

Juvenile Justice Commission
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William F. James Ranch
2023 Inspection Report

Data Collected between September-December, 2023

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commissions (JJC or Commission) is established in Division 2, Part 1, Chapter 2, Article 2 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) and Chapter II of division A6 of the Santa Clara County Ordinance Code. One of the charges of the Commission is “to inquire into the administration of justice in a broad sense, including but not limited to, operations of the Juvenile Court, Probation Department, Social Services Agency and any other agencies involved with juvenile justice or dependency.” (Section 1.2(B) of the Bylaws of the Juvenile Justice Commission of Santa Clara County; see also WIC 229).

The Commission conducted its annual inspection of the William F. James Ranch (JR or Ranch), a secure detention facility for youth offenders from September 2023 to December 2023. This inspection was conducted via physical tours of the Ranch and in-person interviews with staff, as well as several virtual interviews, as appropriate.

The inspection team of ten commissioners conducted inspections and discussions with managers and staff and reviewed documents related to Ranch operations and programs, and numerous required inspections by other agencies and bodies. Commissioners examined Ranch administration, discipline, educational and vocational programs, work programs, behavior management and personal development programs, medical and behavioral health services, facilities, support services, security, and policies and

procedures. For emphasis, [new and notable information is presented in blue font.](#)

The inspection team found the Ranch to be well-run with exceptional vocational and post-secondary programs for youth. There are collegial relationships among the partners and a relaxed, positive atmosphere with youth appearing comfortable at the Ranch and appearing to benefit from the many opportunities afforded them.

The Commission's recommendations reiterate past calls for more robust outcomes data. Longitudinal data are needed to strengthen the case that progressive juvenile justice practices such as those that guide the Ranch provide commensurate long-term individual and societal benefits. The ultimate yardstick is reduced recidivism and differential gains in education and employment. All the elements seem to be in place to position youth to successfully reintegrate into the community.

Commissioners' Note:

The Commission notes that disproportionality in the Ranch population based on racial, ethnic, and other attributes persists unabated, despite system partners' determined efforts. This persistence reinforces the JJC's call to address equity and social justice issues upstream of the justice system, to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline.

Previous years Ranch reports are available at:

http://www.scsccourt.org/court_divisions/juvenile/jjc/jjc_home.shtml

COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Commendations:

1. The JJC commends the James Ranch management for fostering a spirit of camaraderie and leadership among its staff and a passion to excel and achieve impact with their youth.
2. The JJC commends the Probation Department and the Research and Development (RAD) team on committing to track some level of recidivism data from 2024 for its outgoing youth. The JJC looks forward to reviewing that data next year.
3. The JJC commends the JR management for maintaining a low level of use of force in 2022 and early 2023.
4. The JJC commends the Probation Department for updating the Policies and Procedures based on the input of the Continuous Quality Improvement committee.
5. In 2023, the Ranch and its principal received honors for their achievements. Blue Ridge School received the Glenn Hoffmann Exemplary Programs Award for their LiUNA program, presented by the Santa Clara County School Boards Association. They were also recognized with the 2023 YMCA Project Cornerstone Asset Champion award in the Caring School Climate category. Schools in this category transform their campuses into caring communities where all students are valued and feel welcome and respected. In addition to these

awards, the principal was honored with Administrator of the Year by the Association of California School Administrators and received the Caesar E. Chavez Champion Award by community members for his commitment to students and families of South County.

Recommendations:

1. The JJC recommends that the JR divisional managers work with Probation management to identify a set of **metrics** that are important to the facility (e.g., incident reports and trends, Aftercare success and trends, etc.) Division managers should track and understand such metrics along with their regular work of planning, scheduling and resolving day to day issues.
2. The JJC recommends that the Probation Department expand on their plan to collect and analyze recidivism data to add additional outcomes data, to provide information on how Probation can best address recidivism and proactively address issues that adversely affect recidivism. The JJC recommends adding a process to track the housing, education, and employment status of their outgoing youth, while on probation. This can be captured by the Probation Counselors monitoring these youth and tracked systematically as an indicator of future success or risk.
3. The JJC recommends that the Policies and Procedures continue to be updated based on the input of the Continuous Quality Improvement committee.
4. The JJC recommends that the JR management consider a quarterly review of Incident Reports (IR) data to understand trends and improvements committee to capture appeals and grievance data digitally via direct entry into the system vs. using paper forms.
5. Regarding IRs, JR staff should mandate/measure the closure of 100% of the IRs. There are opportunities to periodically clean up this data and improve the IT systems notifications to ensure timely closure of the IRs. Supervisors should investigate an option for system reminders to staff to complete open IRs.
6. Management should consider a regular IR Review meeting to discuss current issues and identify opportunities for improvement and training.
7. The JJC recommends that JR establish a regular and reliable process to get access to the youth's school records in a timely manner. This information is often delayed and makes classification of the youth difficult.

INTRODUCTION AND AUTHORITY

The Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) is a state-mandated court appointed authority. The JJC's purpose 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 (Ranch) between August 2023 and November 2023, pursuant to California Welfare and Institutions Code Section

229.

The Ranch is a residential rehabilitative program operated by the Santa Clara County Probation Department's Juvenile Division (JPD) for youth ages 13 to 18 years old. The Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Court dispositions 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 required to comply with Title 15 minimum standards for local juvenile detention facilities (California Office of Administrative Law).

The Vision and Mission statement articulated by JPD for James Ranch serves as an additional standard for the JJC's inspection report.

WILLIAM F. JAMES RANCH

VISION

The Santa Clara County Juvenile Rehabilitation Program envisions a productive life for our youth working with the family, partner agencies and the community to provide our youth the skills and ability to fulfill their needs in a socially responsible manner.

MISSION

The Mission of the Santa Clara County Juvenile Rehabilitation Program is to positively impact our communities by providing appropriate services to the youth and families we serve. The program will be a holistic model relying on interagency and community partnerships for development, delivery, and enhancement of services for our youth and families. We are committed to delivering a balanced and collaborative rehabilitative program with a focus on the development of pro social skills through systemic intervention in thought, values, actions, and positive relationship building.

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

Organizational Commitment / Diversity / Leadership / Planning and Flexibility / Training / Value of System Partners

ADMINISTRATION

STAFFING, MANAGEMENT, PREA, COVID UPDATE, COMMUNICATION, DATA & OUTCOMES

Staffing, Management, PREA

Current staffing levels at the Ranch are at 108 sworn staff, 93 line staff (28 part-time), nine Probation Supervisors (one assigned to Internal Affairs, one vacant and one on leave) and overall management led by two Probation Division Managers, with the new Division Manager (Facilities) starting in February 2023.

The eight supervisory positions at James Ranch consist of four Facilities supervisory positions, three Treatment supervisory positions, and one Quality Systems supervisory position. The facilities supervisors help manage the facilities 24 hours per day. Two of these are for the night shift and are currently vacant. Of the three treatment supervisors, one oversees orientation, one for aftercare or re-entry and one for the evolving Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) program at the Ranch which is subject to a separate inspection by the JJC.¹

In 2022, the Ranch assigned one treatment supervisor to orientation to promote a common and shared message for youth coming from Juvenile Hall to the Ranch. This is the initial specialist assigned to the youth at the Ranch during the first 30 days. There is also a designated Treatment supervisor at the end of a youth's Ranch term that focuses on aftercare and re-entry as a resource specialist to assist youths in the community to aid with the transition. Treatment supervisors are specifically assigned two pods, but every one of these supervisors is "hands on" for all the youth at the ranch. The treatment supervisors also manage 12 staff, and this has worked well for them to focus on goals within their own staff group. The Treatment Supervisors are also assigned two pods and manage 12 staff.

There are three vacancies for Probation Assistant night staff and 2 vacancies for night Supervising Probation Counselors. There is a constant turnaround in staffing due to the recruitment of staff to be Probation officers. To mitigate the staffing shortages, overtime and extra help/provisional hires are being utilized. One supervisor is assigned for recruitment.

