

**SANTA CLARA COUNTY  
JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION  
INSPECTION REPORT**

**JAMES BOYS RANCH  
JANUARY 2009**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The William F. James Boys' Ranch (Ranch) is a rehabilitative program offered by the Santa Clara County Probation Department for boys 15½ to 18 years old. Youths residing at the Ranch are court-ordered into placement, with the goal of having each youth return home with the necessary tools for successful reintegration into family and community. The facility is located on Malaguerra Avenue in Morgan Hill, CA.

The Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) inspected the James Boys Ranch (Ranch) during a series of visits conducted in January, February and March of 2009, pursuant to the State of California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 229.

Commissioners visited the facility and conducted interviews with Ranch management, staff, support staff and youths. This report is a descriptive summary of information collected during these inspection visits. The report includes information regarding population, "pods" (hereinafter called dormitories), the medical and mental health clinics, school programs, recreation and physical appearance of facility, and a review of available reports. General concerns, commendations, recommendations and a summary statement complete the report.

**II. POPULATION**

The licensed capacity for the Ranch is 96. However, the Enhanced Ranch Program (ERP) used by Santa Clara County based upon small group theory from the Missouri Model discussed below requires a significant reduction from the licensed capacity. The capacity under the ERP is 60 residents. There were 60 youths residing at the Ranch on the date of first inspection visit and 75 youths on the Juvenile Hall Ranch waiting list. As discussed further below, the County of Santa Clara has approved the addition of staff and modular buildings to accommodate an additional 24 residents.

The following is a breakdown of the residents by age and ethnicity:<sup>1</sup>

<u>Age</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Population %</u>
15 yo	0	0%
16 yo	21	35%
17 yo	21	35%

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<sup>1</sup> James Ranch: Jan-09 Population Breakdown by Ethnicity and Age, prepared by Ranch Manager

18 yo	18	30%
19 yo	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>
	60 Total	100%

<u>Ethnicity/Race</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Population %</u>
Hispanic	52	87%
Black	6	10%
White	2	3%
Asian	0	0%
<u>Other</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0%</u>
	60 Total	100%

### III. STAFFING

Probation Department staff assigned to the James Ranch includes the Ranch Manager, 6 Supervising Probation Counselors, 29 Probation Counselors II, 8 Probation Counselors I, 8 Probation Assistants and 22 Extra Help Counselors. Of the 29 Probation Counselors II, one is assigned to the Enterprise Program and one to the Aftercare Program. Another is assigned to the Ranch Orientation Program (ROP) and also assists the Aftercare Program counselor on a part-time basis. Staff are dressed uniformly in slacks or blue jeans, a Probation Department polo shirt and jacket.

The legal minimum standard staff to youth ratio is 1 to 15. In Santa Clara County the staff to youth ratio is 1 to 6 to accommodate the Enhanced Ranch Program (ERP). The 1 to 6 ratio will be maintained when the Ranch is expanded to 84 residents.

The Ranch Manager reported that all Ranch staff have been trained on the ERP methodology. Stage 2 of the ERP implementation plan provides for 15 Ranch staff to be trained to be “trainers.” The next training session (12 eight-hour sessions) is scheduled to begin in April, 2009 and is currently open for enrollment. Juvenile Hall Ranch Readiness Program (RRP) staff are currently receiving ERP training at the Ranch. A condensed version of the training is offered to Mental Health, School and Kitchen staff.

The Ranch uses “extra help” to cover vacations and sick time vacancies, and when staff positions are unfilled pending hiring. Extra help staff are generally candidates for full time positions who have undergone most of the same training as the full time staff. This is a change from the policy of using retirees. By using candidates for future employment, the training provided is not wasted.

#### **IV. FACILITY**

Commissioners noted the general appearance of the facility to be clean and tidy; however, there is still a need for further remodeling. Commissioners are concerned that some of the major repairs noted in the last JJC annual inspection report have not been completed, specifically, repairs of leaky bathroom fixtures, broken sidewalks and eaves. These maintenance issues are yet unresolved and continue to present an ongoing hazard to staff and youths.

Facilities Services of the Santa Clara County Facilities and Fleet Department is responsible for the maintenance and repair of the Ranches. The James Ranch Manager confided that he has had serious difficulties getting work done by Facilities Services. Although he has made multiple requests for repairs of items needing repair, including walkways which are in a dangerous condition and have already caused injuries, there has been no action taken by Facilities Services. Specifically, a defective fence was not fixed, despite requests, until a minor escaped through the gap.

#### **Living Units**

In an effort to reduce the current Juvenile Hall Ranch Waiting List, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors recently approved the addition of 24 beds, increasing the total allowed population at the Ranch from 60 to 84 youths. Two self-contained modular trailers (48 ft x 60 ft), which include living space with bath and bed areas, are currently being used to house youths. These trailers are also being used for staff office space. Two modular buildings are being constructed and are expected to be in place by mid April of 2009. The modulars will be used as living quarters only. In the event a grant is obtained, this space may be used as office space. Construction is currently underway to construct two new dormitories (for a total of seven dormitories), although temporary, to provide living space for the additional 24 youths.

