

East Alton couple charged after large meth bust near school, park

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EAST ALTON - East Alton's **Garry D. Garland** and **Cassandra M. Garland** were charged Monday in a large methamphetamine case after a series of neighborhood complaints and arrest on Friday.

East Alton Sgt. Christian Cranmer said he and his team gathered information for a year and a half in the case and recently obtained a search warrant. He said more evidence for the case was found when they entered the house in the 200 block of Whitelaw Avenue in East Alton.

Garry D. Garland was charged with one count (Class X) Aggravated Unlawful Participation In Methamphetamine Manufacturing, Count 2 (Class 2) Possession Of Meth Manufacturing Materials, and Count 3 (Class 3) Unlawful Possession Of Meth. Cassandra M. Garland was charged with one count (Class 2) Unlawful Possession Meth Manufacturing Material, Count 2 (Class 3) Unlawful Possession Of Meth.

Illinois Law Enforcement System (ILEAS) teamed with East Alton Police and the Methamphetamine Task Force to execute the search warrant at the Whitelaw Avenue home in East Alton on Friday morning. The task force groups are notified with cases of meth and other high-risk types of warrant execution. Area law enforcement members make up the ILEAS network.

“Many of the neighbors were happy to see it go,” Cranmer said of the meth bust on the house. “ILEAS executed the search warrant and the task force came in to assist in the processing and collecting of evidence. They are trained about methamphetamines and the cooking method used in these products. When it comes to something like a hazardous chemical, if it is not handled properly it does endanger not only oneself but others at the scene.”

The appalling thing to Cranmer was the house was located next to a school and close to a park, the Keasler Complex. He said East Alton Middle School and Grade School were in close proximity of the house.

“Being close to a school and the park add aggravating factors in the case,” Cranmer said. “With it being so close to a school and park it will make this case a lot more serious in nature, will enhance the charges and the bond and make everything worse for them (the suspects).”

The East Alton sergeant said ILEAS and the Methamphetamine Task Force did a great job in the execution of the search warrant with East Alton Police.

“Filing these charges is a big deal,” Cranmer said. “It was a big team effort on the part of East Alton Police and these two groups. We showed cooking meth next to a school is not going to fly.”

Cranmer said it is the goal of the East Alton Police Department to clean the city up and he said this should be a warning to others distributing and using drugs.

“This was definitely an eyesore for the town, especially that a lot of kids walk back and forth to school each day and are playing around the house on the weekends,” he said. “It is a residential area. This is a start in the right direction.”

The house on Whitelaw involved in the case is now boarded up and not available for anyone to occupy, Cranmer said.

“We want neighbors to know we took this complaint seriously and took care of the problem,” Cranmer added. “We hope this tells all the other drug dealers in town we are cleaning things up.”