Resource Center staff include a program coordinator, resource & events coordinator and two aftercare counselors. The Resource Center is now assisting youth with DMV appointments and gathering documents for youth to obtain an identification card. They also assist youth to set up a bank account with a \$25 deposit from petty cash. Youth are assisted with information on how to get ready for a job interview, prepare a resume, conduct online job searches and other life skills. The Resource Center has developed fun, innovative and creative activities and provided culturally relevant programming. A clothing closet was started to provide youth with day-to-day clothing when they are released and also with professional clothing for job interviews and employment. The staff have a goal to recognize gaps and determine "what does a youth need when they leave?"

¹ There is information in this report that overlaps with the two programs as that was the manner in which the information was presented.

The Supervisor of Quality Systems continues to have an important role with three staff now that assist with inspections, audits (RAD [research and development]) and follow-up to distribute policies. The Ranch just had a Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) audit and was found to be in compliance. No reports were sustained. A final report is coming. There is an emphasis on educating youth on reporting and understanding what a PREA issue is. The Ranch continues to educate staff as well. The YWCA monitors the red phone line for any reports and hosts training seven times per year for PREA education, teen empowerment, gender and sexuality, and healthy relationships.

The University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute (UCCI²) training program continues to progress at the Ranch. The UCCI consultant meets with committees (Programs, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support [PBIS] and Continuous Quality Improvement [CQI.]) First, the goal has been to educate staff to understand why a switch was necessary from the previous behavioral modification program to UCCI. Next, the goal was to train the trainers, and this is close to 90% completed. Some of the challenges have been scheduling and revising, but the training will be completed. [A consultant has been doing live observations and supporting staff.](#) Another goal has been to be consistent with meetings and the information provided to staff. The PBIS and Behavior Management System (BMS) committees are working on redoing guidebooks and changing the incentive system. Phase Four of the rollout addressing sanctions and incentives will be essential. The Quality Systems Supervisor oversees updating policies and procedures. This change is planned over the next four to six months, due to the CQI committee's input.

Covid Update

Providers and families visiting in person has continued, even with Covid numbers fluctuating. Recently, the opportunity for field trips has been recommended, including trips to a Sharks hockey game and the Monterey Bay Aquarium, construction worksites, and enrichment field trips such as taking the youth on a hike at a county park. What has not changed since Covid is that the pods do not mix unless there is a big project. The sports and intramural league has not returned. No family food is allowed in, and no off-site visits for the youth are permitted.

Communication

Reporting and communication at the Ranch include a monthly leadership meeting, after which information is shared with supervisors and line staff. Each supervisor has a monthly meeting with staff. There are pod (housing unit) meetings with youth. There are also monthly UCCI meetings. Email communication is effective and helpful among staff. Feedback from staff to management is provided in meetings. They have not held a Town Hall meeting this year, usually one occurs every six months. Management has asked what the best way is to communicate information. Emails can be sent for real-time information as well as word of mouth. The current management team's approach is to communicate by walking around the Ranch and talking to staff and youth personally.

² UCCI is the University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute. UCCI's mission is to research, develop, disseminate, and implement evidence-based practices in corrections.

Positives at the Ranch include the willingness of staff to adopt and utilize the new techniques to make meaningful redirection for the youth. When implementing changes, the Ranch strives to teach staff and youth why the changes are important. There appears to be more positive leadership among the staff. The new supervisors over the past three years have created a vision for the Ranch and improved communication and accountability. Supervisors are empowered and they empower the staff. There is more leadership training for supervisors. The Ranch is aware of the California Association of Probation Institution Administrators (CAPIA) awards for Probation departments within the state and is educating staff about these awards to try to qualify. They have implemented a BBQ for staff and monthly birthday club celebrations. Staff's camaraderie has returned after surviving the challenges with Covid. The staff are innovative, happy to be there and bring a positive energy to their work.

Challenges faced by the Ranch include the sustainability of UCCI training and regularly losing experienced staff.

Data and Outcomes

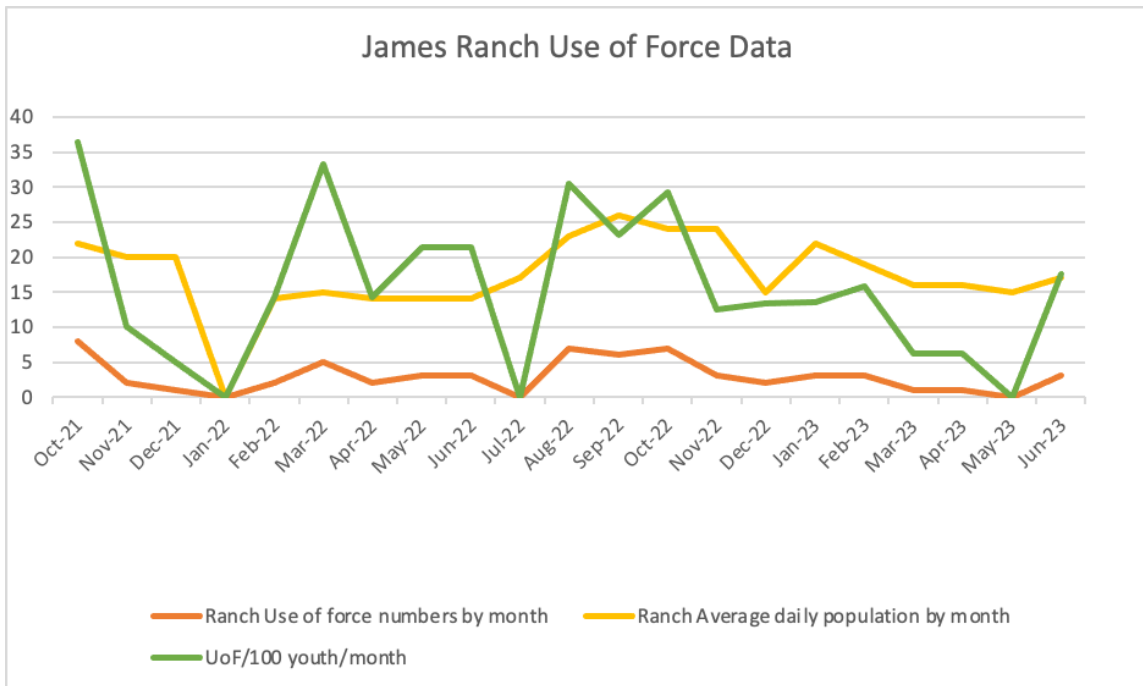
Ranch management has not yet defined how it measures success. It was not clear what key metrics/data are used by division managers to track progress beyond the regular activities of planning, scheduling, and resolving of issues. The importance of metrics such as Incident reports and trends, Aftercare reports, trends and success rates were discussed. Coming to an agreement on a few of these metrics would help to focus more on the Outcomes. One issue they are looking at is whether youth have a job or are in school when they are released back into the community.

INCIDENTS, GRIEVANCES, USE OF FORCE

Use of Force

Staff at the Ranch use force only to separate combative youth, prevent harm, or prevent escape. Most discipline matters are dealt with by counseling the youth to redirect behavior, and use of force is considered a last resort.

The following chart shows the population and restraint use rate from Oct 2021 to June 2023. To the Juvenile Probation Department's (JPD's) credit, the use of force levels have remained low in the last 18 months, which continued in 2023. It is in line with JR staff's view that Use of Force should be used as a last resort. Staff noted that use of force incidents may be increased by specific youth or when the population is higher because a higher population increases the potential for conflict.



Nonetheless, the JJC considers any use of force a serious matter with potentially harmful consequences for the youth, the Ranch program, and the Probation Department.

All Use of Force incident reports are reviewed by a supervisor and Probation Management. All Use of Force incidents that result in an injury are required to be reported to Probation Management. Youth who suffer an injury and any time a youth is restrained (including mechanical only), they must be assessed by medical staff.

Complaints related to the unnecessary or excessive use of force can come from a variety of sources including, but not limited to, youth, parents or family members, medical staff, probation staff, teachers, and community-based providers. They can be filed via a grievance form or by asking to speak to a supervisor or manager. These allegations are taken seriously by the Probation Department and are handled through review. A referral to the Internal Affairs Unit is made when these allegations are warranted. In any review of an incident to determine whether a particular use of force conforms to the Probation Department’s policy, the Department will evaluate the apparent need for an application of force, the relationship between that need and the amount of force used, the threat reasonably perceived, any efforts made to temper the severity of a forceful response, and the extent of any injury to the youth.

