



# Juvenile Justice Commission County of Santa Clara

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## Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission William F. James Ranch Inspection Report July 2013

### 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 Ranch in April 2013 pursuant to California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 229. Eight Commissioners inspected the facility and met with Probation staff, the school's principal and certificated staff, service providers, the youth, and their families. All visits to the Ranch were pre-arranged. This report summarizes the information gathered during visits that took place on from April through the first week of June.

The 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 (Ranch) is a residential rehabilitative program operated by the Santa Clara County Probation Department for youth ages 12 to 18 years old. The Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Court commits youth to the program. The goal of the program is to give youth the tools needed to successfully reintegrate into their families and communities. The Ranch is located on Malaguerra Avenue in Morgan Hill, California.

The licensed capacity of 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. On May 20, 2013 there were 65 youth at the Ranch with a waiting list of 10 (5 new commitments and 5 returning as a result of Administrative Ranch Reviews).

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

Gender & Ethnicity	Female	Male	Asian	Black	Caucasian	Hispanic	Other	Total
James Ranch	3	62	3	11	5	46	0	65

Age	13	14	15	16	17	18	Total
James Ranch	0	3	9	20	27	6	65

### Ranch Waiting List

New Commitments	Female	Male	Total
	0	5	5
ARR Status (Administrative Ranch Review)	Female	Male	Total
	1	4	5
TOTAL			10

### III. STAFFING

The Probation Department assigns staff to the Ranch. The Ranch staff includes:

#### First Shift (0630-1430)

- 1 Probation Manager
- Minimum of 1 Supervising Probation Counselor
- Varies, however a minimum of 14 Probation Counselors II
- Probation Counselors I Varies

#### Second Shift (1430-2230)

- 1 Probation Manager on call
- Minimum of 1 Supervising Probation Counselor
- Varies, however a minimum of 14 Probation Counselors II
- Probation Counselors I Varies

#### Third Shift (2230-0630)

- 1 Probation Manager on call
- 12 Probation Assistants

Extra Help Counselors are assigned to the James Ranch on an as needed basis.

Of the above positions, 10 staff, including supervisors, are certified as bilingual in Spanish, 1 in Korean and 1 in Vietnamese.

Due to the nature of the rotating shift schedule it is not possible to provide exact numbers of staff by classification for each shift as the staff schedules rotate every 28 days.

Supervising Probations Counselors manage:

- The seven pods and treatment programs at the Ranch;
- The Enterprise Program;
- Oversee and are responsible for the youth's treatment needs including case planning, multi-disciplinary team meetings, etc.;
- Internal Affairs;
- The EDGE Program, a community education program that is run in conjunction with the County Office of Education;

## **IV. FACILITY**

### **Facility Overview**

The James Ranch was built in 1956 and contains a dormitory that 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.

The younger boys and the girls are housed in separate newer modular units. These pods also have their own bathrooms and semi-private showers. At the initial inspection, the Commissioners noted that privacy glass had been installed in the shower stalls of both pods. Because of the location of these two units, fresh water is stored in coolers and kept in each pod. Commissioners also found that fresh fruit was out on the tables. We were informed that the fruit was brought to the pods each morning after breakfast as the younger boys and the girls returned.

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. During the initial inspection, Commissioners noticed that the sofas and armchairs were in poor condition. However, we were later notified that new sofas were put in on May 6, 2013. Commissioners examined the new furniture on May 14, 2013 during a follow-up inspection. Each pod received three sofas. Two of the pods received a combination of two sofas and a two-seater due to lack of space. The sofas were specially ordered to have no legs, buttons, or loose cushions. We were advised that the estimated life of the furniture was two years.

The older boys are housed in the original five pods of James Ranch. These pods are much smaller with six bunk beds positioned around a small living area with a couch and television. During the initial inspection, Commissioners saw that privacy screens had been installed in the shower area. Each stall is now separated by a screen. Commissioners were also informed that a rolling screen had been purchased to provide further privacy for the older boys. Commissioners were told that the Ranch also plans to install half curtains for each shower stall.

Inspectors noted that Pods A and B are smaller than Pods C, D, F and G and that the living arrangements did feel somewhat crowded even though there were only 8 to 10 youth assigned to each of these units. In each unit, a list of public defenders’ phone numbers was posted next to a grievance box. All fire extinguishers and alarms had been serviced and were present in all pods.

Commissioners noticed pictures taken by the youth were framed and hung on the walls of the recreation room and the older boys’ housing units. Each picture was taken by a youth at the Ranch and was accompanied by a quote. There were also pictures that had been purchased that were not taken by the youth.

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.

Commissioners also noted that signage still contained the name “James Boys Ranch” and it continues to be the Commission’s recommendation that the reference to “Boys” be removed.

## **Kitchen and Cafeteria**

Two Commissioners met with the Probation Food Services Manager on April 26 to tour the kitchen and cafeteria and review the food service program. A follow-up visit was made on May 14, 2013.

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 that contained portions and nutritional values.

The kitchen currently serves between 80 to 100 juveniles and staff per day. At the time of the inspection, 32 youth were receiving a double portion and 4 youth were receiving special meals as ordered by Medical staff. Orders for special diets are maintained until the youth is released.

The Food Services Manager uses the NutraKids program for developing menus, standardized recipes and tracking nutritional information. The USDA National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program guidelines are adhered to for breakfast and lunch and the Title 15 guidelines are also adhered to for all three meals.

To comply with the 2010 Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act (HHFKA), all menus and recipes have been changed and are pending certification by the end of the school year (June 30, 2013) to meet the new stricter standards.

Standards include:

Minimum/maximum calorie per meal/day

Nutrition specific minimums and maximums per day/week (whole grains, vegetables according to color, proteins, fruit, etc.)

The Nutrakids software program includes the HHFKA information on a limited number of food items. The Food Services Manager has dedicated a significant amount of time to converting all the menus and recipes to meet these new standards. The certification application was completed and submitted in December 2012, with approval expected well ahead of the deadline. Once certified, food services will receive an additional reimbursement of \$.06 per meal.

Youth are served three meals per day and one snack before bedtime and are served in rotating shifts. As a result of a recommendation made in the 2012 Inspection Report, the younger boys and the girls are provided with fresh fruit throughout the day in their pods. During interviews with some of the youth, it was noted that they are still hungry and the fruit is not enough.

Commissioners observed:

1. The light fixtures had not been cleaned in a while and a build-up of material was noted. During our follow-up visit this had been addressed and the light fixtures were cleaned and or replaced.
2. While there was no food spoilage issues noted, the temperature log book for the walk-in and reach in refrigerators indicated a problem with the thermometers. During our follow-up visit the thermometers had been replaced/serviced and the logs were moved to the outside of each unit. This allows for immediate visual observation of temperature variations.
3. Walk-in unit 1 indicated a presence of higher than normal humidity and the seals on the floor seams may have been compromised.

The kitchen is small and out-of-date, but is clean and functioning well. Thermometers are calibrated twice a day and the food temperatures are monitored regularly. To maintain safe temperature control, food is contained in hot boxes between groups.

The Food Services Manager has an experienced staff, with two lead cooks (one per shift) that are Serv-Safe certified. The Food Services Manager is working towards staff certification.

### **General Health and Safety**

While visiting the Computer classroom, Commissioners noticed the electric fans in operation during the class. There is a wall unit which provides some cool air, but we were told that the circuit breaker is tripped more than occasionally by the unit, allowing the room to overheat, along with the computers. At times, it is necessary to run a large utility AC cord to the adjacent room that is not a short distance away. The heavy cord is not only a tripping hazard, but the makeshift remedy is most impractical and the Commissioners felt, unsafe. It seemed to be a permanent arrangement, and there was no plan in place for addressing this potential health and safety hazard.

