

Sonoma County Juvenile Justice Commission Facility Inspection Report

Facility Name:	Family Life Center – Boys Program
Address:	Kuck, Bodega, Jewett & Skillman Houses Addresses: On File
Phone	On File
Contact Person	David Benoit

J.J.C. Inspector(s)	Jody Edwards and Hank Mattimore
Date of Inspection	2/7/2013 and 2/8/2013
Date of Last Inspection	All above sites were last inspected on 1/16/2012
C.C.L. Contact	Pauline Muntzer
Date of Last C.C.L. Inspection	11/5/2013

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

INSPECTED	S	N.I.	Comments
Grounds	X		Properties with large inviting yards, nice rural settings. Boys assist in outdoor maintenance at both the main campus and at the off campus homes.
Building Exterior	X		All in excellent condition with the exception of the Oak Hill House where there were one or two rotten boards on the deck outside but the kids are not allowed on it and it is scheduled for maintenance
Living Room	X		Very comfortable, inviting and spacious with nicely decorated rooms.
Kitchen	X		Clean and orderly with healthy food in the refrigerators. The boys have one night a week they are responsible for cooking, can do by self or can get help. They plan it and then they all grocery shop together on the weekend.
Bedrooms	X		Two boys per room - all very clean and neat. They teach that you keep the rooms clean for yourself not for inspections...the idea is you invest in where you live.
Bathrooms	X		Clean, bath products in showers, towels are in their individual rooms
Fire Safety -Extinguishers -Smoke Alarms -Evac. Plan ?	X		All in order and evacuation plans clearly posted, one house even has a fire alarm that they boys can pull
Food	X		House has stock of good healthy food. The youths talked about the chef being a five star chef...he is the former executive chef from Madronna Manor and they very much liked what he makes.
Health Services	X		Full time medical coordinator at each main campus
Medications	X		All locations have secure and locked medication cabinets

Recreation (on site)	X		At the main site we saw places for recreation outside, baseball, basketball, barbeque areas etc. At the off campus houses we saw basketball areas outside as well as the garages have weight equipment
Outings (off site)	X		David talked about that next weekend they are going cross country skiing in Tahoe as a part of the "Wilderness Program". They also have regular off-site outings on weekends and the Coast Guard has invited them to their campus where they have played soccer and other sports.
Education/ Classrooms	X		Larry M. Simmons High School on each of main campuses
Mail/Phone	X		Phone privileges increase based on phase of each child
INSPECTED	S	N.I.	Comments
Family Contact	X		All parents can visit the third Saturday of each month and there are weekly phone calls. Family therapy starts when the boy has reached Phase 3.
Discipline	X		Phase based program utilizing points and privileges - focus on positive
Library	X		

ADDITIONAL NOTES

The Family Life Center is a comprehensive Level 12 residential program serving boys and girls aged 12 - 18. It was founded in 1978 and provides on-site school and treatment in a family style setting. The boys program is completely separated from the girls program. The administrative campus we met at includes the staff offices, the school and the on campus residential program for boys. Additionally, there are separate satellite homes for boys and we inspected them. The program is development and relationship based and from meeting with staff, and interviewing four youth it is evident that the Family Life Center is an exemplary program that provides a structured and caring milieu. The expectations are clear; staff is consistent in its interactions with the youth, and there is an overall positive tenor. The youth are immersed in the culture of the program which is clearly defined and encourages mutual respect and responsibility among all. There are currently 28 boys in the program and they have room for 30. Only 10% of the population comes from Sonoma County, the rest are mostly from other counties in California.

