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## Cudahy student sues over hazing

### District accused of failing to protect him and others

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A Cudahy High School student blames school officials for failing to prevent an attack in which he was knocked to the ground, pelted with eggs and covered in honey on "Freshman Kill Day."

In a lawsuit filed against Cudahy School District, Curtis Freidmund-Raison and his parents allege school Principal Bernard Schmidt and others knew about hazing activities tied in with homecoming week events last year but failed to protect the students.

A police officer who responded to the attack on Oct. 5 said he saw numerous students covered with eggs and honey after a pep rally at the school.

Freidmund-Raison, 15, suffered more than that embarrassment, according to the lawsuit. He was knocked down twice after being chased along S. Lake Drive and suffered a neck and back injury that still limit his ability to participate in gym and strenuous activities.

His attorney, Jay Urban, said Freidmund-Raison also had been subjected to ongoing harassment at the school, stemming from the attack last year.

Urban said the boy he described as a "late bloomer" struggled in school throughout the year and attended summer school to make up for missed course work. But his problems continued when he found himself in summer classes with the students who attacked him in October.

"We've been trying to work with the school for a year and found deaf ears," Urban said Wednesday. "The day after we filed the lawsuit, they wanted to work on coordinating things so he can go through school harassment-free."

"It's unfortunate it took a lawsuit to do that."

Urban said the boy and his parents would have no comment on the case.

Schmidt declined to comment when contacted at the high school on Wednesday.

Superintendent Nancy Gurrie also declined to answer questions about the Freidmund-Raison complaint but released a statement through another school official.

"The district would not condone any action that would cause harm to our students," the statement says. "The School District of Cudahy strives to ensure a safe and orderly environment for all students."

Cudahy Police Chief Mark Hayes said the attack on Freidmund-Raison was the only such homecoming-related incident reported to his department. Prior to the witness statements in the police investigation, he had never heard the term "Freshman Kill Day," the chief said.

The students who attacked Freidmund-Raison appeared very familiar with the term and its meaning, according to the police report.

One of the boys told police that he brought water balloons and three dozen eggs to school to throw at the freshmen on that Friday afternoon. He hid the arsenal in the bushes until after the pep rally and chased Freidmund-Raison but denied he threw any eggs, the report says.

Three of the youths involved in the attack received municipal citations for disorderly conduct.

A fourth student, who was an adult, was referred to the district attorney's office. No charges were filed, under an agreement with the victim's family that required the attacker to seek counseling and perform community service.

Other hazing incidents involving high school athletic teams and homecoming-related attacks on underclassmen have resulted in criminal charges in Wisconsin and across the country.

A 17-year-old student was charged with disorderly conduct in a similar homecoming hazing at Little Chute High School in 1997. In that incident, upperclassmen duct-taped younger students to a fence post and pelted them with eggs.

This week, eight students at a high school in Vermont were fined after they beat freshmen students with boards, paddles, a snow shovel and a hockey stick.

Urban said he and his clients are not seeking to be punitive in their lawsuit.

"If we could get this practice to stop at Cudahy, and we could get our client back on his school track, that's going to go a long way toward resolving the issues," Urban said. "Sometimes the only way to get the school to take notice is with a lawsuit seeking money damages."