

PRESS RELEASE

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MOM BATTLES SCIENTOLOGY: “LET MY DAUGHTER COME HOME”

Portland, OR resident Susan Lentsch is issuing a public statement on March 15 at the Scientology Headquarters Los Angeles, CA, calling on her daughter's employer, the Church of Scientology, to permit her daughter, Katherine "Kate" Olson, to come home from Los Angeles to Portland to visit her family. Ms. Lentsch **has seen Kate for only six days during the past 15 years** and reports that the Church of Scientology has **forbidden Kate to leave the facility where she both works and is housed**, in order to visit family.

Kate was recruited into the Sea Organization (Sea Org), an affiliate of the Church of Scientology, in 1993, at age 17. Susan Lentsch, at that time a Scientologist, signed papers permitting her minor daughter to become a Sea Org employee; Ms. Lentsch states she signed the forms under pressure and while influenced by Scientology indoctrination. "At that time, being a Scientologist, I saw it as an honor that my daughter qualified for the 'elite' corps known as the Sea Organization," says Ms. Lentsch. She was reassured during the recruitment process that her daughter would get room, board, medical and dental care, and vacations.

"My upset with the Sea Org is that it has **not honored the Scientology Staff Contract** my daughter signed 15 years ago, which stated that Sea Org members are permitted three (3) weeks Holiday per continuous active year," Ms. Lentsch states.

Kate was denied permission to attend a Christmas family reunion in Minnesota, even though she had previously been told that she could do so and Ms. Lentsch had provided a train ticket for her. "The phone call from Kate notifying me that she could not leave for the reunion was particularly disturbing," Ms. Lentsch reports. "Kate was **crying when she was put on the speaker phone** to say hello to her grandparents during the reunion."

In recent years, Ms. Lentsch has noticed Kate's infrequent phone conversations with her have changed. "My daughter and I could not discuss any intimate feelings or family matters with each other. Kate began sounding like a broken record, always saying 'everything is fine'. She was vague about her day-to-day life and mostly wanted to talk about Scientology. The only time Kate sounded like herself was when she mentioned travel plans to see us. She would really come alive and sounded excited and enthused to see us," Ms. Lentsch reports. But time after time, **Kate's vacation requests have been denied** by her employer, the Sea Org.

Ms. Lentsch felt that she was growing distant from her daughter, and that she was losing her 'real' Kate. She later learned that **outbound and inbound calls to Sea Org staff are monitored** and staff are **drilled on what to say to family**. Ms. Lentsch states, "This explained why Kate and I seemed to be playing 'pretend' during our phone conversations--like there was an inexplicable wall between us."

Ms. Lentsch began doing research and talking to former Sea Org members. She met a past co-worker of Kate's, who had personally **witnessed Kate being physically abused** in the Sea Org. Alarmed, Susan briefly visited Kate in Los Angeles; when she confronted Kate with the information about the abuse, Kate was quite flustered, **did not deny the allegation**, and made statements to downplay the abuse incident and **protect the Scientology image**. Ms. Lentsch believes that Kate is in poor health and is not receiving medical treatment. She is greatly concerned about her daughter's mental well-being.

"I did not tell Kate for the longest time that I was no longer a Scientologist, for fear that I would be declared a 'Suppressive Person' (enemy of Scientology) and my daughter would be forced to **sever all ties with me under Scientology's 'disconnection' policy**," states Ms. Lentsch.

"I left my Church because I was noticing the hypocrisies between what the Church tells the public versus what it actually does and then tries to hide. I did not wish to remain in a group that breaks up families and does not even trust its own staff to use their hard-earned vacation time and see their families. **Living in fear and under threats is not spiritual to me,**" Ms. Lentsch states. "The administration of the Church of Scientology is an oppressive organization. This is the worst betrayal."

On February 25, Ms. Lentsch issued the Sea Organization an ultimatum: "Have my daughter at home in my living room within two weeks, or I will go to law enforcement and the media." The March 10 deadline passed without any response from the Sea Organization.

Her public statement will be read by attorney Graham Berry in front of Scientology's Los Angeles headquarters March 15.