

Keene native indicted in tot's death

By KIMBERLY HOUGHTON
Foster's Daily Democrat

ROCHESTER — Chad E. Evans allegedly assaulted 21-month-old Cassidy Bortner several times over a three-month period — beating the child and throwing her into walls — before she died Nov. 9, according to indictments released Tuesday.

The court documents allege that the Rochester man, indicted on a charge of second-degree murder, also continuously grabbed and squeezed Cassidy's face, and fractured her leg and arm during separate incidents this fall and summer.

But it was multiple blows to the girl's head and abdomen that resulted in her death, the indictments state.

Evans, a Keene native and former Keene school board member, is also accused of preventing Cassidy from seeking proper medical treatment for the injuries he allegedly inflicted, said the indictments, handed up last Thursday by a Strafford County Superior Court grand jury and released this week.

Evans, 29, has also been indicted on two felony counts of first-degree assault and six felony counts of second-degree assault. He is also charged with endangering the welfare of a child and simple assault against his girlfriend, Amanda Bortner — Cassidy's mother. Evans lived with Bortner and her daughter when the child died.

Kassidy was repeatedly assaulted from about Aug. 1 until her death, the indictments said.

The girl died shortly after being taken by ambulance to York (Maine) Hospital. That morning, Amanda Bortner had taken Cassidy to her aunt's home in Kittery, Maine. About four hours later, Jeffrey Marshall, the boyfriend

Police allege Evans' assaults on toddler were recurring acts

of Cassidy's aunt, Jennifer Conley, called Kittery police to request help for the child, after she was found to be unresponsive.

She was pronounced dead shortly after 1 p.m.

"Evans recklessly caused the death of Cassidy Bortner ... under circumstances manifesting an extreme indifference to the value of human life," state the indictments, adding that he was "purposely violating a duty of care."

Evans has been free since his \$100,000 bail was posted anonymously at Rochester District Court last month. He is scheduled to be arraigned in Strafford County Superior Court Jan. 2 at 3 p.m.

The second-degree murder indictment alleges Evans "inflicted multiple blows to Cassidy's head and abdomen, thereby causing her death."

Initially, Evans was arraigned

in Rochester District Court Nov. 16 on a manslaughter charge, following the first week of a joint investigation by Maine and N.H. State Police, Kittery and Rochester police, and the N.H. Attorney General's Office. Evans spent several days behind bars in the Strafford County jail before his bail was posted.

Last Thursday, the manslaughter charge was upgraded to second-degree murder by a grand jury indictment. An indictment is not an indication of guilt; rather, it is a judgment by the grand jury that the prosecution has amassed enough evidence to warrant a trial.

Evans could face life in prison if convicted of second-degree murder.

Evans grew up in Keene, and in 1992, at age 19, was elected to the Keene Board of Education. It took a court order to get him on the

board, however, because his father's name was inadvertently put on the ballot in place of his. Evans, then a manager at the Keene McDonald's, left Keene for Rochester shortly after, when the company transferred him to a restaurant there.

He was later cited for heroism after pulling two people from a burning vehicle.

The N.H. Division for Children, Youth and Families has confirmed it is involved in the investigation of Cassidy's death, but won't say if it was contacted before the girl died.

In addition, one state official has said there are several roadblocks that make it difficult for the Division for Children, Youth and Families to prevent children from being abused. A key one involves the overwhelming number of child-abuses cases that are being assigned to a limited number of social workers, said Joan Whitfield, child protective administrator for the agency.

NEW HAMPSHIRE NEWS BRIEFS

Fuel truck flips, forcing evacuation

ALTON — A fuel oil truck slid down a driveway and tipped over this morning, spilling oil and prompting authorities to evacuate the neighborhood.

Authorities reported the driver was not hurt, but that his truck was leaking.

"They are evacuating the street," said resident Michael Appe, who lives several doors away from the spill on Campfire Circle.

The driver used the phone at

Appe's home to report the accident.

"He said he got out and was getting ready to pull the hose away and the truck slid back down a driveway and flipped on its side," Appe said.

Fuel was pouring from hatches on the top of the Wolfboro Oil Co. truck, Appe said, but firefighters soon controlled it.

The truck flipped shortly before 9 a.m.

Plymouth State to arm its officers

PLYMOUTH— For the first

nity said lethal force is contrary to the school's values.

Lunch lady wants students charged

CONWAY — A school lunch lady wants the police to charge some school kids with threatening and harassing her.

Donna Light, who works at Kennett High School, said one student reportedly asked friends if he could get away with killing her. She said others have thrown food at her.

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