

**Juvenile Justice Commission  
County of Santa Clara**

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**Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission  
William F. James Ranch Inspection Report  
July 2012**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) is a state-mandated, court-appointed authority. The broad purpose of the JJC is to inquire into the administration of juvenile law in Santa Clara County. The JJC is dedicated to the promotion of an effective juvenile justice system operated in an environment of credibility, dignity, fairness, and respect for the youth of Santa Clara County.

In fulfillment of these responsibilities, the JJC conducted its annual inspection of the William F. James Boys' Ranch and Muriel Wright Center programs pursuant to California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 229 beginning in May 2012. Seven Commissioners inspected the William F. James Ranch facility and met with the staff, service providers, the youth, and their families. All visits to the facility were scheduled. This report summarizes the information gathered during visits that took place in May and June 2012.

Prior year's reports and inspection reports from other facilities are available on the internet at (<http://www.sccsuperiorcourt.org/juvenile/jjc.htm>).

**II. POPULATION**

The William F. James Ranch (James Ranch or Ranch) is a residential rehabilitative program operated by the Santa Clara County Probation Department for boys, ages 15-1/2 to 18 years old. In early May, the Muriel Wright Center closed and the six boys, ages 12 to 15-1/2 years old and five girls 12- 18 years old from the Muriel Wright Center (MWC or Wright Center) were transferred to the James Ranch along with the MWC staff. The Muriel Wright Center is located on five acres in the foothills of the Santa Teresa County Park on a site overlooking the Santa Clara Valley and was closed due to a small population and budget considerations. There will be information on this transition and the combined program throughout this report.

The Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Court commits youth to the program at the James Ranch. The goal of the program at the James Ranch is to give youth the tools needed to successfully reintegrate into their families and communities. The James Ranch is located on Malaguerra Avenue in Morgan Hill, California.

The licensed capacity for the James Ranch is 96 youth, but the current working capacity is 84 youth. The adoption of the "Enhanced Ranch Program" (ERP) changed the James Ranch from a military, barracks-style program to a "family-style" environment with small-groups and personal oversight.

The tables below show demographic and other information about the youth at the Ranch:

<b>Age of Ranch Youth on May 17 , 2012</b>		
<b>Age</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Population %</b>
13	2	4%
14	3	6%
15	6	12%
16	14	27%
17	18	35%
18 and older	9	17%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Gender of Ranch Youth on May 17, 2012</b>		
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Population %</b>
Male	47	90%
Female	5	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Ethnicity of Ranch Youth on May 17, 2012</b>		
<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Population %</b>
Hispanic	43	83%
Black	3	6%
White	2	4%
Asian	3	6%
Other	1	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Offenses of Ranch Youth on May17, 2012</b>		
<b>Offense Category</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Population %</b>
Felony Crimes Against People	24	46%
Drugs, Alcohol & Related Offenses	3	6%
Property Crimes	6	12%
Weapon Crimes	5	10%
Other Crimes	8	15%
Return/Courtesy Hold/Other	6	12%
<b>Total</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100%</b>

Forty-two (81%) of the youth were from the City of San Jose. There were two youth from Milpitas and Santa Clara and one youth from each of the following cities: Los Gatos, Morgan Hill, Mountain View, San Martin, Gilroy and Sunnyvale.

### **III. STAFFING**

The Probation Department assigns and budgets for the following staff at the James Ranch:

- 1 Probation Manager
- 8 Supervising Probation Counselors
- 66 Probation Counselors (2 vacancies)
- 18 Probation Assistants (2 vacancies)
- Approximately 60 “Extra Help” Counselors are assigned to the James Ranch (“Extra Help” counselors cover absences, vacations or in situations where the Ranch census is high. They cannot work more than a specific number of hours annually.)

Of the above positions, 16 staff, including supervisors, are certified as bilingual in Spanish.

Probation Counselors (including Supervising Probation Counselors) receive 96 hours of training in the Enhanced Ranch Program (ERP). A Probation Counselor, new to the ERP, is expected to complete the 96-hour training within his or her first year of hire. There are four new hires who are scheduled to complete the ERP training by August, 2012. Some Probation Assistants and Extra Help Counselors have also completed the 96-hour training. Probation assistants and extra Help counselors must complete the four-week Juvenile Correction Officer CORE Training. The James Ranch Manager has received basic training in the ERP and was involved early in the process of implementing the ERP in Santa Clara County, but has not completed the full 96-hour training.

Three of the supervising probation counselors are assigned to a schedule that ensures at least one is at the James Ranch everyday including weekends. Three supervising probation counselors oversee and are responsible for the youths’ treatment needs including case planning, multi-disciplinary team meetings, etc. One supervising probation counselor is assigned to Internal Affairs and one is assigned to the EDGE, a community education program run in conjunction with the County Office of Education.

Six probation counselors are assigned to each pod and work a.m. or p.m. shifts during the week, with two counselors assigned to each pod for the morning and evening shifts. Counselors also come together every other Wednesday for an “all staff Wednesday” for pod meetings and to discuss how their youth are progressing in the program. The overnight shift is staffed by the Probation Assistants, one per unit with a lead Probation Assistant providing supervision.

The ratio of staff to youth is 1:6 during the day and 1:12 during the night.

While both James Ranch and MWC counselors and staff complete the same training and were supervised by the same Probation Manager, there were some differences in culture that have developed over time in the two facilities and were revealed during the incorporation of the MWC staff into the James Ranch facility. These differences in culture, largely related to the age and gender of the youth and the different facility set-ups, do not seem to have had an impact on program fidelity. However, it has required some adjustment on the part of both groups to become one “program.” Overall, the merging of the two programs has seemed to have been fairly smooth and all involved have demonstrated professionalism and ultimately, a high level of commitment to the youth.