The State of California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) inspects juvenile facilities on a bi-annual basis. The inspection and reviews cover Security and Emergency practices; and documents and forms used by the agency. Documentation specific to high-risk use of force incidents are assessed to ensure compliance with regulation and policy. In its most recent the BSCC states: “the agency tracks and reviews all Use of Force incidents. Our review revealed the type of force was appropriate given the nature of the incident and staff documented efforts to avoid force.”

JR management also tracks use of force usage and reviews statistics quarterly, led by the Quality Services team, and including management, Probation Counselors I and II, and other staff, with the intention that all teams are represented. Following the meeting, notes, statistical findings, trends and areas of improvement are shared with the line staff via email.

Each (youth-facing) Sworn/Peace Officer employee participates in BSCC's Core Training within their first year of employment and 24 hours additional continuing education each year through BSCC. In addition, any County and Departments specific training is completed. Core is a 6-week program that includes training both in the classroom and "on the mat," on relevant statutes, penal codes, crisis defensive tactics, crisis diffusion, crisis de-escalation, redirecting, and other available options.

The JR staff is proud that their culture has evolved to limit mechanical restraint, encouraging mediation, emphasizing PBIS opportunities and sanctions. Mechanical restraint is extraordinarily limited. Staff is also committed to reviewing all incidents to improve education and streamline communication to all applicable staff.

Reporting of Incidents (IRs)

Any medical need, injury, assault, or threat at the Ranch generates an IR entered into the JAS database and assigned a unique control number. Staff submit the reports electronically before the end of shift, and by each staff member involved in an incident. Supervisors endeavor to review and are accepted by the supervisor.

Total number of IRs:

- 2023 = 285 (through October 7)
- 2022 = 290
- 2021 = 349
- 2020 = 327

The Commissioners reviewed a random sampling of IRs from the last year. The incidents were primarily in two general categories:

- Non-Emergency Medical—sports injuries and gym injuries, general stomach aches
- Altercations/Threats -- youth/youth and toward staff, includes threats/inappropriate language

All of the reviewed IRs appeared to have been handled appropriately by staff and resolved to the understanding (albeit not always agreement) of the youth. IRs including potential incidents of inappropriate staff behavior are sent directly to Internal Affairs. Each youth is provided with the Title 15 handbook and staff work with the youth to review it.

However, it appears that many of the IRs have not completed the sign-off process by the appropriate manager. Each IR must be approved by the Supervisor, but not every IR has that sign-off. This is attributed to staff not easily accessing their own open IRs, not getting system reminders to complete open IRs, and staff movement and schedules.

Appeals/Due Process and Grievances

Youth have the right to file an appeal from disciplinary action including, but not limited to, failure to pass their week (advance in the program) or being returned to JH for ARR (Administrative Ranch Reviews). Grievances can be filed based on any failure of the program to meet the youth's Title 15 rights (i.e., warm showers, food, clothing, education, etc.)

Thirteen (13) grievances were filed between January and October 2023. Responses appeared to comport with due process and a few of them were related issues (access to clothing, haircuts, more food, etc.). This compares to 44 grievances filed in 2022. However, the numbers are not comparable as the same issue can generate a single grievance or multiple grievances.

Appeals/Due Process Forms

In 2023 (through October 7), youth and staff created ~50 Due Process forms. Almost all submissions reflected a youth failing to be promoted in the PBIS for the week. The youth will lodge the complaint, and the staff then explains what has happened in the last seven days (and why the youth failed.)

During 2023, all but one was resolved within 10 days (The one exception took two weeks.)

If a youth still disagrees after staff explanation, the issue is escalated to a treatment supervisor, and then management.

It was unclear to what extent appeals and grievances are entered directly into the system, transcribed after being handwritten, and/or remain on paper. The forms themselves are clear and appear to capture the essential information, but since it is only on paper, they are not easily managed in the system.

Administrative Ranch Reviews (ARRs) apply when a youth at the Ranch should be returned to Juvenile Hall. Last year there were 14 cases of ARR. Examples of items that may trigger an ARR include unprovoked assaults, weapons, or medical issues that cannot be handled on site (e.g., eating disorder treatment) or youth experiencing symptoms of an illness. Issuance of an ARR for behavior is intended to give the youth time to reflect, and they encourage the youth to develop and write down their own improvement plan, going forward.

The staff has done its best to minimize ARR that may be triggered by conflict that could instead be addressed by on-site mediation. Staff have also modified rules to avoid youth who triggered ARR to be transported for better privileges (e.g., more access to unrestricted phone access at JH.)

Process Improvement: Treatment Forms

One improvement implemented by the staff is a new submission option called a treatment form. If a youth feels aggrieved or not being heard, they may submit the treatment form to speak directly with a pod supervisor before submitting a grievance. This process encourages thoughtful conversations with adults to teach communication and expression.

ADMITTANCE, CLASSIFICATION, ORIENTATION, ASSESSMENT & RELEASE, VISITING, CORRESPONDENCE, TELEPHONE ACCESS, LEGAL SERVICES ACCESS

Admittance and Classification

When a new youth is committed by the court to the Ranch, the youth must be transferred and admitted to the Ranch within 10 calendar days. The treatment supervision/Probation Counselor receives an email from Juvenile Hall/court once the youth has been committed to the Ranch and the process of admittances and classifications commences.

The counselor schedules the day of arrival, and within 10 days, makes a visit to Juvenile Hall to meet the youth for classification. During this visit, the counselor explains the program, answers questions, and generally tries to get a sense of who they are and what special needs they may have. The staff reports that most of the youth are open to staff in this initial interview, which enables the appropriate classifications of the youth. During this orientation meeting, the counselor also reviews paperwork that must be signed by the youth.

Once the counselor has met with the youth and gathered all relevant information, an email is sent to all interested parties, including:

- Clerical staff at James Ranch to make files and prep for entry into the computer database, Supervising probation counselors, assigned probation officer and previous aftercare officers, when applicable,
- Nurses and medical staff and behavioral health staff,
- Kitchen staff to increase meal counts,
- Attorney for youth, when applicable.

All relevant notes are documented in the JAIS (Juvenile Assessment and Intervention System) and this information is used to determine the youth's appropriate classification (including, but not limited to, specific medical, ADA-compliance, appropriate and available pods, gender identity, gang affiliation, size/stature, school credits and needs, AB 167³ and IEP [individualized educational plan], sophistication, English proficiency, behavioral health needs, etc.)

Once the youth has been placed, an email is sent to the entire team with an update where the youth is assigned, a description of who the youth is and how the Ranch can focus on support for the youth.

Improvement:

Vocational programs are available to youth at James Ranch and are offered on a rotational schedule, and they are 10-week programs that are offered to the pod. Everyone in the pod participates. If a student is interested in a program (and that pod doesn't have that rotation now), staff does their best to add to the existing cohort, also confirming if additional staff and supervision are available.

Orientation

At Juvenile Hall, the counselor reviews with the youth all expectations, programs, the James Ranch Guidebook, answers questions, explains levels and weekly advancement, in preparation of transferring the youth to James Ranch,

Youth that have been at the ranch before need less orientation. In the existing population of 20, there are <25% repeats. All youth receive the same orientation, despite how many programs to which they have been committed. If they have had more than one program, the youth and their parents tend to have fewer questions, as they are more informed about what the Ranch and program entails.

The culture of the James Ranch is that the more senior youth assist the new youth as they acclimate to the program and their new environment. Additionally, youth at Juvenile Hall, who have been committed to the Ranch in the past, provide information and experiences to youth assigned to James Ranch.

Upon arrival, the counselor greets them and reviews the program a second time—with the goal being that they understand that they will have support from start to finish, and that they clearly understand expectations. The youth watch a 12-minute video (which includes all content from the James Ranch Guidebook) and meet the managers and supervisors in the administrative building.