According to the Ranch Manager, the dormitories at the Ranch are not adequate for the ERP. They are too small, noisy, lacking in privacy for group meetings and do not have private restrooms. In order to properly affect the Missouri paradigm, the dormitories will need to be rebuilt or be extensively remodeled. Unfortunately, the County did not win a State of California Grant of \$13 million intended to rebuild the dormitories. A capital improvement proposal for \$1.5 million will be requested from the County to remodel the current five temporary dormitories.

#### **Cafeteria**

Commissioners visited the cafeteria during the lunch hour, and the kitchen and dining areas appeared to be clean and busy. The persistent problem of a noxious odor caused by sewer gas continues at the southern end of the building, as Commissioners noted at the last annual inspection. Appropriate temperatures were noted on the refrigerator and freezer units, and the food storage areas were organized and clean. The

dishwasher temperature was noted to be 161 degrees<sup>2</sup> during a follow-up visit on January 28. Several youths were assigned to kitchen duty and were busy preparing meals, under the supervision of the kitchen staff and a Ranch Probation Counselor.

Commissioners visited with youths in the dining area and heard complaints and compliments regarding the food provided at the Ranch. Most youths reported that within recent weeks, a “new schedule” has resulted in a decrease in the amount of food offered to them at all three meals. There was only one or two complaints regarding the quality of food, and youths gave the example of a typical breakfast meal as consisting of french toast or pancakes. Hot meals are provided for lunch and dinner menus also, and youths reported only occasionally being given sandwiches for a meal. Milk is provided at all meals, and approximately once a week, chocolate milk is substituted for white milk. Youths reported that kitchen staff offer extra servings should there be leftovers at a meal. Between-meal snacks consist of various fresh fruit items. Several youths told Commissioners that they have complained to Ranch staff about the decrease in the amount of food they are being served, and they were told to submit a grievance form; however, none of the youths reported having done so.

The Probation Food Service Manager (Kitchen Manager) was interviewed during Commissioners’ visit to the kitchen area of the cafeteria, and it was confirmed that there has been a decrease in portion size and caloric content in all meals. While all meals are funded through the Ranch cafeteria budget, reimbursement for breakfast and lunch is received from the National School Lunch Program, a federally subsidized, reduced-cost lunch program, which provides meals to low-income youths and families (typically in school settings). This federal program has recently adopted revised caloric intake and nutrition standards. As a result of the required implementation of these standards, the menu recipes at the Ranch were analyzed for nutritional value. Menus were found to be “on the higher calorie end,” and in excess of the 2,400 to 3,200 per day calorie requirement. Meals now consist of smaller portions and reduced calorie menus. The Kitchen Manager provided a new monthly menu plan to Commissioners, which provides more healthful and nutritious meals meeting the required daily caloric intake standards. These meals consist of one meat dish, vegetables, fruit, juice and milk. While it is recognized that youths performing more than normal physical exertion require additional calories, upon request, youths assigned to work crews can receive “double trays.”

Since youths reported feeling hungry after meals, Commissioners were concerned about whether all youths are receiving sufficient calories or bulk to meet individual energy requirements. Feeling hungry can affect youths’ attitude, behavior and/or ability to focus in the classroom.

The Ranch cafeteria budget includes funding for a culinary instructor, who will be hired through the County Office of Education. Future plans include remodeling of the

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<sup>2</sup> Title 15 requires compliance with California Health & Safety Code Section 113700 et. Seg. Section 114099.6, which requires a final sanitation rinse in water of at least 171 degrees Fahrenheit or above, or in water which achieves a utensil surface temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit as measured by an irreversible registering temperature indicator.

Holden Ranch kitchen for class instruction and food preparation. The goal of the culinary training program is that youths will eventually operate the Holden kitchen and provide meal services for Sheriff's Department staff attending training at Holden facility. The Kitchen Manager expects that this program will be in effect by the next academic school term.

The Kitchen Manager would like kitchen staff to be included in ERP training. He pointed out that the ERP requires a "new way of dealing with youth," and because these youths participate in kitchen work groups, kitchen staff should be part of the new training program. The Ranch Manager agrees and pointed out that kitchen staff have been invited to participate in a shortened version of ERP training to give them an understanding of the behavior modification techniques used at the Ranch.

### **Gymnasium and Library**

Commissioners noted that the gymnasium was well maintained and exercise equipment was in good condition. The Library was also clean and had an adequate number of books; however, the residents would benefit from a greater variety of reading materials, as well as foreign language texts. The Ranch Manager called attention to the rewiring of the library to be completed in mid-April to provide for five computer stations, which will allow the residents to participate in on-line college courses, as well as perform research and other general computer tasks.

### **Safety**

The Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department provides security for the Ranch. Deputies work an overtime shift seven days a week, from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm, during which time, the assigned deputy drives the perimeter of the Ranch property every hour. The deputy is otherwise stationed in a patrol vehicle at the front entrance gate. Should an emergency occur outside these assigned hours, Ranch staff are instructed to contact 911 and the deputy assigned to that beat area will respond. The sally port is in the process of being implemented at the main entrance to the Ranch. The second gate will complete the installation and is expected to be installed by the end of March, 2009, at which time the sally port will be functioning.

