

BLACKSBURG SCHOOL VOLUNTEER SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR LEWD ACT ON A CHILD

A Blacksburg Elementary school volunteer received a 3-year prison sentence today after a Cherokee County jury determined that he inappropriately touched an 8-year-old girl several times while working as a classroom volunteer.

The jury convicted Keith Lyerly, 48, of 3410 Peachtree Road, Chesnee, of lewd act on a minor. Circuit Judge Mark Hayes issued a 15-year sentence that is suspended to the service of 3 years and five years of probation. The incidents occurred in September 2002 while Lyerly worked as an assistant in his wife's third-grade class. Lyerly laid a notebook or papers in the child's lap and assist her with cursive writing with his left hand while he used his right hand to touch her private area under the book or papers. The girl reported the activity to her mother on Oct. 1, 2002.

Blacksburg police arrested Lyerly Dec. 3, 2002 after a comprehensive two-month investigation that included a forensic assessment of the victim at the Children's Advocacy Center in Spartanburg. In the forensic assessment, the child described Lyerly's actions in detail.

Lyerly confessed to the crime when the officer served the arrest warrant on him.

"The victim in this case is a brave little girl," Assistant Solicitor Derrick Bulsa said. "She did a wonderful job with her testimony."

The sentence requires Lyerly to register as a sex offender once he is released from prison.