Staff will personally call the parent/guardian/family after meeting at Juvenile Hall and after arrival at the James Ranch with information on visiting and correspondence with the youth. At the initial James Ranch meeting, youth are offered food and shower, given access to a phone call, and a call to their attorney, and are seen by medical and behavioral health for an assessment which is done within the first hours of arrival. The youth is also given a PREA assessment and Title 15 rights/Youth Bill of Rights information is available. After this orientation meeting, they are escorted to their pod. The pod staff and youth host a welcome group to introduce youth to the others in the pod with names, levels, and a piece of advice from each youth for a successful program. They are also given instructions on expectations in the Pod (e.g., how to maintain your bed and armoire, etc.) Another set of rules and expectations are shared by the school staff. There are more opportunities for higher-level youth to help orient the new youth.

The staff is especially proud of the culture of James Ranch as a therapeutic facility, and the different functional teams work well together with good communication. They are also very good at ensuring that each youth has access to their Title 15 rights. Assessment

The team uses the JAIS assessment tool prior to commitment to Ranch which scores the youth to determine what level of support is needed for that specific youth. This helps to know if staff should engage their attorney, family, counselors, in any special way.

For a youth to progress to the next level, the youth petitions to be promoted and writes an essay explaining why they should be promoted. This may include specific questions, a statement like an autobiography, and/or reflections on what it means that they will be released out to the community, and if living with family, how they can be most successful.

³ AB167 allows youth who meet certain criteria to graduate from high school with a reduced number of credits.

In select cases, the counselor will assign different questions for a youth's petition. These questions are specifically geared to and more relevant to their personal case and lives.

Release

The standard program at James Ranch is 6 months (180 days minimum, based on the court dispositional orders); if they don't meet expectations, it can go up to 8 months with a 30-day ARR.

Youth that appear to not be progressing are monitored regularly. If a youth is struggling through their program, the counselor or probation officer (PO) will call emergency meetings with relevant parties (including the youth's attorney) to get youth back on track.

For example, if a youth is failing to progress levels for two-three weeks in a row, this signals the need for an intervention by the wrap team and youth to discuss what else can be done. If there is still no progress, staff will speak with the counselor and PO and on ARR may be reassessed by the assigned counselor and Managers. Staff considers options, including placement in a new pod or assignment to a new counselor. In most cases, these emergency meetings often turn the youth around.

The intake and orientations counselor is responsible for youth prior to arrival, and through the first month, to acclimate to the program. The counselors share responsibility for youth progress during months two to five, and one is assigned for responsible for month five and beyond for release and aftercare,

During the youth's time at James Ranch, there are at least three family sessions, conducted by the assigned probation counselor, with the assistance of the assigned counselor, if requested.

There is one intake multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meeting facilitated by the Intake and Orientation counselor to set up and plan the youth's stay at the James Ranch. There is another MDT at 60 days, facilitated by the aftercare officer to explain what is needed for release. The counselor assigned to the pod in which youth resides will attend this 60-Day MDT. There is a last MDT 30 days prior to release, also facilitated by the aftercare officer to cover transition issues (e.g., what school the youth will attend, who will be on the wrap team, employment, etc.)

The staff report that there have been no changes with release procedures over the past year.

Visiting

Youth have two hours of in-person visits every week, generally on Saturdays with designated hours by Pod, regardless of level/status. Parents or approved visitors are allowed visitation but not able to hug or have any physical contact. Two approved individuals are allowed to visit at a time (approval includes a background check and approval by aftercare officer and counselor.) The staff make every attempt to accommodate visitors' schedules, for example, if they work on weekends, staff may allow mid-week visits, if staffing permits.

There is a designated visiting center, sectioned out table by table and all visits are

supervised by two staff members at all times. Visitors may not bring food, but books may be upon approval by the counselor. [Covid guidelines are not in place at this time, and visitors are no longer required to wear masks, which has changed since last year.](#) They allow virtual visits via video conferencing supervised by staff available for family/approved close connections that are not able to attend in person visits.

Correspondence

Youth get an initial call upon arrival at James Ranch. Outside of visits, they are allowed a five-minute phone call each week, and additional phone calls are granted depending on circumstances (sick relatives, family emergency, etc.) If a parent/guardian/family is unable to visit, youth may receive a 20-minute phone call. If approved visitors are incarcerated, no phone calls are allowed, but letters may be accepted from incarcerated parents that are first scanned and approved by staff prior to sharing with the youth. No email correspondence is allowed and no cell phones.

Telephone Access

Landlines are available for the phone calls. Video calls are also an option. Staff members supervise the phone call or video call and always initiate the call to confirm who is on the phone. Youth have access to support staff/wrap services, aftercare officers and attorneys, when needed.

Legal Services Access

Youth are allowed to contact their attorney anytime, and they are granted full privacy for those calls. Staff initiate the outgoing call to confirm it's the attorney, then leave the room and have visual supervision of the youth. Attorneys are allowed to visit in person or virtually via video calls; this is less standard than phone. Staff accommodate attorney visits at any time, upon request, and schedule a time to meet with youth. If an appointment is requested, staff manages a daily calendar for each youth, and the staff will work to schedule with the attorney and outside of school hours, if possible (exceptions are allowed, when needed.) Each pod has a laminated poster with contact info for the Public Defender's office, Alternate Defender's office, etc.

The majority of court appearances are done virtually. If the court requests that the youth appear in person, there is a transport team to take the youth to court.

The staff believes that its best success has been streamlining processes and documenting policies and procedures, so they are easily accessible. It's a great deal of work to maintain, but it is worth the investment of time to keep these accessible.

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

Commissioners met with Probation staff on Sep 20, 2023, to review new and existing JR programs. JPD has produced a comprehensive James Ranch Program Resource Guide that thoroughly outlines the elements of the Ranch program.

As noted in the 2021 JJC Inspection Report, the Ranch continues to be in the process of

developing and implementing a revision of the program, with the assistance of the UCCI. The Ranch have formed committees to understand and guide the implementation and training including training of trainers. The Leadership Committee meets once a month to address issues, track progress and provide support as needed. Commissioners were informed that there were 3 subcommittees that guided the changes: CQI subcommittee, Policy/Programming/Assessment subcommittee, and Behavior Management System (BMS) subcommittee. The CQI and Programs Committees are engaged in the implementation process and learning from the feedback. Ranch staff are formally integrating UCCI and PBIS models to enhance program service and will continue to incorporate incentives encouraging positive behaviors, consistent with the PBIS approach.

As part of program implementation, staff have access to a case management system and are able to access the risk assessment tool (JAIS). Institutional Services Plans and Title IV-E Case Plans guide the advance preparation for release and planning for services to support youth in achieving goals. Staff coordinate with the community-based organizations to see that appropriate services are in place. [In the past year, the Evidence- Based Practices \(EBP\) manager has also started to work on facilitator self-observation sheets, youth sheets and group evaluation project sheets.](#)

At the core of the monthly Ranch program is a cognitive based and rehabilitation treatment program used to meet the youth's criminogenic needs. The major risk factors (such as antisocial personality, substance abuse, familial relationships) are addressed through the teaching of social and cognitive behavioral skills. Facilitated by Probation Counselors, these skills are imparted via weekly individual counseling, minimum of three family counseling sessions (some behavior health guided), daily group counseling, crisis intervention & mediation and weekly program evaluation & grading. All pods do cognitive behavior interventions weekly.

The Program Coordinator is responsible for coordinating and arranging various services and programs for youth in the JR. They also ensure the facilitation of MDT meetings and the creation of Institutional Service Plans (ISPs).

The Ranch continues to provide a robust range of programs as part of youth's journey in this facility. The Ranch Youth Advisory Council (YAC), implemented in March 2021, continues to be a very productive partnership between the County's Juvenile Probation Department and FLY (Fresh Lifelines for Youth). Two to three youths from each pod are chosen to be YAC representatives. Representatives meet weekly with FLY staff. Council members freely express and explore changes they would like to see at the Ranch and have a direct line to management. For example, the YAC had the weight room remodeled, met with the Ranch Art teacher and got involved in painting a mural, and made changes to the clothing options. Youth are paid \$25 an hour to be on the Council and sign a contract listing expectations and responsibilities for this commitment. YAC provides youth with public speaking opportunities such as presenting to Ranch managers and meeting with other department officials. Staff continue to note the growth and development of youth who serve as representatives on the Council. Programs supporting the development of youth continue to be offered including:

- [The History of Hip Hop, an eight-week program on the birth of hip-hop culture and the background of the music industry in the Bay Area conducted by San Jose](#)

- Digital Arts;
- Youth Narrative, a creative writing, reading, lyrical inscription, and illustration workshop;
- Young Women's Freedom Center, a voluntary two-part leadership development program for the girl's population at the Ranch. This program offers one-on-one and group sessions focused on personal transformation and healing as well as job-training and internship opportunities; and
- The International Human Association for Human Values, a program that strives to transform the mindset, attitudes, and behaviors of youth to break the cycle of violence and reduce recidivism.