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

The ERP was introduced to the James Ranch site in August, 2006. The ERP is based on an “evidenced-based practice often 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:

1. **Staff Development and Coaching** – 96 hours of instruction in a Cognitive Based Treatment model of group counseling. This instruction is supported by ongoing mentoring and coaching.
2. **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, meet to consider all relevant information and to develop a treatment plan.
3. **Family Atmosphere** - The smaller treatment groups of 10 to 12 youth and the personalized living space create a more homelike atmosphere. Each pod has a central meeting area that is furnished like a large family room.
4. **Group Process** – Small group counseling supports the personal development of each youth. Youth are encouraged to talk about personal problems with the group.
5. **Small Staff-to-Youth Ratios** –Low ratios allow for the staff to interact and work closely with the youth rather than just monitor them.
6. **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.
7. **Personal Enhancement Opportunities** – A variety of activities such as sports, religious activities and workshops are offered to the youth.

8. **Extended Length of Stay** – The “in custody” program increased from a six month to an eight month stay with a six month Aftercare program.
9. **Relationship Building** – One-on-one relationships between line staff and youth build trust and encourage the youth to participate in group work.
10. **Education** – The County Office of Education provides a school day of 300 minutes.
11. **Aftercare Programs** – Additional programs and supports are offered to youth after they leave the Ranch to support the youth’s success when he or she returns home. Aftercare Counselors receive 40 hours of additional training when they are assigned to this position.

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 begins to spend time at home on weekends.)

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

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

James Ranch has conducted the “Teaching Pro Social Skills Program” (TIPS) for the past eight years. The program was in operation before the Enhanced Ranch Program (ERP) was implemented at the Ranch. This is a ten-week program that concentrates on behavior issues such as aggression. The premise of the program is to provide alternative behavior choices by teaching “pro-social skills” Mindful behavior, based on Cognitive Behavior Therapy, is used. The three main components are:

1. Anger Control—Practicing alternatives to emotional reactions in stressful situations
2. Skill Streaming—A teaching model that helps the youth put into practice alternative, positive behaviors, replacing aggressive behaviors. The youth are encouraged to role-play, acting out real or imaginary stressful situations, using the skill-streaming techniques.
3. Moral Reasoning—Teaching a value system and understanding, whereby the youth are encouraged to put themselves in the other person’s place. This is most often practiced during role-playing.

The underlying purpose is to help replace learned thinking with an alternative perception of situations and behaviors; encouraging the youth to question previous ways in which they conducted themselves and perceived others. The classes are held 3 times a week for 1 ½ hours for 10 weeks, giving the youth the opportunity to practice these skills. The goal is that this repeated practice of alternative ways to handle stressful situations will provide the tools needed to deal with life and its problems once they leave James Ranch. Youth who have completed the 10-week program continue to participate with the others, and Commissioners observed some mentoring by the more seasoned youth of their newer classmates.

Juvenile Justice Commissioners attended 2 TIPS classes. Role-play took up a great part of the classes, as did discussion and self-evaluation after each scenario. The classes observed consisted of 12 boys each, with the Pod Counselors as facilitators. In both classes, the counselors were encouraging, but did not interfere. They kept the group engaged and on topic. Their 16 hours of specialized TIPS training was obvious in the way they guided the youth. There were suggestions and questions from the others in the group. The boys had been given homework assignments and were to develop real or imaginary scenarios where they would find themselves in situations that were stressful. They were asked to name their “triggers” in these situations, whereby they had to analyze internal and external factors that could “trigger” their anger. They were then asked to concentrate on their particular “stress reducers” that they

had previously identified as helpful for them. The young men were asked to recognize their particular “body cues” so they could be more aware of their pending agitation, paying special attention to their tone of voice, body stance and accelerated breathing. As the role-play concluded, the youth were given an opportunity to engage in a dialogue with their classmates, reflecting on the manner in which each had handled the role-play situation, discussing their use of TIPS methods and ways in which they used their newly-learned skills could have, utilized. Their insight was impressive, and the role-play showed an understanding of the program’s goals. The youth were praised as they went through this process, both by their peers and the counselors.

According to Probation Staff, many youth are returned to Juvenile Hall because of anger management issues, such as fighting and domestic violence when a youth is off-site on a home visit, (OT).

Commissioners viewed the TIPS Program as a much-needed, innovative and well-run program for youth at the Ranch. Commissioners were also impressed with the manner in which counselors interacted with the youth, eliciting their participation. This was particularly impressive because of various gang affiliations of the youth. Gang affiliation was certainly not apparent during Commissioners' visits.

Commissioners inquired about staffing. There are only 2 Master Trainers whose responsibilities are to train all Counselors. One Master Trainer is the Supervising Probation Manager, in charge of most Ranch procedures and personnel; who has very little or no time to devote to training. The second Master-Trainer is a Supervising Probation Counselor with 13 years of experience. Neither Master Trainer was able to attend the latest TIPS Refresher Course due to other extensive work obligations and/or priorities.

### **Aftercare Program**

The NCCD’s report indicated that minors participating in ERP performed better than their predecessors while in physical custody and 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.

With the goal of decreasing recidivism and improving success in the community, the Probation Department sought and received funding starting in late Spring 2012 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:

1. Safety – Youth will be safe at home, in the community and will do no harm to themselves or others.
2. Substance Abuse – All youth and family will play an active role in their own recovery.
3. Domestic Violence – All youth and family will be in safe relationships (non-violent, non-controlling).
4. Gang Activity – Decrease in criminal street gang activity.
5. Education/Vocational – All youth will either be in school and/or have graduated or received their GED and working.
6. Parental Support – Parents will be ready to keep their youth safe at home, in the community, and at school/work.
7. Peer Mentoring – Each youth will be surrounded by peer mentors who have successfully moved through similar problems.

8. Culture & Environment – Every youth will have new skills to better navigate their home and community.

The components of RRAP include:

1. Sixty days prior to release, an MDT will be assembled to create a highly responsive, individualized Re-entry plan.
2. 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 evening 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.
3. For the first 10 weeks the youth is home, there are strict guidelines and this is officially a “pre-release program.
4. Case management and supervision is sustained for a period of six months.
5. 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 of minors while they transition back to the community.
6. Wraparound 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 model is similar for youth 18 years and older leaving the Ranch, however, there is no funding to provide wraparound services.

The Family Preservation Unit supervises the RRAP program and also supervises probation officers who are supporting other probation youth who are being placed in the community. This supervisor generally works at the Probation Department and visits the James Ranch periodically. Currently there are five probation officers assigned to this unit. Of those currently assigned, one probation officer is certified bilingual in Vietnamese and one is certified bilingual in Spanish. All but one of the probation officers assigned to RRAP is female.

Given the intensive work the probation officers provide to the youth leaving the Ranch, the ratio of probation officers to youth may need to be increased, and it may also be valuable to place a probation supervisor at the Ranch. Also, in order to enhance communication with the families of the youth, there should be more probation officers who are bilingual.

### **Evaluation of the RRAP**

NCCD will partner with the Santa Clara County Probation Department to complete:

1. A process evaluation to document stakeholder support and measure service coordination.
2. Data collection and analysis of system data to monitor performance measures and evaluate the effectiveness of this implementation project.



3. A final report that demonstrates a step-by-step guide for replication of the program for use by other jurisdictions.

The evaluation of the strategic impact and effectiveness will be designed using a quasi-experimental model. NCCD will create a statistical control group using participants who exited the ranch from the three years prior to the start of the grant. One cohort from each of the three prior years will be selected, leading to a control group of 420 youth. Each of the cohorts will be matched on race/ethnicity, gender, age, home language, and severity of the offense. Outcome measures for participants during the grant period will then be compared with the outcomes for the baseline group to see if the program was effective.

### **Multidisciplinary Team Meetings (MDT)**

Each youth is involved in three MDT meetings while at the Ranch. The first is held at his/her 30-day anniversary, with the second scheduled at the 60-day mark, and the third, (Exit MDT) 90 days before their release. The parents/guardians are expected to participate in these meetings, as well as the youth's Pod Counselors, Probation Officer, and a counselor from one or more of the Community Based Organizations, (CBO), who will be guiding them for a 6-month period after leaving the Ranch. Additional staff who have worked with the youth during his/her residency participate in these meetings as well, in particular the Exit MDT. County Office of Education, (COE), also has a representative present, as the minor generally will be returning to an educational facility of some kind.