### **IV. FACILITY**

The James Ranch was built in 1956 and contains a dormitory which is divided into five twelve-bedroom “pods.” There are also two newer modular 12-bed units behind the school. Other facilities include a recreation room, library, kitchen/cafeteria, an administration building, medical and mental health offices, and classrooms.

Prior to the closure of the Muriel Wright Center, the James Ranch population resided in the two newer modular units and three of the dormitory “pods”. When the Wright Center closed, the older boys from the modular units were moved into pods in the dormitory, occupying five of the six pods. The younger boys and the girls from the Muriel Wright Center are housed in the newer modular units. The modular unit housing the former MWC youth are somewhat more spacious than the pods in the main dorm building. These pods also have their own bathroom and semi-private showers. At MWC, the youth had individual rooms, while their new accommodations provide a larger dormitory style room. The youth from MWC who spoke with Commissioners on May 23, 2012, complained about this change and the resulting lack of privacy.

Each pod at the James Ranch is furnished with wooden bunk beds covered with quilts and wooden armoires for clothing. There are couches and armchairs in a central seating area that also includes a television.

The two newer, modular pods were built and opened in 2009 and are more spacious than the original five pods. These new pods have counseling rooms and nice general use areas and are self-contained. The original five pods are much smaller with six bunk beds positioned around a small living area with a couch and television. One of the original pods was closed due to a plumbing problem that has required significant time to repair.

Some of the older boys who now occupy Pods A and B, complained about how small these units are. Inspectors noted that Pods A and B are smaller than Pods C, D, F & G and that the living arrangements did feel somewhat crowded even though there were only 8 – 10 youth assigned to each of these units.

Overall, the James Ranch appeared neat and clean when Commissioners visited. Many of the buildings are old. In particular, many of the roofs covering the walkways between buildings were sagging and showed signs of water damage and there are pipes that were leaking on external concrete and pathways. The “noxious” smell on the grounds identified in previous reports has been addressed and, with regular maintenance, no longer seems to be an issue.

Funding has been designated to build nine new living units with attached counseling rooms and classrooms. Funding has been approved by the Board of Supervisors. Design bids are the next step in the process and these should go out by the end of summer.

### **Accommodating the girls and the younger boys at the James Ranch:**

In an effort to keep the girls and younger boys separate from the older boys, the MWC youth remain in their pods when they are not in school, except for brief periods when they have access to the recreation room and outside fields. The girls commented that they feel they have less outdoor time as a result of the move. As there are five operating pods of older boys who need access to these facilities as well, the movements of the girls are limited. There were universal complaints about this aspect of the move. A related issue was the shared use of the recreation room. Commissioners observed noise and commotion that impacted the girls’ yoga class.

Commissioners spoke with youth from the MWC program in school, on campus, and at lunch. The youth were settling into the new setting, but not without complaint, including their opinion that the food at the James Ranch was not as good as that at the MWC. (See the Kitchen and Cafeteria section.) One positive statement was that they would not have to travel to the James Ranch site this summer to use the pool.

Several girls mentioned that they were upset that they are at the James “Boys” Ranch, which is stated in signage at the James Ranch and in the brochure about the combined programs. Changes to the signage and brochure should be made soon in order to reflect the new population at the James Ranch. The brochure also needs to be changed to reflect the current visiting hours.

## **Kitchen and Cafeteria**

Commissioners toured the kitchen facility and ate lunch with the youth in the cafeteria. Three Commissioners met with the Probation Food Services Manager to review the food service program.

The current staff consists of 6 food service personnel with experience ranging from 5 to 27 years. There are two shifts with the first starting at 5:00 a.m. and ending at 1:30 pm and the second, 10:30 am to 7:00 pm. This overlap allows for a smooth transition between shifts. Menus are established and published four weeks in advance. Commissioners were provided spreadsheets for breakfast and lunch with portion and nutritional values.

The facility currently serves between 80 – 100 juveniles and staff per day. The Food Services Manager uses Title 15 requirements, 2010 Healthy Kids Act, and the USDA to manage and adjust the nutritional content and portion sizes. Youth are provided 2200 to 3200 calories daily and may be increased as prescribed by Medical to 3,600 calories per day for youth with heavy work duty or if determined to need additional calories by the nurse. Efforts continue to reduce the salt and fat content in food that is being served. Orders for special medical diets are received during transfer from Juvenile Hall from the Medical Clinic. Menus, including special needs menus, are maintained for one year and are reviewed by food service staff annually.

Youth are served three meals per day and one snack before bedtime and are served on rotating shifts. During interviews with the girls, Commissioners noted that there was up to six hours between breakfast and lunch and the girls had mentioned that they were hungry. Upon bringing this to the attention of the Food Services manager, he agreed to research the matter. During a follow-up email communication, the commissioners were informed that the girls' lunch shift has been changed to an earlier time and that the Ranch Manager and Deputy Chief overseeing facilities have been made aware of the problem and are currently working on a solution.

The kitchen is small and out-of-date, but is clean and functioning well. Food temperatures are monitored regularly and thermometers are calibrated twice a day. To maintain safe temperature control food is held in hot boxes between groups. The Food Service group participates in a food-purchasing cooperative and purchases bulk food at a reasonable cost. As a result, the purchase of processed foods has been greatly reduced and most of the food is now made from scratch on the premises.

The Food Services Manager has an experienced staff, with two lead cooks (one per shift) that are Serv-Safe certified. Budget permitting, the manager's goal is to certify the remaining staff in the next year. Eight youth assist with the serving of the meals and cleanup of the kitchen.