Staff continue to receive positive feedback from youth on these new programs; Other Ranch programs have continued, including Gang Redirect, Xinachtli, El Joven Noble, Victim Awareness, the Beat Within, and Got Choices. The Ranch planned the "Unchained Program" which would allow youth to train and socialize homeless dogs but it remains on hold due to lack of instructors. This program has the potential to impart important values and behavioral learning to youth and we look forward to a future start of the program.

Many activities are returning to full in-person including sports and recreation with special attention to health protocols even though most protocols have been lifted. Youth can again participate in religious activities and request in person, and they can request a meeting with the Chaplain. The Enterprise work program is again able to take youth crews out to local parks. While the outdoor sports activities (such as running, flag football) have not yet started, the youth and staff are looking forward to resuming these and participating in competitive leagues with other groups.

While home furlough programs have not broadly yet restarted, each pod has two hours/week of visits. An open-air pavilion was built to allow for additional Covid safeguards for youth and visitors. The Ranch also offers family visits via video conference, which has been important for families that cannot travel in person to the Ranch.

EDUCATION

The National Institute of Justice states that providing education opportunities while in custody is the most effective means to reduce recidivism. The Blue Ridge school, located on James Ranch, is one of four Court and Community Schools operated by the COE Alternative Education Department (AED).

Two commissioners conducted an interview with the principal of Blue Ridge School on October 17, 2023. In addition, several Commissioners were able to inspect the school facilities as part of a tour of the Ranch facility conducted on September 28, 2023.

There have been a few changes to staff levels during the past year. Blue Ridge faculty continue to meet weekly in all-staff meetings to discuss all students and address their needs. Staff also meets to discuss the testing data and school progress of individual youth. All education is trauma-informed, with an emphasis on restorative justice practices. Staff work diligently to create an environment that enables the youth to feel welcomed and heard and sets them up for success. Staffing is as follows:

1 Principal
5 Teachers
3 Paraprofessionals (including 1 Art teacher since last report)
1 Special Education Teacher
1 Librarian
2 Wellness Center staff (provided by Santa Clara County)
1 Psychologist
1 School Office Coordinator
1 Academic Counselor

The Covid-19 effects seen over the last year are significantly less than in previous years. A student who has contracted Covid is temporarily transferred to Osborne school for the duration of their isolation and can return to regular classes once released by medical staff.

All student schedules are in-person and teacher-led, including those classes not part of the required core classes of Math, Science, History and Language Arts. Blue Ridge continues to use the legacy classrooms, which have been set up primarily for Career Technical Education, music, and art education. Culinary Arts is taught 3 times per week, Music is taught 1-2 times per week, and Art is offered twice per week. The school day is from 8:30 a.m. to 2:45 p.m. There is no set academic year, school is in session year-round. 200 units must be completed to receive a high school diploma.

Physical Education sessions are in the gym, and students use the blacktop and pool when the weather allows.

Student proficiency continues to be monitored by Renaissance Learning (RenStar) testing by an Assessment Technician. Students have an initial assessment upon entry at the Ranch, which considers any previous stressors a student may have experienced which could affect learning. After the initial assessment, students are tested every 45 days with 25-30 minute exams. The testing is shared with the teachers and discussed at regular faculty meetings. This consistent monitoring helps to ensure students' success and helps to prevent them falling behind. Extra help is provided as needed.

The library has had another refurbishment since last year which includes a new television for students' library-related use. Students visit the library once per week as part of their curriculum.

Students wear a uniform of tan slacks and polo shirt for their school day. Students were involved in helping to design a Bull mascot emblem for their shirts.

Students have a YAC, like the Student Council in other schools, which meets once a week. The YAC is their form of student governance and teaches the students leadership skills. Examples of changes they have championed are more varied lunch offerings, improvements to the gym and improvements to their library.

While the focus for students is to complete their high school course requirements to keep them on track for graduation, for those choosing a career training track instead of traditional college, the school offers robust training programs to prepare them for work. There are several programs offered:

Culinary Arts Program

Students have access to a professionally-equipped kitchen under an experienced chef. Students can receive a Food Handlers certificate which allows them to apply for work in that field. [The youth have developed impressive cooking skills and have prepared a variety of their creations to those at the Ranch and often for visitors too.](#)

LiUNA Program

The Laborers International Union of North America pre-apprenticeship program provides Blue Ridge students with approximately 14 weeks (240 hours) of skills-intensive curriculum and hands-on learning. Through the program, students, both young men and young women, can earn industry-recognized certifications in preparation for entering the construction workforce. Students develop skills through project-based learning taught by industry-based instructors. Satisfactory completion of the program and certification prepares these youth to apply for union jobs and gives them a distinct advantage over an inexperienced person applying for the same job.

The program allows for approximately 6 – 12 students to complete a certificate, with about two program sessions offered in a year. At the time of our interview, 8 – 10 students were on track to receive their forklift certification. Blue Ridge is particularly proud of their forklift program, which required diligence to bring an OSHA-certified piece of equipment as well as an OSHA-certified instructor to teach the course. Their Welding program also offers certification and this program is coed.

Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC 3)

MC 3 Multi-Craft Core Curriculum is integral to the 12-week pre-apprentice program. Awareness of available trades is a critical component of their programs, as it enables students to pursue any of the many trades the industry seeks.

Recidivism is an ongoing concern for the staff at Blue Ridge. While overall very few youth return to the Ranch, it is an issue they do address. The hope is that preparing them with a sound program, early intervention and rewarding and incentivizing students' hard work will help to reduce the likelihood of youths returning to the Ranch. Those who do return, however, often are successful the second time.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Medical services are provided by an on-site clinic that is staffed with two nursing shifts, 6:45am-3:15pm and 2:45pm-11:15pm. Services are enhanced by a telenursing system which provides access to the medical staff at Juvenile Hall and Valley Medical Center for consultation and for services outside business hours. [The clinic is in a building away from the main dormitory, but since last year's inspection a staff break room in the dormitory has been converted into a satellite clinic which provides easier access to youth, especially in the event of an emergency. It is also less isolated and safer for staff in the evening.](#)

Two half-time clerical positions were assigned to the medical team at Juvenile Hall and the Ranch, but there was a challenge keeping the positions full. A proposal has been submitted to consolidate the two half-time codes into a single, full-time code with the hope that it will be easier to fill and retain someone in that position. [A medical social worker has been hired to facilitate a continuum of care from detention to community](#)

transition.

All youth now receive confidential screening for gonorrhea and chlamydia. Further screening is available for other sexually transmitted diseases. The medical team continues to follow Covid protocols based on CDC and local Public Health Department guidelines, but they tend to be more conservative in their application due to the nature of the Ranch Program with youth living in a closed environment where they have contact with staff and others coming in from the larger community. The Covid vaccine and boosters are offered to all youth, but there continues to be some resistance and the rate of uptake is disappointing.

- MAT treatment: 5 youth.
- Psychotropic medications: 16 youth.
- STD screening: 8 youth. Please note that youth who are admitted to Juvenile Hall are also screened for Chlamydia and Gonorrhea before their transfer to James Ranch.
- Optometry visits: 26
- Glasses issued: 17
- Dental visits: 42
- COVID vaccines: 31

The medical team participates in multi-disciplinary team meetings to better educate youth and families on health needs as well as to facilitate transitions of care. Prior to a youth leaving the JR, clinic staff work with probation staff to assist youth and families in identifying the youth's insurance status. The goal is to identify community medical resources, specifically a primary-care provider (medical home) and facilitate a continuum of care from detention to community transition. The long-term goal is to create a workflow with sufficient staffing support to set up a remote visit with the youth's provider while they are still at the Ranch. The family and youth are currently advised to schedule an appointment with the youth's primary care provider to occur within 30 days of their return to the community.