Commissioners were present at a 60-day MDT for one young man. The meeting was facilitated by the Aftercare Probation Officer. Most of the attendees at the meeting had an already established relationship or had met at least once with the youth. The parent was unable to attend the meeting. The education representative was not at the meeting but will attend the meeting 30 days prior to the youth's leaving the Ranch. 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 brought up some of the challenges that he would be facing in the community and seemed receptive to the supports and services he would be receiving. The Mental Health therapist appeared very familiar with the youth, and seemed to have great input regarding the youth's needs, strengths, weaknesses and substance-abuse issues. The MDT team was instrumental in laying out a plan for the youth as he was preparing himself for life outside the facility. This exchange of ideas and information, with the youth's participation at the table, seemed to be an effective way to elicit the young man's efforts for success on his own behalf. This MDT premise was impressive, particularly since the young man's endeavors and behavior would be followed and monitored for a 6-month period after his release. JJC participants were impressed with the level of caring and compassion for the youth expressed by the MDT participants.

## **VI. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

### **Data Management of Incident Reports, Grievances, and Appeals**

#### **Incident Reports**

The Juvenile Justice Commission reviews incident reports for James Ranch monthly and also as part of the inspection process. In reviewing the incident reports this year, the JJC is concerned about the increasing use of restraints (physical, mechanical or both) for youth at the Ranch and the increasing level of violent behavior. Below is a table that shows their use over the past 24 months:

<b>4-month Period</b>	<b>Total Restraints Used*</b>	<b># Fights</b>	<b># Assaults</b>
<b>May – Aug 2011</b>	27	4	6
<b>Sept – Dec 2011</b>	27	6	1
<b>Jan – April 2012</b>	27	10	4
<b>May – Aug 2012</b>	36	13	4
<b>Sept. – Dec 2012</b>	55	22	7
<b>Jan – April 2013</b>	59	19	11

*\*As identified on the monthly “Salient Features” report includes “Restraints-Mechanical Only,” “Restraints – Physical Only” and “Restraints – Both.” The numbers from May 2011 through April 2012 is a total representing restraints used at the James Ranch and the Muriel Wright Center.*

Given the philosophical approach of the ERP, the JJC believes the use of restraints should be the last resort at the Ranch and that it is important for Ranch management to conduct a thorough analysis of this increased use of restraints. The JJC is also concerned about the increase in fights and assaults. Questions that should be considered include:

1. Where the fights, assaults and use of restraints are occurring?
2. When they are occurring?
3. What are the characteristics of the youth engaged in the violent behavior and those being restrained? (Boys, girls, age, length of time at the Ranch, offenses.)
4. Who are the staff involved?
5. What were the antecedents to the behavior?

It is noticeable that the first big jump in use of restraints occurred after the Muriel Wright Center closed and the younger youth and females moved to the James Ranch. It was noted in the 2012 inspection report that Pods A and B “did feel somewhat crowded even though there were only 8-10 youth assigned to each of these units.” During this year’s inspection process, it was noted that these pods now usually house 10 to 12 youth.

The Ranch manager has indicated that she has also been aware of the increasing fights at the Ranch and the increasing use of restraints. As a result, in March of this year, she began working with the counselors and other staff at the Ranch regarding these issues. Focusing on these issues appears to have helped. In April and May there was a decrease in the number of fights at the Ranch. These efforts should continue and should be monitored by a thorough analysis of the data.

### **Administrative Ranch Review (ARR)**

Administrative Ranch Reviews occur when a youth is having difficulty adapting to the ERP program. It may be used when a youth has behavior that is difficult to manage or may even have attempted to escape. In these cases, the Ranch manager will make a decision to have the youth return to Juvenile Hall for a designated amount of time. This “time-out” allows the youth to consider his goals and whether she or he can benefit from the Ranch program. It also allows management at the Ranch to reevaluate the pod that the youth lives in and if placement in another pod will lead to better results. When a youth on an ARR returns to the Ranch, he or she usually does not have to start the program over and is placed on the level he or she was when the ARR occurred.

Between May 2012 and April 2013, 74 youth were sent to Juvenile Hall for an Administrative Ranch Review at least one time. (Note: Some youth received more than one ARR for a total of 89 ARR’s during

this time period.) Of those, 64 are still engaged in the Ranch program or have completed the Ranch program.

### **Grievances and Appeals**

Grievances - 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 the Ranch. 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 a person in authority hear a grievance who is not directly related to the circumstance leading to the grievance.

Appeals -The juveniles at James Ranch may appeal disciplinary actions.

There were three grievances and two appeals filed in 2012 and none has been filed in 2013 at the time of the inspection. (In the last inspection there were eight grievances and appeals filed in the previous twelve months.) These five grievances and appeals filed in 2012 appeared to be handled appropriately. It is noted by Commissioners that the ERP model lends itself to more discussion of behavior and consequences with the minors and that a low number of appeals and grievances is not necessarily a reason for concern.

When asked, most of the minors at the Ranch said they understood the appeals and grievance procedures and felt they would be comfortable filing either. A small and vocal group of youth told the Commissioners that they did not think the process worked and therefore would never fill out a grievance or appeal. One youth felt that his writing skills were not good enough for him to complete an appeal.

### **VII. MEDICAL SERVICES**

Prior to arriving at James Ranch, all youth are given a comprehensive medical and dental exam while in Juvenile Hall. The James Ranch nurse receives a hard copy of each youth's medical record as they are transitioned from Juvenile Hall (JH) to the Ranch. At the time of release from the Ranch, the youth's parent/guardian is provided an updated Medical Summary, indicating all immunizations, medications and any additional medical information.

The nurse keeps a daily log of medications administered to each individual youth as she makes her rounds each morning and evening, pushing a locked cart from one housing unit to the next. It is the Primary Nurse's responsibility to document every incident and contact with each youth in their file, as well as entering the information into the computer, which can be accessed by other nursing staff and authorized personnel at Juvenile Hall. She coordinates doctor, dental and procedural appointments. Some medications are administered privately in the nurse's office, preserving the youth's medical privacy. That would include insulin injections, after the nurse tested the minor's blood levels. She also keeps a monthly log, showing sick calls. This log translates into an annual medical data sheet. In 2012, 1,277 sick calls were documented, averaging 107 per month. Documented sick calls January through April, 2013 have numbered 399, or 100 per month. The potential for increased sick calls and medical issues seems greater with the addition of the girls and younger boys from the Muriel Wright Center (MWC) to the Ranch. The nature of sick calls/medical care and appointments range from X-ray appointments, emergency dental

care at Juvenile Hall, lab work, blood tests, cuts, colds, fevers, allergies and bee stings. If a minor has a fever, injury, or something else that may need to be addressed, the Primary Nurse leaves an index card for the evening nurse as a form of “charting” so that there’s continuity in the youth’s medical care. In the nurse’s absence, Supervising Ranch Counselors are trained in video camera operation, which is located in the nurse’s office. This video conferencing allows Ranch staff live triage with medical staff at Juvenile Hall. If a determination is made for the youth to be personally examined, the Ranch staff transports the youth to Juvenile Hall or to Valley Medical Center (VMC), based on the triage assessment. The youth remains at the determined facility until released by a physician or nurse to return to the Ranch.

The nurse’s office consists of three small rooms. The first room houses office supplies, a computer, video camera, defibrillator and medical files, which are kept in a locked cabinet. Only the duty nurse has access to this cabinet. A second small exam room has an adjoining bathroom. The last room is locked. Only the duty nurse has access to this area. Prescriptions, including psychotropic drugs, as well as over-the-counter remedies, are stored here. They are prescribed by a VMC physician or psychiatrist and are delivered once a week. If there is an immediate need, a prescription can be delivered by taxi from VMC. When a youth is released from the Ranch, their medical records are returned, updated, to Juvenile Hall. All Ranch counselors are trained in the use of defibrillators. This annual, mandatory training includes CPR and any additional instruction necessary for the care of the youth. Defibrillators are located in each pod and the cafeteria. The primary duty nurse personally trains all staff counselors in the use of Epi-Pens. One is located in each living unit. Bees are a constant presence on-site, and staff is prepared for sudden allergic reaction to bee stings or other influences.

