

Family of deceased Jerseyville child says recent GoFundMe was not a fraud

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JERSEYVILLE - A recent GoFundMe page was recently removed after it promised to raise funds towards funeral expenses for a recently-deceased Jerseyville child.

Kimberly Roberts, the biological mother of 6-year-old Liam Roberts, who recently died as a result of what authorities are calling being "extremely malnourished," said she is receiving a plethora of angry messages from several community members - including the woman who hosted the candlelight vigil for Liam Roberts.

"I have never met her in my entire life," Kimberly Roberts said of vigil organizer Missy Walker. "I would swear on a Bible that I would not recognize her, even if I saw her in public."

Though she has been placed under a gag order regarding the conditions of her son's death, Kimberly Roberts said she was able to say the GoFundMe was not needed by the family - adding Liam Roberts has been laid to rest already in a private ceremony.

She said the money would have been used for other purposes, including aiding in the lives of three of her surviving children. One of those children, identified in court documents sent from Jersey County State's Attorney Ben Goetten as A.P.R., was sent to the ICU while also being extremely malnourished after his brother, Liam Roberts, was pronounced dead on arrival while only weighing 17 pounds.

"I had no idea what happened," Kimberly Roberts said of her son's death. "I thought he had died in the hospital of the flu or something, until I saw his tiny little body."

Mike and Georgena Roberts, both 42 and of Jerseyville, were charged with first-degree murder following the death of Liam Roberts. They were also charged with child endangerment regarding both Liam Roberts and A.P.R. Kimberly Roberts has not been charged with anything regarding the death of her son. She did not have custody of her four children living under that roof, yet she did retain custody of two of her other biological children.

Kristy Dibble, Kimberly Roberts's sister and biological aunt of Liam Roberts, said Walker has contacted her via Facebook, and she believes Walker reported the GoFundMe page administered by a family friend as well, resulting in it being removed. She also provided Riverbender.com with screenshots of messages from Walker, which accused the family of using the GoFundMe as a way to get money in an unethical way, blaming Kimberly Roberts for knowingly staying with Mike Roberts, who Walker said was accused of being abusive.

In previous interviews with Riverbender.com, Walker said she had known Georgena Roberts, because the two were neighbors eight years ago. Kimberly Roberts also told Riverbender.com her ex-husband Mike Roberts, who was charged in the death of Liam Roberts, was abusive. She said she had orders of protection against him, adding he would "stalk her through Facebook."

Currently, Kimberly Roberts is not utilizing Facebook, because she said she wants to keep away from the ongoing trauma and drama unraveling due to this case, which is in the public eye. She did send a message to a reporter from Riverbender.com explaining her situation.

"Just for everyone's information, I do not know Missy , and she knows nothing of what happened and nothing about me," Kimberly Roberts said. "I have been fighting tooth and nail for my babies and the cops, and courts all failed us and now my child is gone.

That GoFundMe is not fraud and is going to the church my son's funeral is going to be at. All she is doing is causing so much more harm to this case. All she wants is attention."

A Walker Facebook message to Dibble read as follows:

So don't tell me to shut up MAYBE IF YOU AND UR FRIEND RAN YOUR MOUTH THE LAST 2 YEARS LIKE U ARE NOW LIAM WOULD STILL BE WALKING THIS EARTH...SIX KIDS, exactly where have all of them six kids been? NOT WITH HER but now she wants to beg for money.

Kimberly Roberts told Riverbender.com she had made mistakes in the past, which did result in drug charges, but said she has since gone through rehab in order to help herself. She also retains custody of two of her biological children.

In a statement to Riverbender.com, Walker stood by her comments.

"It was another blow that I felt was just a way for her to benefit from this tragedy," Walker said in a Facebook message. "She wasn't in those kids' lives for years, and then want to try to get money. It's sick.

"I continued to post the same message over and over on the GoFundMe page, and sent GoFundMe several messages stating they should figure out a way to verify the situation, when someone asks people for money. This isn't the first case I've seen people ask for money from a tragedy, and shouldn't have a right to beg for money when they're not the ones who should be collecting money."

Other people have left disparaging comments on the GoFundMe page as well, including someone identified as Linda Jones Cassidy, who posted:

"Why isn't the real truth put on this page? You are wanting sympathy and money. All your son wanted was FOOD! All I can say is you have really got the nerve wanting to pay for your living expenses. I feel you need to be reported to police."

Another poster said a Jerseyville resident had already offered to pay for funeral expenses, meaning the GoFundMe was a sham.

Both Dibble and Kimberly Roberts admitted the page was started by a family friend, before the charges against Mike and Georgena Roberts were filed last Monday, Nov. 6. Funeral arrangements for Liam Roberts have already been conducted, Kimberly Roberts said.

A family friend of Kimberly Roberts said a donation system for the three children who survived the alleged abuse in the home of Mike and Georgena Roberts would be established sometime early this week. She did not wish to identify herself, but proved to Riverbender.com she was a friend of Kimberly Roberts.

That friend said the new fund would be used strictly for those children, and could not be utilized for any other reason.