The medical team reports that the transition from behavioral services being provided by a contract provider to being provided by the County's Behavioral Health Services Department (BHSD) has gone smoothly. They state that they have a good working relationship with the BHSD team, and they believe that the continuity of youth being seen at the Ranch by the same clinician they were assigned to at JH has been beneficial. The medical staff can see psychiatry notes which are housed in the same electronic medical record system that they use. The BHSD uses a different electronic medical record system, but this has not prevented the two teams from sharing pertinent information.

A new initiative in partnership with a Resident Doctor at Stanford University and FLY has been implemented to work with the YAC to train youth leaders as peer health educators. They are addressing four key areas:

- Contraception and sexual health
- Substance Abuse
- General health with a focus on weight and body positive
- Covid

The use of health educators has been successful in adult programs. Measures have shown that participants have retained information and the peer educators have been able to use their experience to help find employment after release from custody. As far as they are aware this has been untried in a youth program, consequently they intend to write a paper on the project and have received the approval of the Institutional Review Boards of the Health and Hospital System and Stanford University to conduct a study of the program. The first round of peer education was completed in the fall, and they are currently assessing the data.

A multidisciplinary team is working with youth, as subject matter experts, to make health education materials at the Ranch more youth friendly. It is anticipated that written materials will be completed by the winter with videos following early in 2024.

There has been a rise in the number of youth being admitted to the Ranch with a substance use disorder involving opioids. They receive substance use treatment and, when warranted, receive medically-assisted treatment. The emergency response team has a supply of Narcan, which can reverse the effects of an opioid overdose. Youth who are being treated for opioid use are trained in the use of Narcan and provided with a home supply, when they return to the community. At the time of this report Approximately 3% of the youth are receiving medically-assisted treatment for opioid use.

The clinic received a referral from the Board of Supervisors to complete blood level checks of youth for lead. Youth who provided informed consent were screened, but potentially harmful levels were not detected, so further screening of youth is probably unnecessary.

The medical team expresses high praise for the collaboration that they have with probation staff, the Public Health Department, and the BHSD.

The medical team is able to wrap services around youth while they are in custody and is strongly committed to ensuring the continuity of services for youth returning to the community, but there are significant challenges to providing the continuity needed. They are especially concerned about the lack of behavioral health services for the most at-risk youth. They hope that an eligibility worker can be hired to help families access Medi-Cal and other services.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES

Behavioral health services were previously provided through a contract with a community-based organization. Starting on July 1, 2022, the County's Behavioral Health Services Department took over providing behavioral health services. A team of four clinicians is based at James Ranch and other clinical staff are on-site during various times throughout the week. They provide day-to-day coverage for groups and crisis management. An additional team of eight (currently two vacancies) caseload-carrying clinicians provide individual and family therapy. They travel between Juvenile Hall and James Ranch. They are assigned to work with youth at Juvenile Hall and continue to see youth who are committed to the Ranch, thus ensuring continuity of treatment that was previously disrupted when a youth was moved to the Ranch and assigned to a new therapist. Two managers jointly oversee behavioral services at Juvenile Hall and James Ranch. One oversees day-to-day operations at both sites, while the other oversees

ongoing treatment services. There is on-site coverage from 8:30 am to 7 pm, seven days a week. An on-call clinician is available for consultation after business hours and holidays. Clinical staff include licensed, or license-eligible clinical social workers or marriage and family therapists. New clinical staff receive extensive training as part of the onboarding process and shadow another team member before taking on clinical responsibilities.

BHDS has a training guide matrix that outlines training requirements for all staff, while more specific training is assigned based on job responsibilities. All clinicians receive supervision and consultation from their manager or clinical supervisor. Staff training has mostly been virtual, but more in-person training has been added as pandemic restrictions have eased. Training is tracked in a BHDS database. Treatment services are available in English and Spanish. A language line can be accessed if services should be needed in another language. So far, such a need has not yet arisen.

All youth at James Ranch receive mental health services. Due to the high prevalence of co-occurring substance use disorders, which is estimated to affect most of the youth (exact data is not available due to privacy protections), all clinicians are trained to be able to treat substance use concurrently with mental health disorders. Marijuana, alcohol, and opioids are the primary substances being abused with just a few using methamphetamine. The most prevalent mental health diagnoses are PTSD, depression, anxiety disorders and ADHD.

Clinicians are housed in one of the older buildings, where they occupy three offices with nine workstations. Services are provided in interview rooms in the Dormitory Building and sometimes in the Administrative Building. At times the limited number of rooms that afford suitable privacy presents a challenge. BHSD is working with probation to identify additional private spaces for confidential treatment.

BHSD places a strong emphasis on using evidence-based practices. These include Seeking Safety, Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI), Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, Solution-Focused Therapy, and Motivational Interviewing. Implementation of evidence-based practices is supported through extensive training and supervision, but there isn't currently a rigorous program for tracking and ensuring fidelity.

A transition plan for youth transferring to the Ranch is developed by the behavioral health clinician while a youth is still at Juvenile Hall. This focus ensures that James Ranch probation staff are aware of youth's behavioral health needs.

BHSD works collaboratively with Probation Department staff. They participate in pod meetings and multidisciplinary team meetings, at intake, 60 days prior to discharge, and 30 days prior to discharge. BHSD staff develop pod care plans and share insight and strategies for working with youth. They also offer interventions for working with specific youth, for example, identifying potential triggers and coping skills that they might use.

BHSD and the medical team use different electronic health record systems, but this has not prevented them from sharing information. The two teams report working collaboratively together with open communication.

BHSD uses the Child and Adolescents Strengths and Needs (CANS) tool to track progress in treatment. They are not currently able to provide sufficient aggregate data to

demonstrate the effectiveness of their services. Probation and BH work together to coordinate services to the community. If probation identifies youth who have not connected to services, they can circle back to the BH team as needed. Many of the providers come to the Ranch 30 days ahead of release to support connection in being established.

YOUTH SURVEY

During the James Ranch Inspection, the JJC distributed an anonymous survey to the James Ranch youth. As with past years, the survey served as an opportunity for youth to inform the Commission on pressing issues at the Ranch. In addition to the survey, Commissioners also conducted a private, in-person interview with two members of the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) to augment the results of the youth survey. In 2022, the Commission was unable to survey the youth at the Ranch for its yearly report — the 2023 youth survey, therefore, marked the first time that the Commission was able to directly hear from the youth in two years. In addition, for the first time, the Commission believed it was important to offer a Spanish-translated copy of the 2023 James Ranch Youth Survey.

20 youths were present at the Ranch on the day the survey was distributed. Of the 20 youths, 18 surveys were completed and collected. Two youths were absent due to an appointment with mental health services. Of the 18 youths that completed the survey, only one youth requested a Spanish translation.

The survey was composed of four Likert-scale and 6 open-ended questions. A copy of the English translation of the survey is labeled as Appendix 3. The Spanish translation of the survey is labeled as Appendix 4. The survey results are in tabular form in Appendix 5.

The four satisfaction scale questions are as follows:

1. *I feel safe at the Ranch.*
2. *Adults at the Ranch are supportive and want me to succeed.*
3. *I feel good about the education I receive while at the Ranch.*
4. *I have been able to stay in touch with my family.*

Each question could be answered by one of five options: strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree, and strongly agree. When analyzing the results of the survey, each response was assigned a numerical value of 1 through 5, respectively.