## **V. OVERVIEW OF THE ENHANCED RANCH PROGRAM (ERP)**

The ERP began at the Wright Center and James Ranch sites in August 2006. The ERP is based on an evidenced-based practice also referred to as the "Missouri Model." Below are the components of the ERP as described in "Aftercare Study, Enhanced Ranch Program," a report written by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) from April 30, 2010:

- a. Staff Development and Coaching – 96 hours of instruction in a Cognitive Based Treatment model of group counseling. This is supported by ongoing mentoring and coaching.
- b. Treatment – All youth are assessed within three weeks of entering the Ranch. A Multidisciplinary Team (MDT), which includes probation counselors, parents, probation

school counselors, and mental health and substance abuse counselors, meets to consider all relevant information and to develop a treatment plan.

c. Family Atmosphere - The smaller treatment groups of 10 to 12 youth and the personalized living space create a more home-like atmosphere. Each pod has a central meeting area that is furnished like a large family room.

d. Group Process – Small group counseling supports the personal development of each youth. Youth are encouraged to talk about personal problems with the group.

e. Small Staff-to-Youth Ratios –Low ratios allow for the staff to interact and work closely with the youth rather than just monitor them.

f. Family Participation - Before a youth enters the ERP, s/he is screened to ensure a significant adult figure (parent, relative, or legal guardian) is willing and able to participate in the program with the youth.

g. Personal Enhancement Opportunities – A variety of activities such as sports, religious activities, and workshops are offered to the youth.

h. Extended Length of Stay – The “in custody” program increased to allow up to an eight-month stay with a six month Aftercare program. A youth who does well in the program may still be released in six months.

i. Relationship Building – One-on-one relationships between line staff and youth build trust and encourage the youth to participate in groupwork.

j. Education – The County Office of Education provides a school day of 300 minutes.

k. Aftercare Programs – Additional programs and supports are offered to youth for 6 months after they leave the Ranch to support the youth’s success when he or she returns home.

While in custody, youth at the Ranch progress through 4 levels. Advancement to each level is earned through good performance on a youth’s goals. Each youth is evaluated on a weekly basis to determine if he is ready to progress to the next level. Below is a schematic of the in-custody levels:

Level 1 – Orientation - Lasts about 1 month

Level 2 – Core Program Activities – Lasts 2 to 3 months

Level 3 – Family Reunification Planning – 2 months (youth begin to spend time at home on weekends.)

Level 4 – Re-entry and Aftercare Preparation – 1 month

## **VI. IMPLEMENTATION OF ERP AT THE JAMES RANCH**

### Initial MDT and Behavior Management

An MDT meeting is held within the first three weeks a youth is at the James Ranch to develop an individual treatment (behavior management) plan for the youth. This plan is used to guide and assess the youth’s progress through the James Ranch program. In addition to receiving individual behavior management treatment, the youth also receives group counseling with the other youth in his/her pod. When a youth violates a rule, s/he is counseled immediately, usually without punishment. If the

misbehavior continues, the entire pod sits with the youth for group discussion of the behavior. If this does not resolve the issue, the Probation Counselor Supervisor and the Ranch Manager continue counseling with the youth. Whether the youth progresses to the next level of his/her treatment plan is determined by his/her behavior for an entire week and is not based on a single incident.

### Teaching Important Pro-Social Skills Program (TIPS)

TIPS is a 10-week program designed to address the behavior of aggressive youth, reduce anti-social behaviors and offer the use of “pro-social skills” as an alternative. Using Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), TIPS has three components:

- Anger Control – The emotional component teaches what not to do (not reacting with aggression)
- Skill-streaming – The behavioral component teaches what to do to replace aggressive behavior
- Moral Reasoning – The values component teaches why it is important to use these skills

The goal of the training is to help minors *unlearn* their negative reactions and to learn a new way of reacting in stressful situations. Youth develop interpersonal problem solving skills and moral reasoning abilities and learn to see their world in a different way. The goal is for youth to return to their communities with the tools and knowledge to deal with issues and problems that may come up in their daily lives. The training requires participation in discussions and skills practice such as role-playing.

Two to three hours of TIPS training are offered in each of the pods each week. Youth who have completed the 10-week session continue to participate in the program until they leave the Ranch.

JJC members attended a TIPS session during a visit to the Ranch. Nine juveniles from a pod attended and included “old-timers” and newer arrivals to the Ranch and the session lasted about 75 minutes. The topic was identifying anger triggers and the instructor was a good presenter. He kept the topic on track, was engaging and encouraging, and elicited good responses from the students. The youth were engaged, participated in a writing exercise and a role play exercise. Another supervisor in attendance actively assisted a juvenile with limited writing skills to write out his example of an occasion when something triggered an angry response. One juvenile said, after reading his example and having participated in the program for so long, that he was now embarrassed by his example involving a confrontation with the Supervisor during a volleyball game. Overall, the program seemed effective at helping the juveniles identify ways to deal with situations that might trigger anger.

### Aftercare Program – Ranch Re-entry Assistance Program (RRAP)

NCCD’s report indicated that minors participating in ERP performed better than their predecessors, had fewer behavioral incidents and lower percentages of violations and failures while in custody. However, NCCD also identified a weakness in the program in that when minors physically left the program they did not perform significantly better than their predecessors after leaving the Ranch and their rates of recidivism were similar.

It is important for minors to quickly transition into post-release programs and positive activities. Transitional supports are critical to their success. To facilitate this successful transition, the Probation Department sought and received funding for a one-year pilot project called Ranch Re-entry Assistance Program (RRAP). This program attempts to ramp up the identification of re-entry needs through the use of Multidisciplinary Team meetings, better identification of risk and needs and creating supportive linkages for youth and their families. The following domains and goals are addressed in the youth and family’s plan:

- **Safety** – Youth will be safe at home, in the community, and will do no harm to themselves or others.

