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Ex-foster child gets \$30M in abuse case

San Diego
attorneys
represent victim

Associated Press

SAN JOSE — A Northern California boy who was the victim of more than 600 sexual abuse acts while in foster care has been awarded \$30 million by a jury, his lawyer said.

Stephen Estey, who represented the former foster child in the lawsuit against Giarretto Institute, said his client, now 25, broke into tears when the verdict was read Wednesday in a Santa Clara County court. He said it's the largest award in California this year for a single-person sex abuse case.

"He's got a little more faith in humanity," said Estey, a partner with Estey & Bomberger of San Diego.

The jury found Giarretto Institute negligent for failing to properly monitor and investigate the Mountain View home of John Hardy Jackson, who was convicted in 2006 of sexual abuse.

Jurors also concluded that Giarretto Institute, which was licensed by the state to supervise the home, was 75 percent responsible for injuries to the child and Jackson was 25 percent responsible.

Giarretto Institute attorney Linda Kollar could not be reached for comment.

The victim, who was abused from December 1995 to March 1999, is one of four foster children who were in Jackson's home and suffered similar abuse, Estey said. They also have lawsuits pending.

In 1999, Eastfield Ming Quong Children and Family Services acquired San Jose-based Giarretto Institute.