Commissioners were informed that only a couple days prior to the initial inspection visit, one youth had escaped from the Ranch through a small gap in the fencing area located behind the garbage dumpster. According to the Ranch Manager, this breach in the fencing area was immediately secured.

A review of the 2008 Annual Fire and Life Safety Inspection Report<sup>3</sup> indicates that the Ranch was out of compliance in a number of areas. According to the Ranch Manager, there has been a follow-up inspection and the Ranch was found to be in compliance.

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<sup>3</sup> 2008 Annual Fire and Life Safety Inspection for the William F. James Boys' Ranch at 19050 Malaguerra Ave. Morgan Hill, CA

## V. PROGRAMS

### **Enhanced Ranch Program**

The Ranch continues to provide services based on the “Missouri Model” as the Enhanced Ranch Program (ERP). This model was developed by the Missouri Juvenile Corrections Program and is an evidence-based treatment approach which has been shown through recidivism rates to be a valid means of reducing subsequent delinquent behavior.<sup>4</sup>

The ERP reorganization required two primary changes from the traditional Ranch configuration: first, the physical plant was changed to accommodate the small group environment, which has been shown in several states to be a more therapeutic setting. The second major change from the traditional ranch program was the establishment of a Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment (CBT) approach which is discussed further below under the TIPS program.

According to a recent legislative analysis of California ranch programs, the “Best Practice” Missouri Model which calls for smaller living units and stresses treatment, is most effective in “reducing criminal behavior and recidivism.”<sup>5</sup> In his study of California county camps and ranches conducted for the California Research Bureau, Marcus Nieto recommends that the California legislature “require the CSA to direct existing grant funding to county pilot projects based on the Missouri model.”<sup>6</sup>

Before ERP, the James Ranch had a 40% failure rate and ERP has successfully reduced that rate. According to Probation Department data, during the first year of the ERP, 110 youth were committed to the ERP and 75% successfully graduated. Likewise, there was a 70% first-year success rate for youth graduating from the six-month long Aftercare Supervision Program.<sup>7</sup>

While this improvement in the failure rate is promising, to date, Santa Clara County does not have data documenting how the program has impacted recidivism rates. The most important aspects of the Missouri Model were adopted for the ERP, however some components were not. For example, the youth in the Missouri Model do not wear a uniform. Commissioners were informed by the Chief Probation Officer and the Ranch

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<sup>4</sup> See OJJDP Juvenile Justice Bulletin, August, 2005. Retrieved 2/2/2009, from <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojjdp/209326.pdf> . See also Julie Peterson, “A blueprint for Juvenile Justice Reform,” Youth transition Funders Group, Spring 2006, and Christine Vestal, “States Adopt Missouri Youth Justice Model,” Mar. 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.stateline.org/live/printable/story?contentId=288904> on February 6, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Marcus Nieto, “ County Probation Camps and Ranches for Juvenile Offenders.” California Research Bureau, Nov. 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.lhc.ca.gov/lhcdir/jj/HenniganFEB08.pdf> , 2/6/2009

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, page 48.

<sup>7</sup> Letter from Chief Probation Officer to the Public Safety and Justice Committee of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, February 14, 2008.

Manager that the Probation Department has negotiated a contract which will assess the effectiveness of and justification of the higher cost of the ERP.

### **Enterprise Program**

The Enterprise Program is a vocational training component of the Education Program at the Ranch. The Enterprise Fund established by the Probation Department is a self-sustaining account that receives income from sales of products made in the welding and construction classes, and from labor paid for by the County for off-ranch projects. Youths earn money for each hour in vocational training classes, and they are paid at the successful completion of the Aftercare Program. Earnings are first used to pay court-awarded victim restitution, as well as any court assessed fines and fees. Any remaining balance is then paid to the youths. The Enterprise Fund is also used to pay for academic classroom supplies, as well as shop materials and supplies. There has been a substantial improvement in payments to youths under this program from the last year's inspection report. In Fiscal Year 2007-2008, payments were \$11,715 compared to \$3,229 in FY 2005-2006, and \$4,922 has been paid through the first seven months of the current fiscal year.

The Enterprise Program consists of five vocational training components: (1) computer technology; (2) construction; (3) welding; (4) kitchen/auto shop and (5) off ranch projects. There are five training classes so that each dormitory can be assigned one-to-one, without overlap to a specific class. Dormitories are rotated every ten weeks. Auto shop used to be a separate training class, but there was enough interest in computer technology to create a new class for that; because of the matching of dormitories to classes, there can be only five training classes so auto shop was combined with kitchen. It is anticipated that auto shop will become a separate class again when new dormitories are added as the population increases in March.

### **Aftercare**

The Aftercare Program Manager supervises all juvenile aftercare programs (Juvenile Hall, James Ranch and Wright Center) and manages four Aftercare Probation Counselors. He also monitors the operation of various counseling and therapy programs.

A Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) consisting of a Probation Officer/Case Manager, Ranch Probation Counselor, Pathways Counselor, Mental Health and Education Counselors, Probation Community Worker and CBOs establish a treatment plan about three weeks prior to a youth's release from the Ranch. Once released, youths are in the Aftercare Program for the six-month period following release from the Ranch. During the first 10 weeks of release, the youths are in the "pre-release" stage of aftercare, during which they are supervised by a combination of Ranch Counselors, Community Workers and Deputy Probation Officers. While in the pre-release stage, a minor may be returned to the Ranch without a court order, or in some situations to Juvenile Hall, for violating the re-integration plan. The remaining 3½ months of the Aftercare Program is a

standard probation period under the control of the geographically assigned Deputy Probation Officers.