- **Substance Abuse** – All youth and family will play an active role in their own recovery.
- **Domestic Violence** – All youth and family will be in safe relationships (non-violent, non-controlling).
- **Gang Activity** – Decrease in criminal street gang activity.
- **Education/Vocational** – All youth will either be in school and/or have graduated or received their GED and working.
- **Parental Support** – Parents will be ready to keep their youth safe at home, in the community, and at school/work.
- **Peer Mentoring** – Each youth will be surrounded by peer mentors who have successfully moved through similar problems.
- **Culture & Environment** – Every youth will have new skills to better navigate their home and community.

The components of RRAP include:

- Case planning for exit that begins at the youth's entry into the Ranch Program (including use of the Juvenile Assessment and Inventory System (JAIS) and an early Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meeting.
- Within 90 days of a youth completing his/her program placement in RRAP, the Probation Officer will obtain a mental health assessment and complete a risk and needs assessment or re-assessment.
- Sixty days prior to release, an MDT will be assembled to create a highly responsive, individualized Re-entry plan.
- Upon release, a "high touch" model will be used for probation staff. The assigned probation officer (PO) will have a small intensive caseload (15 maximum) and s/he will be empowered to work with youth and families in non-traditional ways, working in the evenings and on weekends and assisting with many life domains including employment services, participating in community activities with the youth, and providing counseling in a variety of areas including cognitive behavioral treatment and substance abuse assistance.
- Case management and supervision will be sustained for a period of six months.
- Probation counselors, who have developed a relationship with the youth while in ERP, will continue to work with the youth and provide intensive support and supervision to minors while they transition back to the community.
- Wrap-around support services provided by a community based organization (CBO) will also support the youth and his/her family by providing basic services such as assistance with housing or transportation, socialization and recreational experiences, family education, education and vocational support, mental health services, 24-hour crisis intervention, respite care, and parent advocacy support.

A new, non-traditional relationship between the youth and the probation officer allows for normal adolescent setbacks without the traditional response of court intervention. Supervision can be increased when the youth is struggling and decreased when the youth experiences success.

RRAP will be used with all youth younger than 18 leaving the Ranch. The five probation officers assigned to this program will receive training on providing wrap-around services and will be part of the new Family Preservation Unit, providing a natural training and support system to the probation officers providing these services. Currently there are four probation officers assigned to this unit and one vacancy. Of those, one probation officer is certified bilingual in Vietnamese and two are Spanish-speaking, with one certified bilingual in Spanish. The Probation Manager is prioritizing having a certified bilingual Spanish speaker when he fills the vacant position. The JJC believes RAPP will be a positive step in improving outcomes for youth leaving the Ranch and would like to see youth who are 18 years



and older be able to participate in some form of aftercare planning, if they chose to remain under court jurisdiction, as provide for by AB12 .

RAPP will be evaluated by NCCD next year and if it shows promising results, it will be continued. The Commission believes, however, that evaluation should not just take place in response to this new aftercare approach, but that it should be institutionalized. While the Enhanced Ranch Program has been evaluated in the past by NCCD, there is not ongoing systematic evaluation of the impact of the programs at the Ranch, and we do not have data readily available that tells us about the effectiveness of the program at reducing recidivism or increasing engagement in school or work. Such data would be valuable to inform decision-making and program improvement. It is hoped that while NCCD is evaluating RAPP, that it can also help the Probation Department develop a system of on-going evaluation.

### **Observation: Multidisciplinary Team Meeting (MDT) for Youth Leaving the Ranch**

Commissioners observed the first MDT for a youth who will be exiting the Ranch in two months. This was also the first time an MDT was performed under the new Ranch Re-entry Assistance Program (RRAP). Representatives from Mental Health, Substance Abuse Services, the wrap-around service provider, and the Probation Department attended. In addition, the youth's counselor, and the aftercare counselor participated in this MDT. Arrangements were made to pick up the mother so she could participate. However, she was not home when the wrap-around provider arrived to pick her up, and she did not participate in this initial meeting.

There was a "pre-meeting" where the providers discussed some of the issues affecting the youth and initial recommendations. Then the youth was invited in to meet with the team. The youth was very forthcoming with issues he would be facing at home. The wrap-around service provider indicated that they already had a relationship with the family and the youth reacted positively when he was told he would likely work with a professional from the agency he had worked with in the past. The team discussed what school would be best for the youth to attend and other supports and services he may need when he returns home. At the MDT it was stated that there would be additional meetings to continue to build the structure to help the juvenile be successful when he returns home including additional meetings prior to his leaving with the wrap-around organization.

## **VII. INCIDENT REPORTS, GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS**

### **Incident Reports**

Incident reports are completed at all juvenile detention facilities and cover a wide variety of issues such as sports injuries, fights, medical emergencies, contraband, etc. Over the past year, the Juvenile Justice Commission reviewed incident reports for James Ranch and for the MWC on a monthly basis and also as part of the inspection process. This review confirmed that proportionately fewer incident reports are filed related to behavioral issues at the James Ranch and MWC than are filed at Juvenile Hall. All incident reports were complete and the incidents seemed appropriately handled by counselors and staff.

Special attention was paid to aftercare "ranch failures" from January 2011 to April 2012 and revealed that in the case of the MWC, all three failures were designated as such, because the youth absconded while in aftercare. Over the course of the year at James Ranch, fourteen youth

“failed” the Aftercare program by absconding. With the implementation of RRAP, it is hoped that these aftercare “failures” will decrease; this will be evaluated by NCCD.

Additionally, five juveniles in Aftercare were returned to the MWC and one was returned to the James Ranch for brief periods ranging from a weekend to two weeks for behavior issues such as truancy, drug or alcohol use. This brief return to the program, while the youth is in aftercare, seemed appropriate and appeared to be a good alternative to “Ranch Failure”.

