

Sonoma County Juvenile Justice Commission Group Home Inspection Report

Facility Name:	Valley of the Moon Children's Home
Address:	On File
Phone	On File
Contact Person	Leslie Winters, Section Manager (707) 565-8394

J.J.C. Inspector(s)	Robert Faux & Jane Person
Date of Inspection	May 2, 2017
Date of Last Inspection	May 9, 2016
C.C.L. Contact	Pauline Muntzer
Date of Last C.C.L. Inspection	October 31, 2016

**O = Outstanding *S= Satisfactory or exceeds *N.I. = Needs Improvement/corrective*

Action

INSPECTION	O	S	N.I.	Comments (required if "N.I." is checked)
Grounds	X			Well kept area that is part of a larger county complex.
Building Exterior	X			Appears to be in excellent condition.
Living Room		X		
Kitchen		X		
Bedrooms		X		
Bathrooms		X		
Fire Safety --Extinguishers		X		Extinguisher for Bamboo Room located outside door and clearly accessible to staff.
Fire Safety --Smoke Alarms		X		
Fire Safety --Evacuation Plan		X		
Food		X		
Emergency Supplies	X			Well-stocked, particularly with soft toys for comforting young children.
Health Services	X			Medical, dental and behavioral health all covered, especially dental.
Medications		X		Broad range of psych meds under care of child psychiatrist.
Recreation (on site)		X		Excellent for younger children, but not much for teenagers on site. Some access to gym at Juvenile Hall when available. Budget issue.
Outings (off site)		X		Now connected to Bellos Caballos nearby on Highway 12. This is a horseback riding program for traumatized children. Teen use not so much;

				Minimal other outings suitable for teens.
Education & Classrooms				No on-site education. Staff coordinates with Foster Youth Education Liaison. Staff has 4Cs training for pre-school, and continues Head Start and Special Place (YMCA) if enrolled.
Mail/Phone		X		Normal mail in and out. Children have cell phones; per Federal Court order usage cannot be denied
Discipline		X		Phasing out Boys Town Model, focusing more on relationship building with children.
Library			X	Games and books for younger children mostly. Could expand for teen interests.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Valley of the Moon is undergoing a substantial change due to AB403, changing it from a “shelter” to a 10-day emergency placement facility, geared to getting children stabilized then sent to placement within 10 days. Realistically, the management staff does not see this as possible until the end of 2018. They feel that AB403 has forced them to take a deeper analytical look at each child in order to address particular needs given the shortened time frame for stays. As of the inspection, there were 36 children awaiting placement. 70% have been there longer than 30 days. Most of those over 60 days have had a placement disruption. The average length of stay has been increasing after decreasing in 2016. A recurring problem is the lack of psych intensive foster placements. They have implemented a Trauma Informed Care treatment modality, with the entire staff of the facility now trained in it. Possible sexual exploitation of teen girls is a concern. They are free to leave if they want, and sometimes have cars pull up to the facility to pick them up. Staff would like to see the County spend money on a modern, effective security camera system to try to help curtail this. Staff is on a county Human Trafficking subcommittee, has enlisted the help of Voices and Verity, and established a “Girls Circle” to bring awareness of becoming victims of sexual exploitation to the residents. VOM notifies children’s social workers and the SRPD when they believe a girl has left to possibly engage in this. They would like to establish a “Smart Room” in conjunction with Dr. Robert Macey’s advice on the TIC approach; this would be a room for learning self regulating and deescalating skills through tactile and biofeedback experiences. VOM would need \$10,000+ from the county to set this up. Plans for adding on a Short Term Residential Treatment Program or Family Center have been discussed but there are no present plans for implementation, contrary to some reports. The question of utilization of the facility’s space by VOM once the conversion is complete has not been clearly addressed by the County. The Juvenile Justice Commission should recommend to County Social Services that they include in their budget enough money for the provision of security camera improvement and the “Smart Room.” The staff should be commended for the hard work that they are doing, not just in caring for the children sent to them, but it trying to adapt the facility and program to the new requirements thrust upon them by the State,

YOUTH INTERVIEWS

TOPICS				
Evaluation of Program		X		
Program Understood		X		
Levels (Privileges)		X		Feels that she knows of privileges only because she asked.