The Aftercare Probation Counselor provided Commissioners with a November 14, 2008, report submitted to the Ranch Manager titled “Aftercare Youth Trends and Recommendations,” which provides a comparison of pre- and post-ERP success rates from 2005 to 2008. The following is an excerpt from this report.

	<b>Ranch Program</b>	<b>Aftercare Program</b>
<b>2005-06</b>	60%	40%
<b>2006-07</b>	75%	70%
<b>2007-08</b>	75%	44%

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

TIPS is a comprehensive therapeutic model based upon CBT, which has been heavily researched and tested with delinquent youths. It is being provided at Juvenile Hall now, as well as the Ranches. The 10-week program is provided to youths in their dormitories in three 1½-hour sessions per week. “Mini-TIPS” sessions are currently being conducted in the dormitories by the assigned Counselors who receive at least 96 hours training in TIPS techniques. Mental Health therapists can be consulted as problems arise. Training and consultation is being received from Mark Stewart, who created the Missouri Model.

The three TIPS sessions each week focus on:

- Skill streaming (Monday) – Through presented material and interactive role playing, youths learn everyday life skills, such as asking for help, dealing with peer pressures, how to say “no” and avoiding fights.
- Morality (Wednesday) – Youths learn about feelings of others and are presented a new dilemma each week. Group discussions teach youths how to deal with various life situations and morality issues. A Mental Health Therapist typically attends this session.
- Anger Management (Friday) – Youths are taught the ABC’s of behavior (Action leads to Behavior, which leads to Consequences). Youths learn through role playing how to recognize behavior “triggers” and how to calm down.

### **Supplemental Programs**

The Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meets at the Ranch throughout a minor’s commitment, beginning when youth are first admitted. The team meets with the youth and his family first. The MDT formulates an Individual Service Plan for the residential and aftercare phase of the program for each youth. Based on individual need, this team will reconvene to update or refocus the direction of treatment as needed.



In the Ranch Manager's opinion, parents no longer feel alienated from the orientation process and the result has been an almost 100% parent participation. Additionally, he expects an additional drop in recidivism rates.

On the theory that youths perform better after release, if they know they have employment waiting for them, resource specialists arrange visits from various community employers and business and during the Career Fair. Youths and their families are also encouraged to use furloughs for finding and making application for jobs and obtaining driver's licenses and other identification cards, necessary for employment.

### **Community Based Organizations (CBOs)**

Every Community Based Organization (CBO), volunteer and guest speaker servicing youths at the Ranch is required to complete a security screening application. The Ranch Probation Counselor Program Coordinator (Program Coordinator) reviews these applications and approves clearance prior to any CBO scheduling services. The Program Coordinator is also responsible for the scheduling and the monitoring of all counseling and therapy programs at the Ranch, as well as the Wright Center. The Program Coordinator records youths' participation in these programs and maintains the pre- and post-program tracking tests. The primary CBOs which provide services for youths at the Ranch include Gardner (providing mental health counseling services), Pathways (providing drug rehabilitation services), California Youth Outreach (CYO) (providing gang intervention) and the Three Principles (a health realization organization that contracts through the Department of Alcohol and Drug Services). The task of monitoring these programs, as defined by the Program Coordinator, is mostly defined by following up on complaints of non-performance, rather than by proactively observing their groups. Additional tasks include auditing classes provided by CBOs and the collection of attendance sheets to record youths' participation for inclusion in their individual files.

The Program Resources Specialist, a contract employee, maintains an online resource directory of programs, required (i.e., drug rehabilitation, mental health counseling and family therapy) or voluntary (i.e., sports, skills training, tutoring and mentoring), which youths can utilize while in the Aftercare Program. She frequently attends MDT meetings and provides input regarding available programs. She also tracks the number of youths referred to the CBOs. She works with a number of programs such as the Restorative Justice Program (RJP), which assists first-time offenders. Additionally, the Program Resources Specialist works with over 135 mentoring referrals per year. She has developed a "Universal Referral Form" for the Aftercare Probation Counselor, which can be used to identify and request services for the youths slated to be released.

### **Sports**

The Ranch has a reasonable sports facility and programs including volleyball, baseball and weight lifting to keep youths engaged in team sports during their daily breaks. Youths get three hours each day and additional time on the weekends for breaks.

Youths also have opportunities to participate in statewide basketball, softball and volleyball tournaments with nearby county juvenile custody facilities. As noted earlier, an expansion of the athletic activities and facilities available to youths will increase should the multi-million dollar grant be funded.