### **Grievances and Appeals**

Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations requires the administrator of a juvenile detention facility to develop written policies and procedures and inform minors in custody that they have a right to file a grievance regarding any inappropriate or inadequate conditions at Juvenile Hall. Such inadequate or inappropriate conditions include, but are not limited to, conditions relating to: behavior or action of staff or volunteers, conditions of confinement, health care services, mental health services, education services, classification decisions, program participation and services, telephone, mail or visiting procedures, food, clothing, bedding and hygiene. These procedures must, among other things, provide that grievance forms be freely accessible, that grievances be capable of being filed confidentially, and that an appeal of a grievance is heard by a person who is not directly related to the circumstance leading to the grievance. The juveniles at James Ranch (and MWC) also may appeal disciplinary actions.

When asked, juveniles at the Ranch reported that they knew how to file an appeal or a grievance. Commissioners noted the location for submission of appeals and grievances in the living facilities. There were only eight grievances and appeals filed at the James Ranch and MWC during the past 12 months. The Commissioners reviewed the appeals and all appeared to be handled satisfactorily by staff and management.

### **VIII. MEDICAL SERVICES**

A nurse provides coverage of the Medical Services Office on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday, from 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., and from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. On Tuesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday and on holidays, a nurse provides coverage from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. On weekends and holidays, the coverage is from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. A physician visits the James Ranch every other Thursday for four hours. A psychiatrist works at the Ranch for an eight hour shift on Monday and Wednesday.

Commissioners met with the nurse on duty during one of the visits in May. The nurse presented a small but well-organized clinic. The clinic has a small front office adjoining an examination room and an attached bathroom. A locked medicine room stores all over-the-counter and prescription drugs, and the nurse is the only person who has access to this room. The on-duty nurse dispenses all necessary medications to youth during her shift hours. She uses a locked drug cart to dispense the medication to youth, either in their pods or classrooms.

When minors are transferred to the Ranch from Juvenile Hall, the nurse receives a hard copy of their medical records. Likewise, when a minor is released from the Ranch, the parent or guardian receives a discharge summary record, which includes information on medications, immunizations records, and other medical information.

The nurse maintains a daily log of medications given to each youth. She also maintains a Monthly Medical Report showing all sick calls made at the clinic. During 2011, there were 1286 sick calls

assessments at the James Ranch and 410 at the MWC. The type of the calls included X-Rays, VMC appointments, lab and other blood work, etc. Dental appointments are also recorded in this report.

Below are two tables that provide data on the medical care provided at the James Ranch and Muriel Wright Center during 2011 (taken from *Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System Juvenile Probation Medical Services, Annual Report 2011*):

<b>James Ranch – 2011</b>	
MD appointments*	204
VMC ED evaluations	11
Hospitalizations	11
Sick Call Assessments by RN**	1286
Dental referrals***	63
VMC Outpatient Clinic appointments	32

<b>Wright Center 2011</b>	
MD appointments*	156
VMC ED evaluations	3
Hospitalizations	2
Sick Call Assessments by RN**	410
Dental referrals***	26
VMC Outpatient Clinic appointments	43

\* Data totals are based on 12 months

\*\* Figure does not include drop-ins

\*\*\* Figure does not include referrals to private dentists

There is a tele-nursing video camera installed at the clinic to get live triage assistance from the Juvenile Hall Medical Clinic nursing staff when the Ranch nurse is not on duty. Supervising Ranch Counselors are trained to use the video camera in an emergency when the nurse is not on duty.

If a youth develops a fever at the Ranch, and the nurse is not on duty, the nursing staff at Juvenile Hall (JH) is contacted, and a determination is made about whether the youth should be transported to JH for further evaluation. Generally, Ranch staff transports the youth to JH and the youth remains at JH until cleared by the doctor or nurse to return to the Ranch.

All Ranch counselors receive annual training in CPR (including the use of defibrillators) and defibrillators are installed in the Ranch.

## **IX. MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES**

There are three Community Based Organizations (CBOs) providing Mental Health (MH) and Substance Abuse (SA) counseling services at the James Ranch as a result of the merger of the Muriel Wright Center with the James Ranch. The CBOs are Starlight Community Services, Community Solutions, and Pathway Society. Pathway Society is contracted to provide substance abuse counseling. Starlight and Community Solutions are contracted to provide mental health counseling services. Because of the interrelated nature of the two disciplines all three CBOs provide mental health and substance abuse services. Two of the clinicians are bilingual English/Spanish speakers. The interns are supervised by a licensed Mental Health Specialist. Additionally, due to the merger and the reduced youth population at the Ranch, there is sufficient counseling staff and interns available to meet the service needs of all the youth at the Ranch.

The drawback to having so many staff on site is the lack of available counseling and office space. Nine staff members share three offices, limiting the space available for private, one-on-one counseling sessions. Consequently, Starlight and Community Solutions have utilized Ranch grounds to conduct sessions – i.e. benches, Recreation Hall, Library, Conference Rooms and the Cafeteria to conduct counseling sessions.

The Mental Health Specialists discuss and address issues affecting the youth related to medications, and the overall progress of the youth. They also attend the MDT meetings and are instrumental in coordinating multidisciplinary assessments and evaluations, comprehensive service plans, psychiatric evaluations, medication support, therapy, training for Ranch staff in problem solving, anger management counseling, and additional links to community services such as gang intervention.

