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Judge doubles award to pair who sued Chagrin Falls nanny school over sex abuse cover-up

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By [Cory Shaffer, cleveland.com](#)

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- A judge has more than doubled a 2015 jury award to two women who sued a Chagrin Falls nanny school for claims that the school retaliated against them for reporting sexual abuse of a child by a client of the school.

Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Judge Brian J. Corrigan on Friday ordered the English Nanny & Governess School to pay Christina Cruz and Heidi Kaiser an additional \$413,000, mostly in attorney's fees, after an appeals court referred the case back to him.

The order brings the total award to Cruz, a former student of the school, and Kaiser, a former employee, to \$742,330.93 in damages and attorney's fees.

Corrigan also awarded the pair interest gained on the original jury award. Attorneys have yet to calculate what that amount could be.

The pair were represented by attorney Peter Pattakos and several other lawyers from his firm and his previous firm, The Chandra Law Firm.

The lawsuit alleged that the school and its owners, Sheilagh Roth and Bradford Gaylord, suppressed Cruz's report that she witnessed a school client sexually abusing his 9-year-old daughter. The incident happened July 8, 2011 at the client's Pennsylvania home, according to court records.

The lawsuit claimed the schools and its owners tried to discredit Cruz and fired Kaiser when she refused to cooperate, according to court records.

Jurors in 2015 ruled in favor of the two women after a five-week trial, and awarded the women more than \$300,000 in compensatory and punitive damages, and another \$75,000 in economic damage. Retired Judge Burt Griffin, who oversaw the trial as a visiting judge, negated the \$75,000 and ordered the school to pay a minimal amount of attorney's fees.

Griffin also sanctioned Pattakos for communicating with reporters at Cleveland Scene magazine and urging them to write about the case.

Lawyers for the school appealed the ruling and asked the court to throw out the entire decision. Lawyers for Cruz and Kaiser also appealed, saying Griffin abused his discretion for limiting attorney's fees and sanctioning Pattakos.

The 8th District Court of Appeals rejected the school's appeal but ruled in favor of the plaintiffs on all three issues, and kicked the case back to trial court, and it was assigned to Corrigan.

The school, founded in 1984, trains and places professional governesses and nannies. It is nationally recognized and has been featured on ABC's "Nightline," [according to its website](#).

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