### **Religious Programs**

Religious services and programs at the Ranch are coordinated through the Chaplain at Juvenile Hall. Chaplaincy services are provided by the Correctional Institutions Chaplaincy of Santa Clara County, Inc. (CIC). CIC is a non-profit ministry which provides chaplains to both the adult and juvenile institutions. There is one full time staff member and an ordained minister assigned to the juvenile facilities to provide Protestant services and counseling, and to coordinate the work of approximately 70 volunteers who provide bible study and mentoring services to the residents of all three facilities. The CIC Chaplain trains volunteer ministers and coordinates the times for services offered by volunteer clerics. According to the CIC Ministries Volunteer Manual,<sup>8</sup> CIC receives “broad-based support from hundreds of churches in the County, representing the wide spectrum of Christian faiths.”

There is one Catholic Priest assigned by the Catholic Diocese, who serves Mass and coordinates the efforts of three other volunteer Priests. In addition to religious services, the Protestant and Catholic Chaplains visit the dorms every week to provide counseling and take confessions. The CIC Chaplain pointed out that there is occasionally a minor of one of many non-Christian faiths, including Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist and Native American. When there is a minor of non-Christian denomination, the CIC Chaplain first tries to arrange for the minor’s own religious leader to attend to the minor’s spiritual needs in the facility. In the event this is not possible, the Chaplain contacts a cleric of the minor’s religion from a list of volunteers.

Both the CIC Chaplain and the Catholic Priest assigned to juvenile facilities advised that they receive full cooperation from the management and staff at the James Boys Ranch, who make time available for services, bible studies and counseling.

## **VI. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

Behavior management is based upon the Missouri Model. Unlike Juvenile Hall and the Wright Center, behavior modification at the James Ranch is not based upon the level system as represented by different color belts. Rather, according to the Ranch Manager, the residents at the James Ranch are treated individually and as members of their dormitory. Instead of rule violations resulting in a specified punishment, the resident is counseled immediately, generally without punishment. If the misbehavior continues, the entire dormitory sits with the resident for group interaction regarding the behavior. If this is not sufficient, counseling continues with the Probation Counselor Supervisor and the Ranch Manager getting involved. According to the Ranch Manager, privileges are not

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<sup>8</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.cicministries.org/pdf%20files/Volunteer%20Manual.edit0109.pdf> on March 20, 2009.

awarded or withheld based upon any one incident, but based upon a weekly evaluation of a minor's overall performance. This is a very foreshortened summary of a fairly complex system, which is based on the successful Missouri Model. Commissioners have been invited to attend training on the ERP, which several are expected to accept.

### **Incident Reports**

Commissioners conducted a review of 163 incident reports<sup>9</sup> submitted by Ranch staff during the period of July 1 through December 31, 2008. Eight of these reports involved physical or mechanical restraints used to control youths after incidents such as minor assaults (youth on youth) and anger outbursts. Fourteen (14) reports involved injuries to youths typically received during sports or other physical activity, or an illness. One incident involved a minor who absconded from the transporting Ranch staff person during a routine medical appointment. The staff person waited in the vehicle in an effort to de-escalate the situation, and the minor returned within 20 minutes. Other reports included behaviors such as disrespect to staff, inappropriate language and dress, minor pushing minor and horseplay. The majority of dispositions were noted to be one-on-one counseling of minor and failure to meet weekly or grading expectations.

*Incidents involving youths in the Aftercare Program:* Of the 163 incident reports reviewed, nineteen (19) involved a return to the Ranch after the youths had entered Aftercare and another ten (10) involved an escape or minors absconding from Aftercare.

### **Grievances**

Commissioners noted that grievance forms were not stored by the staff monitoring station located in the dormitory hall during the first visit January 12, 2009. Commissioners were told that the supply would be replenished; however, on the second inspection visit on February 5, 2009, there still were no forms available. Commissioners were concerned that grievance forms are not readily available to youths, should youths wish to file a grievance.

Commissioners reviewed four grievances<sup>10</sup>, the totality of grievances filed by youths at the Ranch since the last inspection date. Three of these were filed in February, 2008, and the fourth was filed in April, 2008.

One youth filed a grievance against one of the nursing staff. The minor reported that he requested permission to use shampoo products other than those provided at the Ranch, because he was getting a rash from Ranch-issued shampoo. The minor stated that the nurse became mad at him and requested that Ranch staff write an incident report against the youth, stating that the minor used profanity towards him. The minor also reported that the nurse used inappropriate language towards him. The matter was referred to the Nurse Manager and the nurse was counseled. Two youths filed grievances regarding the smaller food portions during mealtime. These issues were referred to the Food

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<sup>9</sup> James Ranch Incident Reports for period covering July 1, 2008, to December 31, 2008.

<sup>10</sup> James Ranch Youth Grievance Forms dated February, 2008 and April, 2008

Services; however, no changes were made as all food portions are strictly governed by caloric intake to maintain compliance with the newly imposed nutrition and calorie standards. A final grievance was filed by a youth who reported that he was not getting along with his counselor, because he had sexual feelings for female staff. This youth requested to be moved to a different dormitory, which did not have female staff whom he found attractive. The youth's request was denied; however, he was given individual counseling with a goal of helping him recognize his inability to interact with female staff and to work towards improving these relationships.

### **Appeals**

There were few appeals filed, which is explained by the Ranch Manager as being due to the fact there is no loss of privilege directly tied to any particular behavior and, therefore, is difficult to appeal by denial of the behavior. In the event a disciplinary action or consequence is imposed on a minor, there is an appeal process available.