The Ranch nurse stated that parents are kept informed throughout a minor’s stay at the Ranch during Multi-Disciplinary-Team (MDT) meetings. They are also notified if a youth is determined to have a medical issue that needs to be addressed. She said she cannot remember an instance where there was a language problem in communicating with the youth regarding their medical care. Currently, there are no pregnant girls at the Ranch, but OB/GYN care is available through VMC. The youth are provided reproductive health instruction while residing at Juvenile Hall, however, she stated she addresses any inquiries regarding sexually transmitted diseases (STD’s) when needed, and hands out a generic pamphlet to youth which addresses the issue. Condoms are also provided the youth upon request prior to home visits, (OT).

A pediatrician is on-site on Thursdays from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM to personally address the minors’ needs. A psychiatrist is at the Ranch on Mondays, meeting with youth and Mental Health Therapists. The Primary Ranch Nurse has worked at James Ranch for 7 years and previously at Juvenile Hall for 2 years, with prior experience at Santa Clara County Main Jail for 7 years. She is supervised by a Nurse Manager of Custody Health Services for Santa Clara County.

A part-time nurse works 3 evenings a week from 6 to 10PM on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The full-time staff nurse works a split shift 2 days a week, as follows:

Monday-7AM to 3PM  
Tuesday-7AM to 11AM  
Wednesday-7AM to 11AM  
Thursday-7AM to 3PM  
Friday-7AM to 3PM

Evening Nurse 6PM to 10PM  
Returning to Ranch 6PM to 10PM  
Returning to Ranch 6PM to 10PM  
Evening Nurse 6PM to 10PM  
Evening Nurse 6PM to 10PM

The Friday 7AM to 3PM shift, just recently implemented-had previously been a split-shift as well. Weekends are covered by relief nursing staff as follows:

Saturday-7AM to 11AM  
Sunday-7AM to 11AM

Returning to Ranch 6PM to 10PM  
Returning to Ranch 6PM to 10PM

Currently, Saturday and Sunday are the primary nurse's days off, and a relief staff nurse fills in, working the split-shift as well. This is also the evening procedure when she is on vacation. A Ranch nurse is available on-site 68 hours per week, but there is no duty nurse available at the Ranch for 7 hours during the day on Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday, for 3 hours each day on Monday, Thursday and Friday, and 9 hours each night. Commissioners feel that the split shift schedule for nursing staff does not meet the needs of the youth at the Ranch and leaves too many hours without on-site coverage. During the inspection process, Commissioners witnessed the nurse staying past her scheduled work hours in order to complete computer and written log entries, to follow-up with ill or injured youth, and to administer prescribed noon-time medications. The nursing schedule should be re-evaluated to ensure youth have adequate care. It should be noted that during the hours when no on-site nurse is available, Ranch staff has access to the Tele-Nursing system, allowing the minor to be assessed by a licensed, registered nurse at Juvenile Hall.

## **VIII. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Mental Health Services at James Ranch are supervised by the Probation Department and administered under the umbrella of County Mental Health (CMH). The on-site Mental Health services are provided by Starlight Community Services, contracted as the primary Mental Health Services provider while a youth is in residence at the Ranch, with substantial assistance from Pathway Society counselors, as care is needed by the youth for substance abuse issues. Seneca Center becomes involved with transitional assistance, or Support Enhancement Services, (SES), as the youth leaves the Ranch. Care is then provided by the Ranch Re-Entry Assistance Program, (RRAP). When there is an indication of sexual abuse, Juvenile Probation may request that a Superior Court Judge generate an order, enlisting the services of Gardner Health Center. The direct oversight of Mental Health at James Ranch is provided by the Starlight Community Services Aftercare Manager.

The portion of this inspection dealing with the Ranch Substance Abuse Program will be addressed separately in this report.

Therapists receive mental health information from Juvenile Hall as the youth is transferred to the Ranch. Each youth is seen by a therapist within three days after arrival, with full orientation taking place within five days to ensure the youth's mental health needs are addressed early-on. Contact and counseling is done much sooner if there are suicide concerns. The Mental Health therapist meets with the Valley Medical Center's, (VMC), Psychiatrist weekly, (Mondays), to discuss the needs of the youth who are scheduled to see him. On an average Monday, we were told, the Psychiatrist will counsel six youth. The Supervising Therapist keeps in touch with the Ranch Psychiatrist on a regular basis by phone or e-mail, keeping him updated on individual youth. Clinicians are able to communicate with the Ranch Psychiatrist by email, and stated they do so regularly. None of the therapists could recall an incident in the last twelve months when the Psychiatrist was not available by phone if needed. At any time a therapist or psychiatrist, pod counselor, or any staff observes behavior or overhears a comment by a youth, indicating suicidal thoughts or actions, the Supervising Therapist is immediately notified in person or by phone (she is available twenty-four hours a day/seven days a week). The youth is transported to Juvenile Hall (JH), and the Director of JH Mental Health is notified by phone. The minor remains at JH

for evaluation and treatment, and returns to the Ranch when the Mental Health Team makes that determination that the youth is ready to return .

Each therapist keeps a personal mental health file on each youth assigned to them containing pertinent, private notes regarding medication, issues currently being worked on with the client, family concerns to keep in mind-anything of concern to the youth or therapist. Mental Health maintains these files, which can be accessed by another therapist in the primary's absence. A "Universal File" containing basic, private information is kept current by the psychiatrist and the minor's therapist. These are kept in locked cabinets in the Nurse's Office. The Ranch Nurse retains the key to the Universal Files, and they are available to authorized staff only.

The Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) 2012 James Ranch Report had recommended that a formal policy be developed addressing planned and unplanned absences by Ranch Psychiatrists to ensure adequate and in-person services, (non-tele-psychiatry) are available without interruption for lack of coverage. There is now a formal, written policy in place that appears to have eliminated Commissioners' concerns. Additionally, the Commissioners had suggested after their 2012 inspection that Mental Health counselors have adequate, appropriate and private areas for face-to-face counseling, scheduled or impromptu. Therapists have stated the lack of counseling space no longer seems to be an issue, and that they have been able to secure private areas for one-on-one counseling of the youth. We were also told that each counselor had been provided a two-way radio for safety, and that all devices were fully functional.

The Mental Health Therapists participate in each of the youth's Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meetings. Each youth is involved in three MDT meetings while at the Ranch. The first is held at his/her 30-day anniversary, with the second scheduled at the 60-day mark, and the third, (Exit MDT) 90 days before their release . The parents/guardians are expected to participate in these meetings, as well as the youth's Pod Counselors, Probation Officer, and a counselor from one or more of the Community Based Organizations, (CBO), who will be guiding them for a 6-month period after leaving the Ranch. Additional staff who have worked with the youth during his/her residency participate in these meetings as well, in particular the Exit MDT. County Office of Education, (COE), also has a representative present, as the minor generally will be returning to an educational facility of some kind. Commissioners were present at a 60-day MDT for one young man. The Mental Health therapist appeared very familiar with the youth, and seemed to have great input regarding the youth's needs, strengths, weaknesses and substance-abuse issues. They were instrumental in laying out a plan for the youth as he was preparing himself for life outside the facility. This exchange of ideas and information, with the youth's participation at the table, seemed to be an effective way to elicit the young man's efforts for success on his own behalf. An Aftercare Counselor , who had successfully worked with the youth during his Ranch stay, was assigned to work with the youth after release. This MDT premise was impressive, particularly since the young man's endeavors and behavior would be followed and monitored for a 6-month period after his release.

To better serve the youth at the Ranch, Mental Health staff members have been conducting weekly meetings that include the therapists, counselors, and CBO staff. The purpose is to re-assess each client's needs, substance abuse issues, ranch and family relationship adjustments and the youth's progress at the Ranch. These frequent and interactive meetings are a strong indication of an ongoing, collaborative attempt to address each youth as his/her needs and behavior change.

