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Ex-official accused of embezzling from kidney charity

By the Associated Press

November 22 2006

RICHMOND, Va. -- A former accounting director for the National Kidney Foundation of the Virginias is accused of embezzling about \$175,000 from the charity over six years.

Robert B. Graves Jr., 54, was arrested Tuesday and served with 12 felony embezzlement indictments returned by a grand jury for defrauding the charity that services Virginia and West Virginia.

The foundation works to prevent kidney and urinary-tract diseases, improve the health of those affected by these diseases and increase the availability of all organs for transplant.

Graves was fired in March 2005 after the foundation learned that was convicted in 1994 of embezzling about \$78,000 from the Comfort Inn-Corporate Gateway Hotel in Chesterfield County, where he worked as the controller. He was ordered to make restitution and received a suspended 25-year prison sentence.

An internal audit revealed numerous wire transfers and refunds of foundation money to personal bank accounts of Graves and his wife, the search warrant affidavit said.

The transfers occurred "pretty much on a weekly basis" beginning in 1999, when Graves was hired, said Henrico County police investigator J.W. Adkins Jr. At the time, the foundation did not conduct background checks on its employees.

The foundation has cooperated with police during the 18-month investigation, said board chairman David Hallock.

"The embezzlement does not have any impact on the programs and services that we provide to the 10,000 people or more in our service area that suffer from kidney disease," Hallock said. "You never like to have your trust violated by someone in such a manner."

Hallock also said annual audits turned up no irregularities during Graves' employment and additional safeguards have been implemented to "make sure this type of thing doesn't happen again in the future."

If convicted, he also could receive prison time for his earlier crime.

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Nina - Age 6

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Nina's wish was to go to Germany to visit her Opa (grandfather) since they both had cancer.

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