## **VII. MEDICAL SERVICES**

The Santa Clara County Health and Hospital Systems (SCVHHS) provide medical services at the Ranch. The Nurse Manager at Juvenile Hall, who also supervises medical services at the ranch, described three major health goals:

- Comprehensive health assessment screenings
- Treatment for diagnosed medical problems
- Health education and health prevention activities such as immunizations.

All youths are given a comprehensive medical examination by the Medical Director at Juvenile Hall before being sent to the Ranch. A registered nurse is at the Ranch from 7:00 am to 11:00 am, and from 5:00 pm to 9:00 pm, seven days a week. Tele-video nursing services are available 24 hours each day. When the 24 new beds become available in March, the nursing schedule will be extended on Mondays and Thursdays from 7:00 am to 3:30 pm. Depending on the medical needs, youths requiring immediate attention can be transported to Valley Health Center in San Martin, Juvenile Hall Medical Clinic Infirmery, or, if necessary, to the VMC Emergency Room.

Tele-video nursing is a unique system, which provides 24 hour, seven days a week medical triage at the Ranch, even though a nurse is not always on site. In December of 2006, SCVHHS installed a video conferencing system that allows the medical staff at Juvenile Hall video access to youths who may be ill or injured at the Ranch. This system allows the physician or nurse to see the youths through tele-video conferencing, and to visibly review youths' medical records before prescribing a treatment plan to be initiated at the Ranch or to make a subsequent recommendation to transport youths to one of the aforementioned facilities for further treatment and care.

Youths are offered information classes on such issues as substance and tobacco use, and health decision-making abilities. While health education and promotion classes

are offered to youths at the Ranch, medical staff have found that the youths are very tightly scheduled and are not often able or are not interested in attending health education classes.

Dental care is still not available on-site at the Ranch as there is no dental chair, dental equipment or dental assistant at the Ranch; however, youths experiencing dental problems can be treated at Juvenile Hall by the Director of Dental Services. The Director is also on call for consultation regarding any significant dental problems that may arise outside the routine 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, Monday and Wednesday, dental hours at Juvenile Hall. A volunteer dentist provides routine dental cleaning for minors.

The following data from SCVHHS Juvenile Hall/Juvenile Ranches Annual Report reflects twelve (12) months of medical activity at the James Ranch in 2008:

Doctor appointments	95
VMC Emergency Department evaluations	10
Sick call assessments by nurse (not including drop-ins)	793
Dental Referrals (not including referrals to private dentists)	4
VMC Outpatient Clinic Appointments	49

There was a 75% decrease in the number of youths who received dental treatment as compared to those in 2007.<sup>11</sup> According to the Director of Dental Services, this decrease is a result of minors not requesting dental care, but dental care is available upon any future request.

## **VIII. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Mental health services at the Ranch are provided by the SCVHHS Mental Health Department, according to the Program Manager, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), who is responsible for mental health services at all three juvenile facilities: James Ranch, Muriel Wright Center and Juvenile Hall. There is one full time LCSW at the Ranch who works Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. There is also an Associate Clinical Social Worker (ACSW) at the Ranch three days each week, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, as well as Monday and Wednesday, from 8:00 am to 12:30 pm. Two Mental Health Community Workers were assigned as Family Partners to work with youths and their families, making home visits, and providing case management support. Recently, those positions have shifted to the Proposition 63 funding base under separate supervision, but they can be called upon when needed. As of the date of the interview with the Program Manager, there had been no need to call upon the Community Worker's services.

There are two Psychiatrists who attend to youths at all of the juvenile facilities. One of the Psychiatrists has primary responsibility for the Ranch, which she visits on alternating Thursdays, when she sees the youths on psychotropic medications. Psychiatric consultations are also available through the tele-video nursing equipment. The

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<sup>11</sup> SCVHHS Juvenile Probation Medical Services, Juvenile Hall/Juvenile Ranches Annual Report 2008

Psychiatrist prescribes medications and follows up with those youths taking psychotropic medications.

Mental health coverage is provided at James Ranch five days each week, but should there be a need for mental health intervention at night or on weekends, an on-call Mental Health Worker can be consulted by telephone or via the tele-video nursing equipment. There is no isolation or time-out room at the Ranch; therefore, in cases requiring a youth's isolation or close attention, such as a suicide gesture, a youth can be moved to Juvenile Hall. When medical intervention is needed, the youth may be taken to VMC. Mental health staff members now have walkie-talkies to summon assistance, if necessary.

Mental health staff members attend Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) meetings to screen for mental health issues. There are currently 30 open cases of youths having mental health diagnoses, which range from Oppositional Conduct Disorders to Bi-polar Disorder. There were, at the time of the interview, five residents requiring psychotropic medications, primarily for treatment of Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder. Mental health staff do not provide generalized counseling for behavior problems such as drug use. They focus on the therapy for mental health issues. Youths generally receive mental health services, because they are having family problems or emotional problems.

Mental health staff no longer participate in the TIPS program due to the classes being held in the dormitories in the evenings. Nor does Mental Health staff participate in Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT), which is an evidence-based program conducted by outside contractors. The Program Manager noted, however, that her staff receive two days of ERP training in order to better support the program.