Youth Interviews

TOPICS	S	N.I.	Comments
Evaluation of Program	X		All 4 interviewees were positive about their living situation. They felt the staff treated them with respect.
Counseling/ Therapy	X		One boy commented: "It is challenging, it helps me more in my future. At first when I came here I didn't want to do things, I'm much more open now, especially in family therapy." Another boy mentioned he would like to change the group schedule; he said, "I'd like to have them less long and more often. The two hours in Circle time gets hot, we sit on the floor and it hurts by back after a while." When we asked David about that he was able to explain all the reasons for why there are no pillows or furniture that would create more comfort during the Circle time and why it was so long, but he also said that he would think about this suggestion.
Physical Education	X		There are places for recreation at both the main campus and the homes.
Health Services	X		
School	X		One boy said, school is good, I'm taking classes at the JC, I'm more motivated about school. I skipped school for two years and I now because of this program I will probably graduate in October just a few months past the time when I really should have graduated, but that's pretty good for having skipped two years.

Food	X		The boys said, "the food is great, Todd the chef is a 5 star chef and its all really healthy."
Snacks	X		
Library	X		
Chores	X		We saw schedules of chores at all the houses which include vacuuming every day and one cook night for each boy per week.
Money	X		They receive allowances.
Mail / Phone	X		
Levels (privileges)	X		The phases of the program are clearly understood and the interviewees will offer up their phase level as soon as they meet you. They understand that increasing privileges are tied to meeting improvement goals.
Laundry	X		Each boy does their own laundry.
Grievances	X		
Activities & Entertainment	X		
Program Length Understood	X		
Staff evaluation	X		Respect is demonstrated by all the staff
Discipline	X		
Allowance	X		
Clothes	X		
Medications	X		
Drugs/Alcohol			They have a class called 'Choice and Change' which is a harm reduction model. It takes people where they are at and builds off their strengths. Before it was just say no, and of a moralist nature. Now they are trying to get kids to think about what they are doing to themselves. With MRI's you can see what's going on in the brain. You want to get kids talking about what's hurting and why they have used drugs and to see what other alternatives are possible. Of course contraband must go. If it's in the system, we have them rest and eat and then once it's done being in the system we get the kids to talk about it just the same as if it were any one of the acting out behaviors. Of course there are consequences and accountability about it.
Probation officer			

ADDITIONAL NOTES & SUGGESTIONS BY YOUTH

of Youth Interviewed: 4

Ages of youth interviewed: N/A

Length of time at this facility: 1) **2.5 months** 2) 1 month 3) 1 year 4 months 4)5 months

They all really liked the food! One youth summarized it well by saying, no one wants to be at a group home, but I am making the best out of it and this is a good place. One youth said, I like the relationships here, there are lots of cool people here both the staff and kids. The youth who had been here the longest said, "This place is really nice, I would recommend this place and I know that a new kid wouldn't like it at first but I can see kids make a huge change." The kids agreed that there was lots of structure but they understood why they have that. They all felt that they were treated with respect, even the brand new child was able to say that "if you want respect then you give it."

One youth talked about wanting to change the rule about listening to music. It is only allowed after you are in Phase 3 and he was not Phase 3 yet and he considers himself a musician. When David talked about music, he considered it a "growth edge" and said, their rule is to not have music allowed until you are in Phase 3 so that the youth can attend to basic skill sets of

relationship building. He said, we're working with our music rule and how to change it because we know music is soothing and maybe it makes sense to have it before Phase 3.

Inspection Summary

It is evident that the Family Life Center is making a difference in the lives of the youth it serves. Many graduates of the program say that the skills of communication and listening here have helped them tremendously in the outside world. There is a stable, well trained and positive staff that are role models for the residents. Much care is given to the admissions process and making sure youth are appropriately placed to provide for social cohesion, diversity and to further the positive goals so they can transition to society as productive and happy adults.

Next Inspection Recommended: _____ or X Annual Inspection
Date

Jody Edwards, Commissioner

Hank Mattimore, Chairperson

cc: Honorable Judge of the Sonoma County Superior Court
Commissioner of the Juvenile Court
Probation Department, Chief of Probation
Department of Social Services
State of California, Community Care Licensing
Juvenile Probation Director
Facility Inspected