Mental Health Staff has provided diagnosis training to Probation Counselors at their request. They have also worked with counselors, teaching skills to deal with difficult behavior by the youth, assisting the counselors by offering alternatives and insight regarding youths' behaviors. Time and heavy assignment of youth-to-therapist have not permitted these classes on a regular basis. Commissioners believe that Mental Health training is beneficial to all Ranch Probation staff, and suggest this idea be investigated and concentrated efforts be undertaken for its implementation on a regularly-scheduled basis.

Mental Health Staff is made up of two full-time Counselors, two Interns, and one Supervising Clinical Therapist. One of the full-time therapists is fluent in Spanish. One part-time therapist is fluent in Vietnamese. The Starlight's Program Manager is on-site at the Ranch once a week, and the Assistant Administrator for Starlight Community Services is present at James Ranch on a monthly basis. Each Mental Health Therapist has a caseload of 24 youth. Last year, assigned youth per therapist numbered approximately 20. Being mindful that each therapist deals with the client's family and often extended family as well, this number most likely would rise considerably. Added to this, with the addition of the younger boys and girls from Muriel Wright Center (MWC), there were added differences in the types of therapy needed. Therapists noted that concerns for young women and boys 15 ½ and younger differ greatly from those of the older boys. Impulsive behaviors by the younger boys, along with medication issues, are instrumental in changing the manner in which they are counseled. In addition, counseling the young women presents many different types of problems as well. When questioned about a reasonable caseload, the therapists all agreed that 15 would be manageable to enable each therapist to provide skilled and caring counseling for their charges. Regarding staff sufficiency, the Commissioners felt the staff-to-youth ratio is daunting when Ranch population reaches the high 60's or low 70's, given the responsibility level of each clinician. The general feeling by the Commissioners was that the therapists were attempting to sustain their high standards with too few staff. When sorting out the numbers, it appeared that additional clinicians would allow that good level of care to continue.

### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE SERVICES**

Pathway Society, Inc., a Community Based Organization, (CBO), is the primary Substance Abuse Service Provider for the youth at James Ranch. The Pathway On-Site and Aftercare Director has been involved in youth services for nine years, having counseled youth previously at Harold Holden Ranch For Boys and Muriel Wright Center, (MWC). The girls and younger boys, ages 15 ½ and younger, were integrated into the James Ranch population in 2011 when the MWC facility closed. There are currently three full-time therapists, one part-time therapist and one part-time Intern. All are supervised by the Director. All therapists are assigned to the Aftercare Program, where they continue to counsel and guide their clients and work with the youth's family and school after they are released from the Ranch. Staff works independently in most counseling assignments. One therapist speaks Spanish, one speaks Punjabi, and one speaks Hindi. Pathway is currently seeking funding for an additional Spanish-speaking therapist, but funding has not yet been approved.

In 2011, changes were implemented, increasing the collaborative efforts of Pathway, Mental Health, Probation, and Ranch support counselors to ensure that the therapist most familiar with each youth is assigned to follow that minor into the six-month Aftercare Program. This change has shown positive results, compared to past practice of post-Ranch counselor assignment. The particular therapist assigned to the youth can be chosen from a CBO, such as Seneca Center or the Probation Department in collaboration with Pathway Aftercare Services. There are many CBOs from which to choose for referral in assisting the youth, each with its own specialty, and carefully selected, based on that client's needs.

The American Society of Addiction Medicine, (ASAM), provides the basic Assessment Plan utilized at Juvenile Hall to determine a youth's drug and alcohol involvement and risk level. The Department of Drug and Alcohol Services, (DADS), oversees this plan. This assessment tool is employed again at James Ranch after a youth has transferred to that facility. When a minor is initially assessed, there are three Risk Groups that guide the Substance Abuse Team regarding a treatment plan:

1. **HIGH RISK:** History of suicidal concerns, blackouts, experimentation with drugs and alcohol, use of methamphetamine, cocaine, ecstasy, current use of prescription medications, hospitalization due to drug or alcohol overdose, crimes committed under the influence of a

substance, family death related to drug use, use of substances during home visits, or positive drug test after a home visit.

2. MEDIUM RISK; History of prescription drug use (self and/or family), signs of possible or assumed withdrawal after visit home (OT), confessed “urges” while on OT, expressed wanting to use, expressed plan to return to using after release.
3. LOW RISK; Occasional marijuana use, alcohol use, no documented history of drug use.

While a youth is a Ranch resident, the Substance Abuse Team uses Cognitive Behavior Skills tools to help prepare youth for life situations they will encounter after their release from the Ranch. Currently, all youth participate in The Seven Challenges Program. The Seven Challenges Program is a nationally-recognized model of system change that has been implemented through a partnership with the Probation Department and the Department of Drug and Alcohol Services., providing youth within the Juvenile Justice System greater access to substance abuse services. It is a SAMHSA-registered (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration), evidence-based model, designed specifically for adolescents with drug and alcohol problems, to motivate them to make a commitment to change, and supporting their commitment for that desired change.

A great part of this program is based on journaling. The journals are exchange weekly with a Journaling Therapist as an ongoing dialogue in this therapy process. The completion of nine journals generally takes approximately twenty weeks. The program is dependent on the youth’s therapeutic work and progress. It was pointed out that some youth are not confident in their language and written communication skills, falling into lower grade level comprehension, thus making the journaling assignment a discouraging process. If an assessment is made that a youth’s issues have changed and a different approach might be warranted, he/she is removed from the Seven Challenges Program, and they are counseled one-on-one. The consensus of the Therapists was that not all minors’ drug and alcohol issues rose to the level of complete immersion in the program, and that in cases where a minor’s issues were substantial, they would significantly benefit from one-on-one counseling. These alterations in treatment services are determined by the assigned Pathway Therapist and the Clinical Supervisor.

There are future plans to strengthen and improve the approach used to assess a youth in determining treatment services. The new premise involves assessment of a youth as they enter the Ranch within three weeks to determine the level of care they will need, decide whether the youth will participate in individual, family or group therapy sessions, and if there is a need for substance abuse treatment. Commissioners asked the Pathway staff about their most serious drug-use and alcohol concerns, issues where the most concentrated efforts are put into use. All agreed that the greatest concerns involved the following:

1. Methamphetamine-felt to be one of the most dangerous substances
2. Alcohol-combining the use of alcohol and any other substance, to include prescription drugs (in particular psychotropic drugs)
3. Cocaine-not too widely used, comparatively speaking.
4. Marijuana

Currently, each full-time Pathway Society therapist has approximately 20 assigned Ranch youth, including individual and group sessions, with 8 additional Aftercare youth. Youth referred to Aftercare will meet with the therapist for the first ten weeks of Aftercare. If there are no reported positive drug tests, the youth will meet with the therapist once every two weeks, with “phone case management” or “as needed” visits. If the youth continues to test positive for drugs, Aftercare sessions are increased in frequency. Counseling includes the youth’s family, extended family, school personnel, and any significant individuals in the youth’s life.



The caseload is daunting, and therapists who most often meet with the minors in their homes, must often interrupt their workday at the Ranch, juggling their time so that they are able to counsel during daylight hours. In many areas safety is an issue. When asked about a more acceptable caseload, the educated estimate by staff for a successful and productive assignment would be 15-youth-per-therapist, to include their Aftercare youth. When questioned, the Pathway Director responded that she had worked with 100 assigned youth in the last year, and stated that “Youth are being most impacted by the therapist’s schedule when there is a high caseload.”

## **IX. EDUCATION**

The education program at the 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 community college if they received graduation certificates at the Ranch; attending their home district’s community school; or attending a comprehensive high school. Students earn 7 ½ credits a month. Beginning with the current academic year (2013-2014), students will need 220 credits (up from 200 credits in previous years) to graduate. These units were added at the direction of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. These credits will count because many of the schools that the students return to require more than 200 credits to graduate. Two days a week, a counselor is on campus to meet with students to review their transcripts and advises them on graduation requirements. Students can use the program, Adventa, to help them with class credit recovery. Other programs that students use are Cyber High and ALEXIS that are computer-based credit recovery systems.