Youth also had an opportunity to respond to the following open-ended questions:

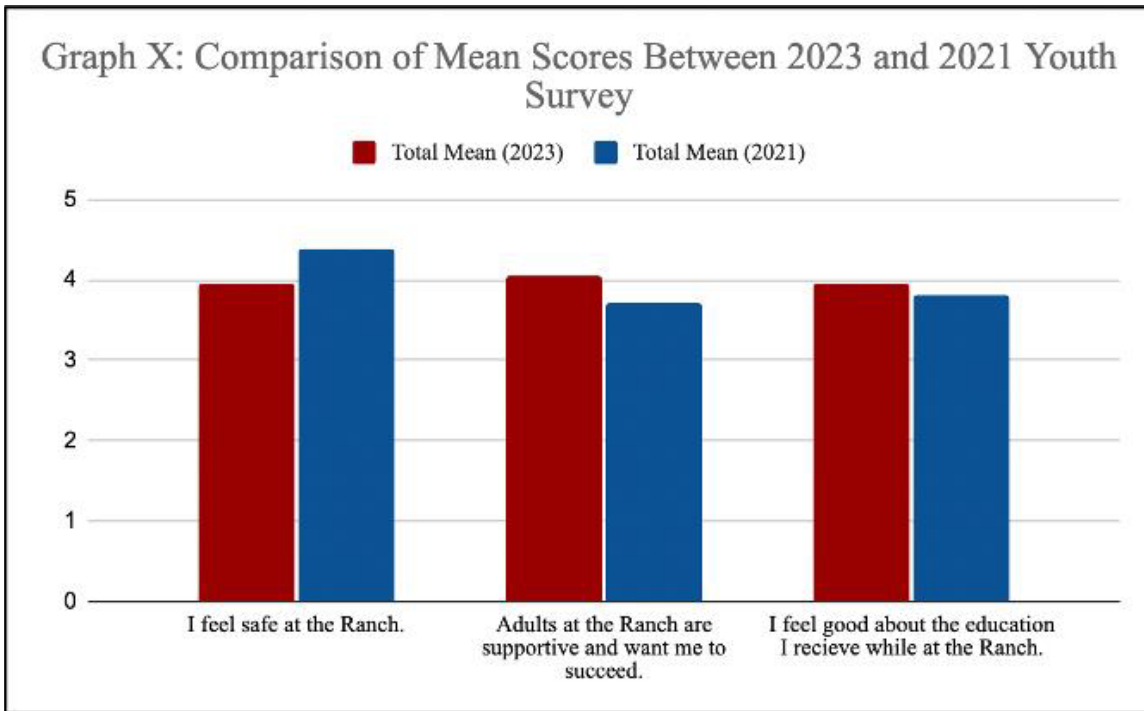
5. *What has been the most difficult part of being at the Ranch?*
6. *In your time at the Ranch, who has been the most helpful for you?*
7. *How have you been able to stay in touch with your family?*
8. *When you think about leaving the Ranch, what worries you?*
9. *If you could improve one thing about the Ranch, what would it be?*
10. *Is there anything else that is important for us to know?*

Of the four satisfaction scale questions, youth responded most positively to the second statement: *Adults at the Ranch are supportive and want me to succeed.* 77.8% of youth

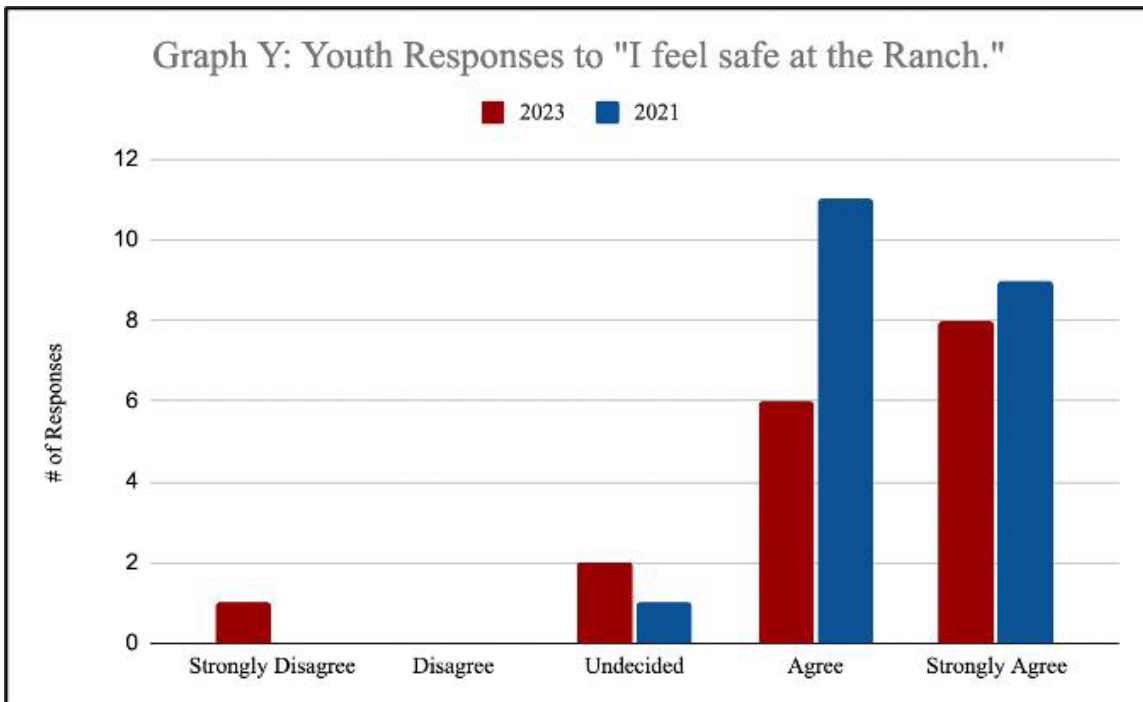
either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. This positive sentiment was also reflected in the free response portion of the survey. On multiple occasions, youth cited staff members by name, noting that they had been helpful and supportive during their time at the Ranch.

Across the survey, there was an upward trend in youth responses to the conditions at the Ranch. In 2023, only 10% of youth requested better food, a 30% drop as compared to 2021. No youth complained about showers or water, and as mentioned, there were no direct complaints about staff.

The Commission also compared the mean scores on the satisfaction scale questions between the 2023 and 2021 youth survey to determine whether there had been any marked differences between the two years. The fourth question, *I have been able to stay in touch with my family*, was excluded from this analysis, as it was not asked to the cohort surveyed in 2021. The results of the Commission’s analysis are displayed in Graph X.



Overall, the values across all three metrics in 2023 and 2021 remained relatively even. There were slight increases in satisfaction to Questions 2 — *Adults at the Ranch are supportive and want me to succeed* — and 3 — *I feel good about the education I receive while at the Ranch*.



As seen in Graph Y, there is a sharp decrease in youth feeling safe while at the Ranch between the 2023 and 2021 survey. This diminished sense of safety was further reflected in the free response portion of the survey. Under Question 9 — *If you could improve one thing about the Ranch, what would it be?* — one youth informed the Commission that there had been several shanks discovered in their pod. The same youth, when asked “*What has been the most difficult part of being at the Ranch?*” responded with “the strip searches” and “keep[ing] rival gangs away from each other.”

Based on these responses, Commissioners spoke with the YAC members about violence at the Ranch. The YAC members were honest and forthcoming in their responses. In the weeks preceding the Commission’s distribution of the survey, several shanks had been discovered and confiscated by Probation. While Probation had been successful in mitigating any violence, the YAC members nevertheless acknowledged rising tension within the pods.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (P&P)

The last review of the Policies and Procedures for James Ranch took place for the 2021 Inspection. At that time there were numerous sections that needed Probation’s attention. Those Policies and Procedures continued to be in effect until the end of October 2022. At that time a three-volume set offered by Lexipol⁴ was adapted and adopted for use by this county. The first volume, Juvenile Detention Policy (JDP) covers both Probation’s Juvenile Hall and the James Ranch Facilities, in circumstances where there is overlap.

⁴ Lexipol: <http://www.Lexipol.com>

The second volume, Juvenile Ranch Procedures (JRP) addresses JR issues specifically. A third volume is dedicated specifically to Juvenile Hall.

These policies appear clear and easy to follow, though most sections have a reference to forms not included in the manual. A great deal of effort went into the process of sorting out potential offerings by Lexipol to select and adapt the offered standard forms for use in Santa Clara County's youth detention facilities. However, there is still work needed to cover all circumstances. Of note is that the references to the Juvenile Detention Facilities volume does not cover the sections referenced in the JPR.⁵

Since the facilities of JH and JR have been through fire, flood and Covid rehousing of youth, the issue of alternative housing in the case of an emergency is real. If JR need to be evacuated the youth are to be returned to JH, but if an overflow occurs the youth are to be housed at the Main Jail.⁶ The JJC continues its objection to the concept of housing county youth in the same facility as the adult in custody population. Mindful Santa Clara and Santa Cruz shared housing during the Santa Cruz Mountains wildfires, the JJC continues its recommendation to develop mutual aid agreements with neighboring counties.

