

## Teen who made false rape report offered support

By **Robert Stanton** Updated 9:44 pm, Friday, November 2, 2012



Activists Imam Khalis Rashaad, left, Deric C. Muhammad and lawyer Sadiyah Evangelista-X talk about the recanted rape claim during a news conference on Friday at Cyrill Park.

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As community leaders mobilize support for a **Yates High School** student who admitted she lied about being sexually assaulted last week, Houston police have not ruled out the possibility of criminal charges against the teen.

The 15-year-old girl told police that a man abducted her on Noah Street near Cyrill Park on the way home from school, dragged her into an abandoned house and sexually assaulted her. She provided a detailed description of man, as well as other information.

But authorities discovered evidence that made her story questionable, and she ultimately admitted that the Oct. 24 assault never happened, said activist **Deric C. Muhammad**, who held a news conference Friday at the park.

"We are actually relieved that the predator that we were looking for does not exist," said Muhammad, of the **Ministry of Justice**-Houston. "One of the most egregious things that a female can do is to fabricate a story that she has been raped, when she has not. We don't want the cries of real rape victims to get drowned out in the lies that are told, such as the one that was told last week."

### ***Help, not criticism***

**Imam Khalis Rashaad** said the girl and her mother, a single working mom with two jobs, are "apologetic and remorseful" about the situation. Rather than "throwing the whole family under the bus," he said, "let's pull behind her and see what assistance we can give to the family."

Rashaad, of the **Ibrahim Islamic Center**, said the outreach center is available to organize services for the family that could include tutoring, nutritional counseling and financial management. And if it's needed, the center would arrange psychological counseling for the teen.

### ***Underlying issues***

Muhammad agreed that assistance, rather than punishment, is needed to get the girl on the right track.

"We know there are some underlying psychological issues that would compel this young girl to come forward with such a story," he said. "We vehemently condemn what she did, but we don't condemn her as a child and as a person. We believe she can be redeemed from this."

Houston attorney **Sadiyah Evangelista**-X, who is assisting the family, said she advised them to avoid discussing the matter publicly.

"We don't know what the true story is, and to give statements and talk about facts that we don't know for sure would be inappropriate because of possible legal repercussions," she said. Evangelista-X said the girl could face criminal charges for making a false police report, and the city "could file claims for using city monies in order to find a perpetrator that did not exist."

HPD spokeswoman **Jodi Silva** said the criminal investigation of the case has been closed. "However, there is still an active and open investigation," she said, but declined to elaborate.

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