In the recent past, the school served students in grades 9-12. However, in April, 2012, the Muriel Wright Center (MWC) closed. As a result, these students were transferred to the James Ranch campus. The former Wright Center program was open to boys who were 12-15 years old and girls. Students at the Ranch attend classes in the morning or in the afternoon. The girls and younger boys attend class in the morning from 8:00 to 12:15 and the older boys attend classes in the afternoon from 12:45 to 5:00. The average class size for the older Ranch students ranges from twelve to seventeen students. There are approximately five girls and six boys attending separate classrooms in the morning. When the Commissioners visited on April 16 and May 13, 2013, the total number of students at the Ranch was 60. Of these, 42 or 70% were English only speakers and 18 or 30% were English Language Learners (ELLS). One of the 60 students has a “504” plan (This plan outlines special services for those students who qualify such as shortening homework assignments or giving the student extra time to take a test) 9 or 15% are eligible for the Resource Specialist Program (RSP) and 7 or 12% qualify for the Special Day Class (SDC). The Ranch has a full-time SDC teacher and a part-time RSP teacher. An RSP teacher serves the special education students. Also, there is a RSP Assistant who works with special education students as well as two instructional assistants. The SDC students work two periods with an SDC teacher who is a retired teacher. She teaches them Social Studies and English. Then these students work with the RSP teacher on their other subjects for additional support.

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. Students receive letter grades in their subjects based on participation and assignment completion. There are five classroom teachers, a part-time RSP teacher and full-time SDC Teacher. Blue Ridge has a departmentalized structure where the students rotate teachers based on the Master Schedule. Their teachers are credentialed to teach their assigned subjects. When students are not attending academic classes, they attend CTE training. The teachers’ work year ranges from 185 to 210 school days. While some teachers hold classes during the summer, others take the summer off so that substitutes replace them in the classroom. A teacher-in-charge runs the school when the principal is on another assignment and coordinates the GED Program.

When students enter the Ranch, they are assessed in Reading and Math using the Renaissance Star Reading and Math tests. Rather than students continuing to be tested at entry with the Renaissance Reading and Math tests, the principal would like students to take a diagnostic test that identifies areas of weakness. These results would prescribe the instruction students would get to address their academic deficiencies and a subsequent post-test would reveal how much the students had grown. 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 Ranch 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 of probation-like status).

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.

When the principal was interviewed, he stated he was interested in the students participating in a program called Project-Based Learning. Under this program, students would design a project that interested them. In completing this program, the student would use multiple skills like writing and math calculations. The teachers would collaborate with students and each other to help students complete their projects.

Last year, Commissioners commented on the fact that the principal was at the site one day a week. One recommendation was that the principal spend more than one day at the site and visit classrooms more often to ensure students were getting rigorous instruction. During this inspection visit, the principal indicated he is at the school 3 to 4 days a week but not always for full days. When he is there, he walks through the classrooms daily. He also meets with the special education staff to ensure students with IEPs (Individual Education Plans) are getting the necessary instruction.

When the Commissioners visited the Ranch last year, there were concerns about the IEPs of RSP students bring up to date. On October 9, 2012, the Commissioners reviewed the students' IEPs. They were found to be in good order. When this information was communicated to the current principal, we asked him if any IEPs were out of date. He believed that two may be but the RSP teacher is in the process of updating these IEPs so the school is compliant.

When the Commissioners visited the classrooms and interviewed the principal in 2012, several concerns were noted in the 2012 inspection report. During the current inspection visit, those concerns were expressed to the current principal, and he provided the following updated information. His responses are italicized.

1. The high school does not offer "A Through G" requirements. These course requirements, offered in many regular education high schools, prepare students for college attendance.  
Response: *The current principal stated the Ranch is still going through the WASC process. If the Ranch attains this accreditation, he believes that students' academic work at the Ranch will be more readily accepted at regular education high schools and colleges.*
2. 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 that will increase to four days a week beginning June 4.

Response: *A Resource Specialist (part-time) sees all the special education students. Also, a full-time SDC teacher works with SDC students for at least two academic periods.*

3. While four tutors were available to help students last year, only one tutor is providing services to students in the current school year.

Response: *The principal stated there were no tutors but two instructional assistants help students in the classroom.*

4. When the Commissioners visited the classrooms, two of the five classrooms had substitutes. In the classes with the substitute teachers, students appeared to be working individually with limited teacher guidance.

Response: *The principal stated the substitute rate was 23% over the entire 12 months. When the Commissioners visited, the only substitute was the full-time SDC teacher.*

5. 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.

Response: *The principal stated he is at the Ranch School 3 to 4 days a week and walks through classrooms every day he is there.*

6. While SDC students' IEPs may be current, the Resource Students had not had theirs updated since their teacher left in April.

Response: *When Commissioners visited in October, 2012, the IEPs appeared to be in order. The principal indicated two IEPS may be overdue for revision but will be brought up to date as soon as possible.*

The 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. Response: *When the Commissioners visited this year, the Ranch school was in good order regarding student furniture in the classrooms.*

## **XI. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

### **Enterprise Program**

The premise of the Enterprise Program at James Ranch is to instill productivity, independence, and self-confidence, with emphasis on work ethic and pride in a finished project. The program is run like a business, with profits from the sale of the youth's projects helping to fund further projects or pay the youth a stipend, which he/she can use to pay off his/her restitution. And, once the restitution is paid, the youth is issued a check for his/her additional earnings when they are released from the ranch.

Daily classes are two hours and forty-five minutes in length for older boys, from 9:00 AM until 11:45 AM. They are two hours in length for Ranch girls and younger boys, ages 14 to 15 ½. Classes are ten weeks in duration, and are monitored by the County Office of Education. The youth are instructed in

basic, level-entry skills in welding, painting, plumbing electrical, heating/air conditioning solar, drywall/sheetrock, cement, masonry, tile-setting, wall-framing, communications wiring and computer skills. Classes are taught by three experienced and skilled instructors, one of whom has worked at James Ranch since 1987. The computer instructor has worked with Ranch youth for over twenty years. Safety is stressed, and the younger boys, (ages 14 and 15), require greater supervision. Instructors will also assist a minor who demonstrates an interest in a specific trade by helping him/her research how and where to become involved in that trade, the current wages and assisting them through the process while they are participating in classes at the Ranch. Other employment or training pursuits were previously addressed through the Aftercare Work Studies Program post Ranch release, however that program has not been in operation or staffed for the past 1 ½ years. Academic instruction takes place in the afternoon after lunch.

In the 2012 Inspection Report, it was recommended that the James Ranch pursue the development of a culinary school and an auto shop. During this inspection, Commissioners were told that funding was not currently available to address either of these concepts.

Commissioners visited the long-running and innovative Computer Class. Speaking with youth, this class seems to be a favorite. The instructor works well with the youth, assigning clever and imaginative tasks that instill basic skills with even beginning, inexperienced students. The class program encompasses technical skills, such as Excel, Power Point, Microsoft Word, and Photo Shop, (which requires the completion of 60 separate projects to receive a certificate of completion). The older boys in this particular class showed obvious enthusiasm for the project they were working on, and several were proud to show the Commissioners their projects as they exited the classroom. This atmosphere was much the same when Commissioners visited the classroom last year, observing the girls. The instructor, a Ranch facilitator for over twenty years, said her class is based on instilling more than basic computer skills. The premise is to build confidence and open up the youths' minds, showing opportunities and avenues by which they can navigate their lives after release from the Ranch. The youth are assisted in filling out college and/or job applications on-line by the instructor, and coached in ways to present themselves in job interviews. Some youth are earning college credits as they participate in classroom assignments. In the past year, five youth have participated in online college courses. One young man had just completed his FAFSA application for class funding at DeAnza College. It was clear that a great deal of care and attention is given to each youth.