Regarding the expansion of the Ranch, the Program Manager advised that there were no additional funds allocated for mental health support for the additional 24 beds. She said that they will do their best to continue to respond to the needs of the residents and to provide the same level of support, but they cannot afford to lose any of their staff.

## **IX. EDUCATION**

Commissioners met with the School Principal at the Ranch. The education program at the James Boys Ranch is managed by Blue Ridge High School, one of the 18 Alternative Schools Department programs of the County Office of Education (COE), and is designed to allow students to return to their home schools upon return to the community. For students who are unable to manage the standard program, there is a program available to prepare for the GED test.

There are three Alternative School teachers, one Special Day Class (SDC) teacher and one SDC instructional aide. All teachers are credentialed. Support staff consist of a shared principal, school office coordinator, shared counselor, shared resource specialist and aide. A retired school teacher and college students provide mentoring and tutoring services for youths. Social Services volunteers provide mentoring services to youths and

also visit youths' homes to assist youths and their parents in the process necessary for obtaining driver's license, identification cards and enrollment in online education/college programs.

The ERP dormitory system of treatment calls for the residents to go through the day together with their fellow dormitory members. Inasmuch as there are not sufficient teachers to provide classes by dormitory, the dormitories must be intermixed with boys from other dormitories. The Ranch Manager points out that the mixing of dormitories causes problems in classes, such as intra-dormitory fights and acting-out behavior.

Students attend classroom instruction every day for four hours in the afternoon. In the mornings, students are enrolled in a variety of vocational classes ranging from construction technology to welding. Additional classes will be added upon the implementation of the 1.5 million dollar expansion grant, which provides the addition of 24 youths to the Ranch Program towards the end of April, 2009. According to the School Principal, thirty percent (30 %) of the youths pass the English and math courses. Some youths are preparing for the California High School State Exit Exam, which is administered four times each year.

Upon enrollment, the Measurement of Academic Proficiency (MAP), an academic measurement tool, is administered to youths to identify their language arts and math skills, and the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) is used to determine their English skills. An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) is developed for each of the youths. Input from students, parents, counselors and probation officers is used to develop the plan, which is then used to allow teachers and students to focus on goals aimed at helping youths transition back to the community.

Commissioners met with teachers prior to the start of classes. The teachers seemed very enthusiastic and knowledgeable in their field, and their teaching plans appeared well organized. Teaching experience ranged from two years to six years. Courses include English, math, history, life science and physical education. Classes are also given in high school graduation requirements and special education.

Commissioners visited all four classrooms and the welding shop. Class size averaged 12 youths and included from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade levels. Youths ranged in age from 15 to 18 years. The classrooms were orderly, but Commissioners noted that not all students were fully engaged in all the classrooms. Classroom activities included journal writing, book discussions and the writing of essays. Grade level differences seemed to be a concern, particularly in math class. In the other classes, the level of instruction is at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level. Individual instruction using the Special Education instructor is one method by the high school to compensate for the knowledge differences. There are limited assets available for the non-English speaking students, and Commissioners were concerned that there were no books or other study materials available in Spanish or other non-English languages.

The School Principal has developed five staff goals, which focus on increasing instructional offerings, skills, alignment of site level goals to district wide goals and strengthening the relationship between the Probation, Mental Health and Medical Departments. The School Principal is currently compiling statistical data regarding youths' testing results and academic status, which supports the success of the school program. Commissioners believe such a measurement tool would be beneficial in assessing the success of the school program at the Ranch.

## **X. FEEDBACK FROM YOUTHS**

Commissioners visited the Ranch January 18, 2009, and spoke with minors and their families during the Sunday visitation time. In general, the youths with whom they spoke seemed to understand the purpose and the goals of the Enhanced Ranch Program. One youth said he did not think the program would work for him, because he had anger and substance abuse issues. Most youth seemed engaged in the ERP and felt that the staff care about them. One youth did not know about the grievance policy. Youths again commented that there is less food being served during meals, and it has not been explained to them why the menus have changed. Another youth reported that he was not happy with staff, as one staff person had been unfriendly towards him. This youth also reported that he liked the ERP and vocations program.

Some parents reported that they did not understand the ERP concepts, and one parent of a youth who had been at the Ranch for several months was adamant that she did not understand the program and she did not believe it was a positive experience for her son. There were also a number of parents who reported that the new ERP has been a more effective model of treatment for their sons. Several parents commented that they are included in the program as soon as their sons are transferred to the Ranch. Those parents of youths placed at the Ranch more than one time reported that the communication between Ranch staff and parents has greatly improved since the implementation of the new program.

All of the youths contacted reported having passed one or both components of the California High School Exit Exam and had aspirations for college or work upon graduated from high school and the Ranch Program.

## **X. JAMES RANCH PROCEDURES MANUAL**

Commissioners noted that the majority of the James Ranch Procedures Manual has not been revised since 2004. The furlough and search policies, staff training and Aftercare Program sections were revised in March of 2006, and the most recent revision was to the release, escape and failure section in July of 2007.

