MONROVIA – A More than Me (MTM) staff member was arrested Monday, June 16th, with multiple counts of rape and statutory rape. Macintosh Johnson, the MTM Academy’s community liaison to West Point, was reported to police by MTM management after numerous students reported sexual misconduct. He is currently in police custody while the Liberian National Police conduct a full investigation.

Actions toward an arrest were launched after initial student complaints late last week.

The Women and Children Protection Section at the Liberian National Police, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Gender have participated in gathering testimonies and processing the initial stages of the case.

More Than Me is an international American and Liberian NGO founded in 2009. Last year, More Than Me opened its own school in downtown Monrovia for West Point girls. MTM’s mission is to provide services to its students to ensure education and opportunity, not exploitation and poverty, define their lives.

More Than Me and the Liberian National Police held a meeting for parents of students the morning of June 20th to inform the school community of the investigation’s progress.

More Than Me has also taken steps to form a coalition of partners – including West Point Women for Health and Development, HOPE, and THINK – to jointly address sexual abuse of children in the West Point community. In addition, More Than Me has consulted legal counsel in Liberia to ensure a smooth investigation, conduct internal probes into the event, and to ensure that it is an isolated incident.

Earlier this year, Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf denounced the country’s epidemic of child rape, calling it one of Liberia’s “biggest challenges” and “a growing concern”. According to Liberia’s Ministry of Gender, two-thirds of all rape victims in 2013 were between the ages of three and 14, yet less than one percent of perpetrators were convicted.

“It is our responsibility to show survivors that we hold offenders, not victims, accountable for sexual assault,” said CEO Katie Meyler. “Our girls cannot be victimized a second time by a culture that accepts their rape as standard practice, or even worse, makes the girls feel as if it were their fault.”

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