While visiting the Computer classroom, Commissioners noticed the electric fans in operation during the class. There is a wall unit which provides some cool air, but we were told that the circuit breaker is tripped more than occasionally by the unit, allowing the room to overheat, along with the computers. At times, it is necessary to run a large utility AC cord to the adjacent room that is not a short distance away. The heavy cord is not only a tripping hazard, but the makeshift remedy is most impractical and the Commissioners felt, unsafe. It seemed to be a permanent arrangement, and there was no plan in place for addressing this potential health and safety hazard.

A highlight of the Enterprise Program is the opportunity for youth who reach Level 3 to work off-site in groups of 3 to 5 from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM four days a week. They work at Santa Clara County Parks, providing them an opportunity for work experience, which can be added to a resume. They used their acquired skills to make metal fire pits, heavy, redwood picnic tables and benches and water troughs that are sold to ranchers and Santa Clara County Parks. This program also provides the youth the possibility of earning \$200 to \$300 during their Ranch stay, which can be applied to their restitution or given them upon their release from the Ranch. The probation clerical Ranch staff keeps track of youth's earnings, based on the number of days in the program. These figures are forwarded to Probation Accounting and Santa Clara County Department of Revenue, (DOR). Any monies in excess of restitution are issued by DOR to the youth after Ranch release.

### **Community-Based Organizations:**

Commissioners were provided with a schedule of programs offered at the Ranch by community based organizations (CBO's), some provided for a contracted fee and some offered free. Some of the programs include male role model programs, reproductive health education, yoga, Girl Scouts, mentoring programs, support groups for specific issues (gang diversion, dealing with sexual assault/abuse.) Commissioners were informed that instructors and workshop leaders receive an orientation to the Ranch prior to their being allowed to work with the youth at the Ranch and ensure fidelity to the Ranch programming.

### **Religious Programs:**

There are two church services (Catholic and Protestant) on Sundays at the Ranch. There are also Bible study classes. Youth with other religious beliefs can also request time with their religious leaders. Religion-based dietary needs are also accommodated at the Ranch.

### **Sports**

One of the most popular sports that youth at the Ranch enjoy is volleyball. Participation in sports and in traveling to sports competitions is voluntary and based on the youth's level and behavior. (The youth must be at a level that allows him/her to travel.) The Ranch participates in two sports leagues. One league is composed of teams from other detention facilities. The other league is composed of alternative education schools and the travel for competition is easier to manage because it is local.

The Ranch also supports on-site sporting events such as a Summer Olympics that allows voluntary participation by all youth. There are also sporting competitions between the pods with teams that are composed of youth and staff.

## **XII. YOUTH AND THEIR FAMILY**

Family visiting days for the older boys at the Ranch are conducted Sunday mornings from 10 am to 12 noon and 1 pm to 3 pm. Visits for the girls and younger boys are conducted Saturday afternoons from 1:30 to 3:30 pm. The parents bring food and drinks to share while the families visit either in the cafeteria or recreation hall. A counselor is always present during these visits.

Commissioners visited with minors, their parents, grandparents and siblings on Sunday, April 28 and Saturday, May 4., at which time, minors and their families were asked about their experiences while at the Ranch. Topics such as orientation, understanding of the grievance process, emergency protocols, MDT participation, inclusion in minor's program progress/failure, and expectations and services available for minors after release were briefly discussed. Minors and families were also asked what they believe to be the strengths and weaknesses of the program. Minors and parents interviewed relayed the following information to the visiting Commissioners:

Minors and families made favorable comments regarding all Ranch staff and the Ranch environment. Minors who very recently entered the program reported they were informed about what is and will be expected of them and they knew how to obtain answers should they have any questions. One minor felt the Ranch Program will teach him better skills which will help him successfully complete the Ranch Program and continue to be successful when he is returned to the community.

Minors reported being informed of the grievance process and one minor said that his counselor “supported” the grievance process in the pods. One parent reported having to contact the Ranch “in the middle of the night” for an urgent matter. She was given answers to her questions and was very pleased with the Ranch staff’s attention and response to her situation. An older boy requested that a tattoo removal program be made available to minors interested in participating. Minors and parents who are bilingual reported no communication problems and that interpretation services are provided when requested. Minors and parents also reported feeling “comfortable” at the Ranch, which they attributed to the country-like setting and the Ranch staff.

Older boys requested that the school schedule be changed so they can attend school in the morning instead of the afternoon, especially during the hot summer days. One father pointed out it might be hotter in the afternoons than the morning hours and it would be better to be in the classroom during the afternoon hours. An older boy also requested that more weights be added in the workout room.

During the girls’ family visits, minors reported being near completion of the Ranch Program. One girl received her high school diploma while at the Ranch and plans to submit a junior college application after her release. Another girl expressed disappointment that her family could not visit her because of the travel distance. Another girl stated that the Ranch Program had been a very positive experience for her and she thought being committed to the Ranch earlier would have been beneficial. She commented that the Ranch programs can be effective for minors who apply themselves. One younger boy did not understand why he had to attend drug counseling classes as he is not a drug user.

The girls expressed disappointment in the lack of availability of sports and exercise programs for them while at the Ranch. An example pointed out was the competitive volleyball tournament between the Ranch and community schools in which only the older boys can participate.

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

1. All personnel at the Ranch (Probation Department Staff, County Office of Education Staff, CBO staff, etc.) should be commended for the support given to the JJC inspection team. Every staff person Commissioners encountered in the process of generating this report were cooperative, and approached the inspection in the spirit of collaboration.
2. The Commission commends the principal for:
  - a. being at the Ranch School more often and for regularly monitoring classroom instruction
  - b. for taking steps to introduce a new instructional program, Program Based Instruction.
  - c. looking into using diagnostic tests to address students’ instructional needs
3. The school was better organized as compared with last year. The principal and special education staff appear to address the Commission’s previous concerns about RSP students having current IEPs and SDC students getting appropriate instruction from a credentialed teacher.
4. To the Probation Department, for their recognition for the need for and implementation of a more results-oriented aftercare program (Ranch Re-entry Assistance Program) for youth leaving the Ranch.
5. To the new Ranch Manager who is working with staff at the Ranch to address some of the recent fights and behavior issues that have arisen since the merging of the James Ranch and the Muriel Wright Center.

6. To the Ranch manager for the use of the Administrative Ranch Review as an alternative to “failing” a minor and providing a second chance for youth who are struggling to work within the ERP framework.
7. The Food Services Manager and staff responded quickly and decisively to our concerns and rectified the thermometer issues immediately.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

#### **James Ranch:**

1. That Ranch administration immediately address the potential health and safety electrical issue in the Computer Classroom.
2. The signage identifying the Ranch be changed to remove the reference to “Boys” as it now houses girls, as well. This recommendation was also included in the prior year inspection report.
3. Regularly service, clean, and monitor the aging refrigeration units in the kitchen.
4. Continue to retrain food service staff on proper food temperatures and to report when a variance is noted.
5. Clean the light fixtures in the kitchen and cafeteria area regularly.
6. Increase and expand the offerings of snacks to younger boys and girls throughout the day.
7. That two additional TIPS Master Trainers be trained to help keep this very effective program running smoothly, with all personnel fully-trained in the latest methods and best practices.
8. The Enterprise Program should continue to work to identify resources to institute a Culinary training program and an Auto Shop program, which, at some point, might generate sufficient revenue to fund the programs, and could lead to the youth leaving the Ranch with skills that will make them highly employable.
9. Ranch Management should conduct a thorough evaluation of the increase in fights, assaults and the use of restraints on the youth at the Ranch in order to better understand if there are strategies that can be implemented to decrease their such occurrences.
10. Evaluate and, if needed, take steps to ensure youth understand how to file grievances and appeals and ensure that they feel they can do so without fear of retribution and or consequences.
11. The Probation Department should put a high level of importance on the educational needs of youth at the Ranch and County Office of Education staff should be included in all MDT meetings.