The JJC specifically looked for a section regarding parental or citizen complaints and found none. Our previous recommendations addressed the issue of complaints and recommended the response to a parent or citizen upon the completion of the inquiry be provided not only in English, but also in the language used in the complaint. As requested previously, the JJC continues its request that all complaints, information gathered, and the resolution of complaints be made available to the JJC for review. If the matter falls under a personnel issue, personal identifiable information can be redacted before releasing the complaint and dispositional information to the JJC.

The new policies and procedures are much more comprehensive than anything reviewed by the JJC previously, and JPO should be commended for adopting and adapting Lexipol's policies and Procedures. It however needs continual coordination as to specific issues between all three volumes and to focus on issues specific to Santa Clara County.

FACILITIES

Two commissioners visited the JR on November 1, 2023, to conduct the facilities inspection. JR staff accompanied them on the tour. Their budget is adequately funded and includes USDA funds for their food costs.

Facilities staff manages the buildings and equipment for Food Services, Laundry, classrooms, dormitories, gym, and all Administration buildings, as well as the Ranch grounds. "All Staff" meetings are held bi-weekly. Management has monthly update

⁵ JR P & P Section 516.4 references the Use of Force Policy in the the JPD volume.

⁶ JR P & P Section 410.2.2

meetings with Probation and the Facilities and Fleet department, and the result has been faster completion of projects.

Since the 2022 inspection, a resource center has been added for youth assigned to the re-entry unit. Plans are being finalized for a soccer field with perimeter track lanes. Plans for a sallyport at the northeast edge of the property are still pending. As a security measure, a plan for a parking lot for visitors outside the gates has been proposed. Facilities will be having anti-ballistic film installed on the Administration building to allow for additional security. Youth from the LiUNA program have installed concrete walkways. Carpet will be installed in the recreation hall, which will be used as a multi-purpose room.

Issues the Facilities team has addressed in recent months include:

- Plans to add water softeners due to damage done to appliances from hard water deposits.
- Movement of electrical utilities underground and screening off the equipment that is above ground is near completion.
- Storms at the beginning of 2023 caused flooding and blocked drainage Management has taken action to improve the culvert and the surrounding area at the back of the property to mitigate further flood risk while maintaining a fire barrier.
- Major repair to the woodworking building roof to shore it up temporarily until a permanent fix can be done.

The greenhouse has been cleared out and new irrigation has been installed. There are plans for a master gardener to be on site one-two days per week.

Operative security cameras had been installed in the dorms, but only begun recording visual and audio after the Board of Supervisors approved the Ranch's use of those cameras on December 5, 2023. On March 6, 2024, notification was distributed to all Probation staff and auxiliary staff notifying them that the cameras are now recording.

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

The JJC has completed its 2023 annual inspection report of James Ranch. Based on the information learned during the inspection and a review of documents, data and inspections by other agencies and surveys of the youth, the JJC finds that the youth at JR are supervised appropriately, thoughtfully managed and offered services to improve their quality of life in the community when they are released. We agree with BSCC that it is being run to the standards required by the state and that the best interests of the youth served are being met to the best of anyone's ability.

However, reviewing the recommendations in this this report, there remain issues unresolved from prior years as the JJC seeks documentation of how well the youth do

after release from the in-custody portion of the program to adequately understand the basic effectiveness of the work done on the youth's behalf and by the youth themselves. The Commission requests responses to its recommendations by July 18, 2024

Approved by the Juvenile Justice Commission on April 2, 2024.



Stephen Betts, Chair



Marcella Bellicitti, Inspection Committee Chair

Appendix 1 - James Ranch Youth Survey

Hello! We are the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC), and we inspect James Ranch to make sure it is a safe and supportive place. By completing this survey, you will help us continue to improve the Ranch. Please DO NOT write your name on this survey. Your responses are confidential—meaning no one else sees your answers—and your honest opinion makes a difference. Thank you for your feedback!

Demographic Information

POD: _____ Age: _____

How long have you been at the Ranch? _____

How many times have you been at the Ranch? _____

For each statement, please select the number below which best represents your experience.

I feel safe at the Ranch.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

Adults at the Ranch are supportive and want me to succeed.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

I feel good about the education I receive while at the Ranch.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

I have been able to stay in touch with my family.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

Please respond to the following questions about your experiences at the Ranch:

What has been the most difficult part of being at the Ranch?

In your time at the Ranch, who has been most helpful for you?

How have you been able to stay in touch with your family?

When you think about leaving the Ranch, what worries you?

If you could improve one thing about the Ranch, what would it be?

Is there anything else that is important for us to know?

Appendix 2 - Encuesta del James Ranch

Hola! Somos la Comisión de Justicia Juvenil del Condado de Santa Clara (JJC). Inspeccionamos James Ranch para asegurarnos de que sea un lugar seguro y de apoyo. Al completar esta encuesta, nos ayudará a continuar mejorando el James Ranch. Por favor NO escriba su nombre en esta encuesta. Sus respuestas son confidenciales. Nadie más ve tus respuestas. ¡Gracias!

Información Demográfica

¿En qué grupo estás?: _____ ¿Cuántos años tiene?: _____

¿Cuánto tiempo llevas en el James Ranch? _____

¿Cuántas veces has estado en el James Ranch?: _____

Para cada declaración, elija el número que mejor represente su tiempo en el James Ranch.

Me siento seguro en el James Ranch.

1	2	3	4	5
Muy Rechazada	En Desacuerdo	Indeciso	De Acuerdo	Muy De Acuerdo
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Los adultos del James Ranch me ayudan y quieren que tenga éxito.

1	2	3	4	5
Muy Rechazada	En Desacuerdo	Indeciso	De Acuerdo	Muy De Acuerdo
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Me siento bien con la educación que recibo mientras estoy en el James Ranch.

1	2	3	4	5
Muy Rechazada	En Desacuerdo	Indeciso	De Acuerdo	Muy De Acuerdo
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Puedo contactar a mi familia.

1	2	3	4	5
Muy Rechazada	En Desacuerdo	Indeciso	De Acuerdo	Muy De Acuerdo
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Por favor responda a las siguientes preguntas sobre sus experiencias en James Ranch:

¿Qué ha sido difícil de vivir en James Ranch?

¿Quién ha sido de mayor ayuda para usted en el James Ranch?

¿Cómo has podido contactar con tu familia?

Cuando piensas en salir el James Ranch, ¿qué te preocupa?

Si pudieras mejorar algo del James Ranch, ¿qué sería?

¿Hay algo más que sea importante que sepamos?

Appendix 4: Documents Reviewed

- Annual Programs Evaluation: Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act (JJCPA) Youthful Offender Block Grant (YOBG) 2022
- Annual James Ranch Fire Inspection Report, June 2023
- Annual Juvenile Justice Report prepared by the Probation Department 2021 (latest report)
- BSCC's Biannual Inspection Report December 2021
- California Code of Regulations Title 15 Minimum Standards for Juvenile Facilities Title 15 Crime Prevention and Corrections Division 1, Chapter 1, Subchapter 5 (2019)
- County of Santa Clara Facilities and Fleet Department. Building and Grounds Inspection, June 2023
- County of Santa Clara Probation Department Employee COVID-19 data
- County of Santa Clara Probation Department Report April 2021
- Environmental Inspection, October 2022
- Final PREA Flow Chart April, 12, 2023
- Final Report of Evidence-Based Correctional Program Checklist (CPC) William F. James Ranch
- Final Report University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute (UCCI) completed Correctional Programs Checklist (CPC) June 2023
- James Ranch Program Resource Guide, July 2023
- James Ranch Youth Guidebook
- Juvenile Probation William F. James Ranch Facility, Management Audit of the County of Santa Clara prepared for the Board of Supervisors June 30, 2022
- Juvenile Justice Commission, Santa Clara County (2020) William F. James Ranch Inspection Report.
- Juvenile Justice Commission, Santa Clara County (2021) William F. James Ranch Inspection Report.
- James Ranch statistics monthly report
- James Ranch Policies and Procedures Manuals
- Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Annual Report 2021. By the Probation Department (latest report)