The 2008 CSA Biennial Inspection Report cites the following Title 15 procedures manual violations:<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Corrections Standards Authority 06/08 Biennial Inspection Santa Clara County Juvenile Facilities



1. Channels of communications and description of job classifications
2. Relationship of Probation Department to Juvenile Court, JJC and Probation staff
3. Ethical responsibilities
4. Death/Serious injury, written policy
5. Use of physical restraints, written policy
6. Religious Program, written policy
7. Correspondence, written policy

The Ranch Manager informed Commissioners that the manual is currently in the process of revision and commitment to electronic form. The revised edition will reflect corrections of the CSA manual violations and the new ERP policies and procedures.

## **XI. ANNUAL HEALTH INSPECTION**

According to the CSA inspection report dated June 30, 2008, regarding inspection visits conducted February 4 through 6, 2008, the Ranch was out of compliance in regard to the required annual health inspection. Commissioners were provided a letter from the SCVHHS Public Health Department dated April 22, 2008, which confirms that the Ranch is now in compliance with the environmental, nutritional and medical/mental health evaluations, as required in Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations.

## **XII. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED**

Copies of documents and reports from various sources were requested as part of this inspection. The following documents and reports were reviewed by Commissioners.

1. James Ranch Procedures Manual
2. Response to Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury Report – Probation Department’s Restitution Program Fails Victims and Wards
3. Enhanced Ranch Program Evaluation Report – 2007
4. Enterprise Fund – Daily Transaction Log Fiscal Year 2008-2009
5. James Ranch & Muriel Wright Center, 6-8 Month Program Report (need date)
6. Muriel Wright Residential Center & William F. James Boys’ Ranch Programs Report (no date given)
7. Santa Clara County Probation Department, William F. James Boys Ranch Guide Book, revised August 25, 2006
8. The County of Santa Clara Probation Department, James Ranch and Muriel Wright Residential Center Enhanced Ranch Program, February 20, 2008
9. William F. James Boys’ Ranch Brochure, revised October, 2008
10. James Ranch Staff Organization Chart
11. James Ranch: Jan-09 Population Breakdown by Ethnicity and Age
12. Cafeteria Menus for July 27, 2008 to September 20, 2008 (we need current menus which reflect the reduced food portions)
13. 2008 Annual Fire and Life Safety Inspection for the William F. James Boys’ Ranch, dated November 14, 2008

14. Juvenile Justice Commission Inspection Report, William F. James Boys' Ranch, dated March 4, 2008
15. Corrections Standards Authority Biennial Inspection Santa Clara County Juvenile Facilities, dated June, 2008
16. Annual Health Inspection – William James Boy's Ranch, dated April 22, 2008

### **XIII. COMMENDATIONS**

#### **The Juvenile Justice Commission commends:**

1. The James Ranch staff for the caring for all youths placed at the Ranch and not only those youths assigned to their immediate care and supervision. Overall, Commissioners found Ranch staff to be very dedicated to helping youths learn more positive social attitudes and skills. The staff uniformly showed good morale and positive interactions with the youths residing at the Ranch.
2. The Santa Clara County Probation Department for the utilization of prospective Probation Counselors as "extra help."
3. The Santa Clara County Probation Department for successful negotiation of a contract which will implement an assessment of the effectiveness of the ERP.
4. For the improvements of the Enterprise Program that have been achieved since the last annual JJC inspection report.
5. For the passion and knowledge of the Blue Ridge High School faculty.
6. The SCCVHS for the innovative and cost-effective implementation of videoconferencing to better provide medical assessment to the youths at the James Ranch. Ranch medical staff are commended for their efforts made towards ensuring youths receive a high quality of care and that necessary actions are taken whenever clinical outcome data falls below established performance thresholds.
7. The James Ranch for the marked improvements made since the last annual inspection report, including the outstanding staff training programs for new and extra help staff.

### **XIV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends that the Santa Clara County Probation Department:**

1. Identify space for Dormitory Probation Counselors to use as counseling rooms.
2. That Kitchen Services explain the reduced calorie intake menu to minors and the reasons for its implementation.

3. That creative approaches to increasing the calorie intake of youths without violating the free/reduced cost lunch agreement be considered which meet the requirements of well balanced, healthful, nutritious and energy-sustaining meals.
4. That the Culinary Arts Training Program be fully implemented and ensure that youths receive appropriate academic credit for participation in this program.
5. That kitchen staff attend a brief (two day) training in ERP.
6. That grievance and appeal forms always be readily available to minors.
7. That grant funding continues for the necessary remodeling of dormitories at the James Ranch in order to ensure the effectiveness of the ERP.
8. That the revision of the James Ranch Procedures Manual be completed, as recommended in the CSA inspection report dated June 30, 2008.

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

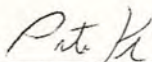
1. To develop a tool which measures the effectiveness of the academic program.

**XV. SUMMARY**

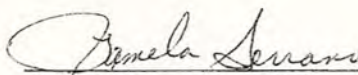
The Juvenile Justice Commission has completed its annual inspection of the James Boys Ranch.

Based on this inspection, the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission believes that the James Boys Ranch exceeds the requirements for assuring the safety, well being and rehabilitation of youths in a juvenile detention facility.

**Approved by the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission on April 7, 2009.**

  
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 Patricia Khan, JJC Chairperson

Apr. 20, 2009  
 Date

  
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 Pamela Serrano, JJC Inspection Chair

4-21-09  
 Date