In the 2011 Inspection Report, a recommendation was made that substance abuse services should be increased so all youth needing such services (almost every youth at the Ranch) could receive them. Pathway Society staff indicated that not only have staff been increased but there has been a change so that substance abuse counselors working with youth will be able to continue to work with the youth when they return to the community instead of being “handed off” to another provider. This is a promising change that can lead to improved outcomes for the youth. Additionally, Pathway Society has begun using “The Seven Challenges,” an evidenced-based, youth-focused substance abuse program that is being rolled out to the probation department and substance abuse programs throughout the county.

Two Commissioners attended an initial meeting with the three CBOs and all staff involved (Supervising Probation Counselors, Nurse, Psychiatrist and Ranch Manager) participated in this meeting. County Office of Education staff was not present at this meeting.) The purpose of this meeting was to launch an ongoing effort to increase the cooperation and information sharing among the various Probation Department staff and the contracted CBOs which provide mental health and substance abuse counseling to the youth at the James Ranch. A goal of the meeting was to obtain the commitment of all attendees to meet weekly and ensure communication and coordination efforts continue.

During said meeting a Commissioner raised the issue of Physician/Psychiatrist “coverage” and scheduling for planned and unplanned absences as a result of a recent instance where Psychiatric services were not readily available due to an unplanned absence by one of the two psychiatrists. The Mental Health Department was of the opinion that video psychiatric services were a potential remedy for such situations. However, as a result of the discussion that took place during the meeting it became apparent that the potential existed for subtle nuances to be missed as a result of a fixed camera position. The psychiatrist present during the meeting agreed to take back the Commissioner’s concern to the Mental Health Department administration and agreed to provide Probation administration and the Juvenile Justice Commission with a copy of the written policy to be developed to fully address this concern.

## **X. EDUCATION**

The education program at the James Ranch is managed by Blue Ridge High School, one of the 16 alternative school programs of the Santa Clara County of Education (COE). It is designed to provide students with several alternatives when they leave the Ranch: attending their home district’s community school; attending a comprehensive high school or, if they have received graduation certificates, attending community college. Prior to the closure of the MWC, the Blue Ridge School at the James Ranch served students in grades 9-12. However, in April 2012, the closure of MWC transferred students as young as 12 years old to the James Ranch campus.

When students enter the Blue Ridge School, they are assessed in Reading and Math using the Renaissance Star Reading and Math tests. Students also take the CELDT (The California English Language

Development Test). While at the Ranch, students take the CSTs (California Standards Tests), and the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)) just as students who attend comprehensive high schools do. Most students at the Blue Ridge School are two or more years behind academically and have not achieved federal standards in Math and Language Arts. Therefore, the school continues to be in Program Improvement (a federally-designated term for probation-like status). One-third of the students have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) qualifying them for the Resource Specialist (RSP) or Special Day Class (SDC) services. Fifteen percent of the students are English Language Learners (ELLs).

Youth are required to spend 300 minutes per day in the educational program that includes language arts, social studies, math, science, Career Technical Education (CTE), General Education Development testing (GED) preparation, and special education services. The academic classes are self-contained and are taught by instructors who are credentialed to teach all subjects. The younger boys and the girls attend academic classes from 8:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m., and after lunch, participate in CTE in the afternoon. The older boys attend CTE in the morning, eat lunch and then attend academic classes from 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. The class size for the older boys (ages 16-18) ranges from twelve to seventeen students. The girls and the younger boys (ages 12-15½) each have their own classroom with approximately five or six students in each class. Students receive letter grades in their subjects based on participation and assignment completion.

There are five classroom teachers and one SDC teacher and a 0.5 FTE resource specialists, and 1.5 FTE special education aides. The older boys who have special education needs are assigned to the same living unit and are in an afternoon SDC together. The remaining older boys take classes with two or three of the alternative education department teachers. The special education needs of the girls and the younger boys are addressed by the 0.5 FTE resource specialist and the special education aide, who will either work in the classrooms with the youth or pull youth out of class to address their special education needs. However these students no longer have a special education teacher and their needs are now expected to be met by the Special Day class teacher already at Blue Ridge School. It is not clear how this will work.

Students need 200 credits to graduate from high school and earn 7 ½ credits a month while at the Ranch. (In the 2012-2013 school year, this requirement increases to 220 credits.) Students can use the program, AVENTA, a computer program, to help them with class credit recovery. Another program that students use is Cyber High, a computer-based credit recovery system. Two days a week, a counselor is on campus to meet with students to review their transcripts and advise them on graduation requirements. Teachers have the opportunity to tutor the older students before class.

Teachers have contracts for 185 to 210 school days (comparable to a ten-month school year). The school at James Ranch is year-round and many teachers take the summer off. Substitute teachers provide instruction in the classroom when a teacher takes the summer off. A teacher-in-charge coordinates the GED program and runs the school when the principal is at another assignment. The principal is assigned to be at the school site one day per week.

The principal stated that staff members are involved in staff development activities on Wednesdays. On the first and fourth Wednesdays of each month, teachers collaborate on developing common assessments for the curricula they teach. On the third Wednesday of each month, teachers work on English Language Development by sharing lessons and assessments. There is an all staff meeting on the second Wednesday of each month. In achieving the goal of WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) accreditation, the school's professional development was reviewed. Next year, the school's academic departments will be reviewed.

