the their son.

The child, now 3 years old, is in foster care. Under the guidelines agreed upon by both attorneys during a Nov. 24 pre-trial hearing at Leominster District Court, the boy will be returned to parents Joshua and Kellie Theriault at the end of January.

Joshua and Kellie Theriault, both 34, of 1588 Main St., were arraigned in July on the charges, after an investigation in February that was the result of an anonymous tip about the child's bruises. A police officer visiting the house found their youngest child with bruises on his face and looking malnourished and underweight. The three other children in the home appeared healthy.

The Department of Youth Services then visited the home, and also found the child to appear to be malnourished. He was removed from the home in February and hospitalized: he has been in foster care

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Rebecca Moles, a doctor from UMass-University campus who evaluated the child, said it was the worst case of child malnourishment she had ever seen. Moles said if he had not been removed from the home, he would have died. No other physical cause for his low weight was found during his hospitalization.

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The toddler was under the care of Dr. William J. Blake of Holden, who told the court he had ordered blood tests for the child but the Theriaults had not had the tests done.

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The Theriaults have been working with the Department of Children and Families since then, and have worked out a service plan of action.

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Under their probation, the Theriaults are to continue following the plan, which includes monthly visits to a pediatrician, (a different pediatrician than the one Kellie previously used) regular meetings with a nutritionist, follow-up with specialists to monitor the child's mental health and development, and that the boy remains in the pre-school he is currently attending once he returns to his parents' custody.

Melissa McKeon contributed to this story.



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