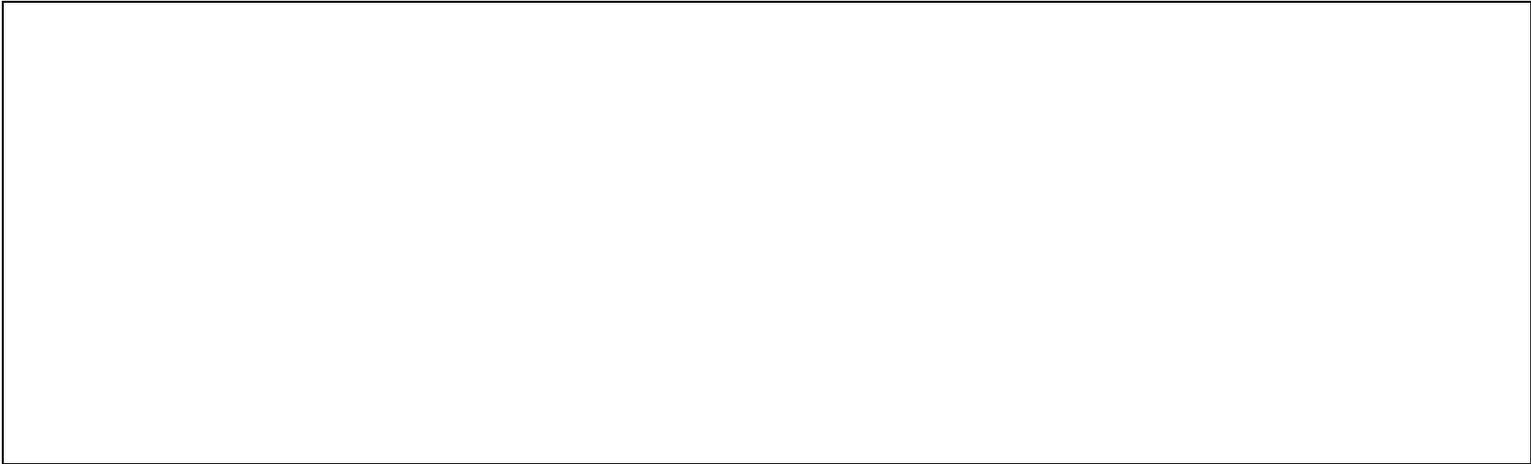
Grievances				Feels that staff always refers to the rules and are not flexibly responsive.
Discipline		X		No issues.
Staff Evaluation		X		Most are nice and trying to do their job well. Some, particularly morning staff, are stricter.
Health Services		X		No issues.
Counseling/Therapy		X		Only has group therapy. Some counselors are more effective; depends on the subject. As a 17 year old, (18 in December) she feels the level is below her age.
Chores & Allowance		X		Points earned result in fair allowance.
Laundry		X		She helps with her own.
Clothes		X		She has her own; no special needs.
Food			X	Depends on who is the cook. Would like to see a vegetarian option because the main item is always meat. Breakfasts could have more variety. Some orange chicken or Chinese food would be good.
Snacks		X		OK with fruit and pretzels.
School		X		She is an on-line student who will graduate next year early. Has studied this way since the 7 th grade. Troubles with math, but loves literature. She has her own books.
Library			X	Not enough for her age and interest. Could be more sophisticated.
Activities & Entertainment			X	Would like more real physical activity, like hiking, ball sports. Staff often don't have the keys to the gym when they go play basketball, so it doesn't happen. Walking around the facility is not enough.
Money		X		Besides an allowance, she earns her own money at a Petaluma grocery store, which she gets to by bus.

ADDITIONAL NOTES & SUGGESTIONS BY YOUTH

of Youth Interviewed: ___ 1 ___

She feels that the staff are generally open to her problems, and that the adjustment has not been hard, though she's been at VOM for only two weeks. She expects to remain only a few months and is kept aware of the placement efforts on her behalf, and she has some input into those considerations. She has been able to keep in touch with her family and friends.

Inspection Summary



Next Inspection Recommended: ____ or ___X___ Annual Inspection

Robert Faux, Inspection Commissioner

Jane Person, Inspection Commissioner

Inspection Commissioner

Mary Cone, Commissioner/Report Review

Dennis Ruggiero, Chairperson

cc: Honorable Judge of the Sonoma County Superior Court
Commissioner of the Juvenile Court
Probation Department, Chief of Probation
Sonoma County Family Youth & Children's Services
State of California, Community Care Licensing
Facility Inspected

Revised 12/2016