Based on interviewing the principal and visiting the classrooms, the Commissioners had several concerns:

- The high school does not offer courses that fulfill “A thru G” requirements. These course requirements, offered in many regular education high schools, prepare students for college attendance.
- Some special education requirements do not appear to be met. A staff member reported that an SDC student from the Wright Center does not get instruction from an SDC teacher. Also, RSP students at the Ranch have not received instruction from an RSP teacher since April. The principal told the Commissioners a Special Ed Resource Teacher goes into class daily. A Special Ed para-educator has been in class once a week, which will increase to four days a week beginning June 4.
- While four tutors were available to help students last year, only one tutor is providing services to students in the current school year.
- Commissioners noted during the site visit that two of the five classrooms had substitutes. In the classes with the substitute teachers, students appeared to be working individually with limited teacher guidance.
- While the high school provides for administrative coverage by having a teacher-in-charge, the principal is at school only one day a week. The rest of the time the principal is assigned to other COE education sites. Also, the principal stated he was going to be re-assigned for the next academic year.
- While SDC students’ IEPs may be current, the Commissioners were told by Blue Ridge staff that Resource Students have not had theirs updated since their teacher left in April, 2012. However, the COE administration indicated to the Commission that all IEP compliance is processed centrally at Osborne school where we will find documentation that there were no lapses of compliance at Blue Ridge.
- Commissioners are concerned about finding school furniture and equipment out on the sidewalk, the office being unlocked and no clear plan that exists for the delivery of instruction. Commissioners were left with the impression that little to no planning took place on the part of the County Office of Education in combining these two educational programs. However, the principal stated he was meeting with the head of the Ranch about Special Education services options and instructional schedule beginning July 1, 2012

## **XI. ENTERPRISE PROGRAM**

Commissioners continue to be impressed with the quality of the Enterprise Program and found it be very successful for many reasons. Primarily, the Enterprise Program teaches entry-level trade job skills to the youth and is led by many inspirational teachers. The youth learn the basics of construction, carpentry, welding, tile, heating and air conditioning systems, drywall, roofing, electrical, plumbing, painting, and computer skills. Last year, the auto shop program was not operating and the proposed culinary program was on hold due to budget issues. The auto shop program is still not operating due to the lack of an auto shop teacher and the culinary program is on hold due to budgetary constraints.

The Enterprise Program at the Ranch is very innovative. It operates on a business model and tries to make a profit to be reinvested in the program to buy supplies. In addition, the youth are paid approximately \$50 per month and some of their earnings are used to pay restitution fees.

Last year, the manager of the Enterprise Program retired and was replaced by a very capable manager. Commissioners were given a tour of the various programs and spent the majority of the time learning about the welding, construction trades, and computer program.

The commissioners were very impressed with the welding program because it was very current and the instructor demonstrated a passion for teaching and a genuine concern that the youth develop important life and personal skills. Last year, the instructor was recognized as the “Teacher of the Year” by his peers

for his dedication and inspiration to teaching and working with youth. The youth are taught to be respectful of each other and learn to work together regardless of their differences. Also, the youth are taught and encouraged to always do their best in all their endeavors.

In the Enterprise Program, metal cage traps are made and sold to the local ranchers to catch wild pigs, metal fire pits and custom storage sheds are built as well as patio tables to generate income for the program. The Enterprise Program has established working relationships with many of the local unions. When a youth has acquired enough experience from the Enterprise Program, they are awarded a certificate and can contact a union to receive more training and enroll in a program to become an Apprentice or Journeyman position.

In the past, some of the Enterprise youth have worked with the Santa Clara Valley Water District, County Parks, State Fish and Game, and the City of Morgan Hill on various projects including creek and trail maintenance, firebreaks, construction of fire pits, and concrete work.

In the 2011 James Ranch Inspection Report, the Commission recommended that the culinary arts and automotive program be instituted when monies become available. As recommended in last year's report, the Probation Department should also seriously investigate the financial feasibility of providing meals to the local law enforcement agencies, Sheriff's Department, and fire fighters that use the neighboring Holden Ranch facility as a training facility and staging area for the firefighters when fires occur. According to last year's Enterprise manager, this food service would be profitable and would generate income to pay for a culinary and automotive program, or other programs the Probation Department deemed necessary. If this is not possible, an alternative is to offer a culinary arts program utilizing the James Ranch cafeteria setting.

This year, the Muriel Wright Center closed and the female and young male youths were being transitioned into the programs at the James Ranch. At the time of inspection, five female residents were participating in the Computer Class. The computer class teaches many of the components of Microsoft Office, Excel, Adobe Photoshop, and how to do research on the internet. At the time of inspection, the females were being taught some of the elements of Photoshop and some of the art the students had produced were displayed on the walls. According to the welding department, the female juveniles will soon be able to participate in the welding class.

The computer instructor has over 20 years in the teaching field and believes in teaching "employable skills." The Photoshop program is very intensive and has 60 assignments before a student can receive a certificate. The instructor said she also assists students in applying for financial aid and completing the paperwork needed for employment.

Commissioners were also given a tour of the other areas where the youth are taught heating, air conditioning, plumbing, insulation installation and theory, painting, roofing, wood framing, electrical, weatherproofing, solar, green construction, tile, doors and windows. Similar to the other programs, certificates are issued once the skills are mastered. The Enterprise Program makes and repairs many of the redwood benches of the Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department. As mentioned earlier, the monies that are generated are used for restitution to victims of crimes and the balance is given to the youth at the time of release in the form of a check.

Overall, the Commission found the Enterprise Program to be very innovative, inspirational, and a valuable program to the youth because it not only teaches valuable trade skills but also interpersonal skills.

## **XII. PARENTS AND VISITATION**

Parents and younger siblings (up to age 14) can visit youth at the Ranch on Saturday and Sunday mornings or afternoons. The different pods are scheduled for different days and times to provide adequate privacy and supervision. If a parent cannot come at the designated time, Ranch staff are flexible and make other arrangements. During these visits, parents are allowed to bring “special foods” to their sons and daughters. Arrangements may also be made for other significant adults to visit the youth, such as grandparents, aunts and uncles. Parents visit with their children in the cafeteria, the recreation room or in one of the Ranch meeting rooms. Parents with transportation issues that make it difficult to visit the Ranch can take a bus to a nearby shopping center where Ranch staff can pick them up to bring them to the Ranch. Parents sign in for all visits.