#### **Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services**

1. Youth within the juvenile justice system have high rates of co-occurring substance use and mental health problems. Traditionally these have been addressed separately, but the latest research clearly demonstrates that the best outcomes are achieved when both are treated simultaneously.

In line with this best practice, we note that the Health and Hospital System's departments of Mental Health and Drug and Alcohol Services are in the process of being merged into a single Behavioral Health Department. We recommend that the Probation Department combine the resources allocated to contracted substance abuse treatment and mental health services at James Ranch and the aftercare program in order to create a continuum of behavioral health services so that co-occurring disorders may be treated according to best practice through a single clinician.

**Santa Clara County Office of Education:**

1. James Ranch School should make securing WASC Accreditation a high priority so students receive credit at their regular education high school for the additional 20 credits as required by the COE School Board.

**Responses to Recommendations in the 2011 James Ranch Inspection Report**

There were nine recommendations to the Probation Department, four recommendations to the County Office of Education and one recommendation to the County Mental Health Department made in the July 2012 inspection report. The Probation Department's responses (dated September 7, 2012) as well as those of the County Mental Health Department and the Santa Clara County Office of Education are contained below.

**2011 Probation Department responses:**

1. Evaluate and develop alternatives to "unit confinement" that is the result of the youth from the MWC being moved to the James Ranch.

**Response:** *The Probation Department has adopted this recommendation. A rotational schedule has been implemented to assure that all pods have access to all outdoor and indoor activities, which in turn utilizes unit time for programming appropriate to the unit environment.*

2. Take steps to reduce the feeling of over-crowding in Pods A and B.

**Response:** *The dorm at the James Ranch was originally constructed as one single large barracks space, which was modified to accommodate the cognitive group processes of the Enhanced Ranch Program by installing temporary wall dividers until a new facility could be constructed. These wall dividers help to create 5 separate Pods housing up to 12 youth in each. Pods A, B, D, E, and F are slightly smaller than Pod C due to the configuration of the overall dorm building.*

3. *The Department has applied for and received S881 grant funds to construct a new design which will complement the operational and programmatic needs of the facility. The new design will create 9 pods of equal size and space. We expect that the new construction will begin in the coming year.*



4. 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.

**Response:** *Changes have been completed to pamphlets and brochures. Permanent signage changes are pending due to the temporary nature of the Muriel Wright Center closure.*

5. Work with COE to provide a morning snack to youth, mirroring a dietary schedule comparable to schools in the community.

**Response:** *The Department will work with COE to ascertain how and when this recommendation can be adopted. Currently all dietary needs are being met as per Title 15 Minimum Standards Juvenile Facilities section 1460, and 1461.*

6. 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.

**Response:** *The Ranch is currently providing a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meeting for every youth as they prepare for exit. At 60 and 30 days prior to release MDT participants gather to strategize on aftercare services based upon the individual needs of the youth. These meetings may include all or some of the following individuals: the Probation Officer, Probation Counselor and Supervisor, WRAP Team, Mental Health, Pathways (Substance Abuse Agency), the youth, parents and or guardian, and education staff. AB12 resources will be considered for those youth who require and qualify for extended foster care services.*

7. Ensure a regular source of drinking water for youth participating in physical activities (for example, a P.E. Class) outdoors.

**Response:** *This recommendation has been adopted and completed.*

8. 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.

**Response:** *The Probation Department has reviewed this recommendation and finds the option of the culinary program operating out of the James Ranch kitchen problematic. The inability stems from the insufficient time and space to allow for its primary function of serving the James Ranch population to occur while simultaneously operating a culinary program. Further, the county has learned from a consultant that in order to establish a culinary arts program at the Holden Training Facility, the kitchen would require substantial costly upgrading in order to meet current building codes. The department is temporarily withholding adding this project to the Capital Programs list due to current county budgetary constraints.*

9. Ensure the education staff from COE is included in meetings discussing program implementation and issues regarding the youth.

**Response:** *This recommendation has been completed and is on-going. The Treatment Supervisors at the James Ranch have been tasked to meet monthly with the COE staff to discuss current and on-going programming.*

10. 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 to measure the effectiveness of interventions and to incorporate “program corrections” to improve outcomes.

**Response:** *The Probation Department has continued to utilize the NCCD template to report out on the outcomes of the ranch program. The department will be looking at developing a system that regularly provides these data. Additionally, the department has added a Director of Research to our staff who is working with the Ranch staff to create meaningful program evaluation criteria to assess effectiveness and ensure fidelity.*

**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.

**2011 Mental Health Department Responses:**

*The Mental Health Department proposes the following formal written policy to address the recommendation of the Juvenile Justice Commission regarding psychiatric coverage at James Ranch due to planned or unplanned.*

*Psychiatric staff absences:*

1. *Absence of James Ranch psychiatrist for less than two weeks: Coverage by tele-psychiatry (if possible) or phone by Juvenile Hall psychiatrist as needed (informed by input from James Ranch therapists).*
2. *Absence of James Ranch psychiatrist for more than two but less than three weeks: Coverage by tele-psychiatry by Juvenile Hall psychiatrist as needed (informed by input from James Ranch therapists).*
3. *Absence of James Ranch psychiatrists for more than three weeks: In person coverage by division child psychiatrist for Yz day/week (coordinated with James Ranch therapist), otherwise coverage as needed via tele-psychiatry (if possible) or phone.*

*\*It was mentioned in the report that the fixed camera position was a limiting factor for the use of Telepsychiatry. The MHD will look into a possible remedy for this situation to ensure that maximization of the use of technology is possible in situations where in-person coverage is unavailable.*

**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.

**2011 Santa Clara County Office of Education Response:**

*The Board of Education has increased the number of graduation requirements to 220 for AED students including a Life Skills/Health class and Computer Application skills. In addition, the Department is participating in the WASC accreditation process during the 2012-2013 school year which includes a revision of current classes to align with the A-G entry requirements for UC/CSU attendance.*

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.

**2011 Santa Clara County Office of Education Response:**

*Special Education staff has arranged a schedule that addresses the needs of both SDC and RSP students in the AM and PM session. Special education instruction is provided in a consistent and collaboratively manner with alternative education staff that involves push-in, small groups and/or individual instruction. The schedule enables that ALL eligible special education students will benefit through instruction from both credentialed and classified staff.*

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.

**2011 Santa Clara County Office of Education Response:**

*A new Principal has been hired for Blue Ridge and will be on site for 2 to 3 days a week. He comes with an extensive background in educating adjudicated youth and completes a walkthrough of all classrooms a minimum of twice a week.*

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

**2011 Santa Clara County Office of Education Response:**

*The SCCOE Alternative Education department has developed a focused Professional Development plan which includes components of ERP such as enhancing student engagement through relationship building; additional personal enhancement opportunities through athletic conditioning, community service projects, and Career and Technical Education opportunities; and a more concerted effort to increase parent and family participation in meeting the current needs of our students and helping them identify future goals that they would like to achieve.*

**Documents Reviewed for this Inspection:****State of California**

1. April 11, 2012 – Corrections Standards Authority (CSA) – Biennial Inspection (under Welfare & Institutions Code sections 209 & 885)
2. March 14, 2013 – Office of the Fire Marshal, County of Santa Clara Fire Inspection.
3. May 17, 2012 – County of Santa Clara Public Health Department Annual Health Inspection.

**Other Documents:**

4. Alternative Education Department Community Schools, Staff Handbook, 2012-2013
5. “Aftercare Study, Enhanced Ranch Program,” National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) - April 30, 2010.
6. “An Assessment of the Enhanced Ranch Program” National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) –May 2010.
7. 2010-2011 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Report, “Mental Health Support at Youth Ranches.”
8. Juvenile Justice Commission James Ranch- July 2012 and July 2011 and Muriel Wright Inspection- - March 2011 Reports.
9. Probation Department Response to the Juvenile Justice Commission Report on the James Ranch (from Chief Sheila Mitchell) – September 7, 2012.
10. Skill Streaming—Skills for Adolescents (List of 50 options from which a TIPS Trainer can choose as a program topic.

