

**BERNALILLO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
SHERIFF MANUEL GONZALES III**



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Sheriff Gonzales Announces Safe Child Unit Arrests

Detectives from the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Department Safe Child Unit conducted a welfare check of two children at 35 Clayx Ln, Cedar Crest, New Mexico. The welfare check was conducted in response to an anonymous reporting party, who stated several concerns for the children's safety to include being physically abused and neglected by their step-father, Aaron Brooks (41 YOA) as well as their mother, Damie Brooks (40 YOA). Detectives from the Safe Child Unit noted the children were incredibly small in stature for their age and appeared to be very thin. In contrast, their brother (5 YOA), was almost as big as they were (in size). Detectives were later contacted by concerned family members of the two children who had stated they had seen the parents force the children to "stand at attention" for hours on end, restrict their food intake, not allow the (older) children to sit on furniture in the house and force the children to sit outside in inclement weather for long periods of time without proper clothing for the conditions. Detectives further made contact with several school personnel responsible for these children over the past few years and they described the children as having been in trouble with the parents when school staff noted the children having eaten discarded food from trashcans because they were hungry. School personnel also indicated having reported some of these observations to CYFD as a concern for physical neglect. A doctor specializing in child abuse diagnosed both children as suffering from nutritional neglect and indicated both children were substantially underweight for their age.

On January 13, 2020, with the assistance of the Bernalillo county District Attorney's Office, Detectives from the BCSO Safe Child Unit obtained arrest warrants for Aaron Brooks (7 counts of Abuse of a Child and 2 counts of Conspiracy to Commit child abuse and Damie Brooks (6 counts of Abuse of a Child and 2 counts of Conspiracy to Commit Child Abuse).

Both Aaron and Damie Brooks were arrested on January 13, 2020, for their warrants.

This case was a prime example of the effectiveness of proactive efforts in the area of child welfare within Bernalillo County. The Safe Child Unit worked with the entirety of the Bernalillo County Multi-Disciplinary Team to provide the most effective and diligent efforts in this investigation.

"Today's arrests are an excellent example of BSCO's collaboration with other agencies to protect our children, and I would urge the community to always report suspected child abuse or exploitation to protect our most innocent. It is all of our responsibility to protect our children."

- Sheriff Manuel Gonzlaes III

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