Commissioners spoke with parents during a Saturday afternoon and Sunday afternoon visitors’ session. In speaking with parents, there seemed to be a general satisfaction with the programming and supports their children are receiving.

## **XIII. COMMENDATIONS:**

*The Juvenile Justice Commission commends:*

1. The staff of both the James Ranch and MWC programs for ensuring a smooth transition with the integration of the MWC into the James Ranch and their commitment to youth.
2. The Probation Department’s commitment to improve outcomes of the youth leaving the Ranch by seeking funding to design the Ranch Re-entry Assistance Program (RRAP).
3. The Food Services manager and staff for their fine work to improve the quality and nutritional content of the food being served.
4. Probation counselors working in the classroom and helping students with their academic work. Last year’s report on the MWC recommended that the Probation staff in the classroom should help students with their academic work and several counselors were observed doing this in the morning classes.
5. The metal shop teacher’s use of creative and alternative methods of instruction, engaging students in learning and transitioning to life after the Ranch.
6. Provision of additional substance abuse services and implementation of Seven Challenges to the benefit of all youth at the Ranch who may have substance use disorders and for implementing a model where substance abuse counselors follow and work with youth in the community rather than handing them off to another provider.

## **XIV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

*Juvenile Justice Commission Recommends that the Probation Department:*

1. Evaluate and develop alternatives to “unit confinement” that is the result of the youth from the MWC being moved to the James Ranch.
2. Take steps to reduce the feeling of over-crowding in Pods A and B.



3. Make changes to the signage and brochure that provide current information about the James Ranch. This includes removing the words that indicate that James Ranch is a “boys” ranch.
4. Work with COE to provide a morning snack to youth, mirroring a dietary schedule comparable to schools in the community.
5. Hold an “exit planning meeting” for youth who are leaving the Ranch and are older than 18 years old. Utilize the resources of AB 12 to ensure the youth have greater success when they leave the Ranch.
6. Ensure a regular source of drinking water for youth participating in physical activities (for example, a P.E. class) outdoors.
7. Work with the COE to explore the possibility of doing a culinary arts program in the cafeteria/kitchen at James Ranch or at the Holden training facility.
8. Ensure the education staff from COE is included in meetings discussing program implementation and issues regarding the youth.
9. Work with NCCD to develop and adopt a data tracking system that is able to provide quality and understandable data about success and recidivism when youth leave the Ranch. A similar recommendation appeared in the Ranch Inspection Reports in 2010 and 2011. It is important to collect data in a timely manner in order to measure the effectiveness of interventions and to incorporate “program corrections” to improve outcomes.

***Juvenile Justice Commission Recommends that the Mental Health Department:***

1. Develop a formal written policy that addresses both planned and unplanned Psychiatric staff absences, of any duration to ensure adequate in-person services (non tele-psychiatry) are available to James Ranch youth. The Department should explore all options including, but not limited to using a Psychiatrist floater or extra-help position to address said absences.

***Juvenile Justice Commission Recommends that the Santa Clara County Office of Education:***

1. Ensure teachers prepare Individual Student Plans for each student that includes exposing students to curricula that meet the “A thru G” requirements (San Jose 2020). Even though many of these students achieve below grade level, the teachers should prepare them for college attendance by stretching their academic potential.
2. RSP and SDC students should receive the necessary instructional support from credentialed special education teachers. While special education paraprofessionals can provide assistance, their help cannot substitute for instruction from a certified special education teacher.
3. Increase the principal’s time at the school site to two days a week. More time at the high school would allow the principal to visit classrooms regularly above and beyond the requirements of teacher evaluation. It would also allow observation of substitutes and ensure students are receiving a level of instruction comparable to that offered by the regular classroom teacher.

4. Ensure faculty, substitutes and other COE staff working at the Ranch have solid grounding in the principles and behavioral approaches of the ERP.

**Documents Reviewed for this Inspection:**

State of California:

- 1.) Corrections Standards Authority Biennial Inspection - June 14, 2010.

Other Documents:

- 2.) Office of the Fire Marshall, Inspection Report - June 15, 2010.
- 3.) Public Health Department Inspection Report –May 17, 2012.
- 4.) “Aftercare Study, Enhanced Ranch Program,” National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) - April 30, 2010.
- 5.) “An Assessment of the Enhanced Ranch Program” National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) -July 24, 2009.
- 6.) 2010-2011 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Report, “Mental Health Support at Youth Ranches.”
- 7.) Juvenile Justice Commission James Ranch Inspection Report July 2011.
- 8.) Probation Department Response to the Juvenile Justice Commission Report on the James Ranch (from Chief Sheila Mitchell) – October 11, 2011.
- 9.) Santa Clara County Probation Department: Ranch Re-entry Assistance Program (RRAP) – no date available on document.
- 10.) Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital Systems Juvenile Probation Medical Services – Juvenile Hall/Juvenile Ranches Annual Report 2011 (no date provided).
- 11) Transmittal to Board of Supervisors, “Report Back Regarding Recidivism at Youth Ranches,” August 23, 2011.

**Summary:**

The Juvenile Justice Commission has completed its annual inspection of the William F. James Boys’ Ranch. Based on this inspection, the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission believes that the James Ranch meets the requirements of Title 15 of the Welfare and Institutions Code for assuring the safety, well-being, and rehabilitation of youths in a juvenile detention facility. In addition, we believe implementation of the proposed recommendations will lead to better outcomes for youth confined to this facility.

**Approved by the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission on:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Ray Blockie, JJC Chairperson

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Date

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Penelope Blake, James Ranch Inspection Co-Chair

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Date

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Dana Bunnett, James Ranch Inspection Co-Chair

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Date