

Superior Court of California County of Santa Clara

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JUVENILE JUSTICE COURT

Judicial Inspection of Juvenile Detention Facility for Suitability

Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 209¹

_____ Juvenile Hall / Secure Youth Treatment Facility (S.Y.T.F.)

✓ _____ William F. James Ranch / Learning Independence for Tomorrow (L.I.F.T.)

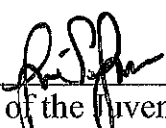
Date of Inspection: 10/04/2024

Judicial Findings

✓ _____ The facility was found to be within the minimum standards adopted by the Board of Corrections as noted on the attached and is suitable for the confinement of minors.

_____ The facility was found to not be within the minimum standard adopted by the Board of Correction as noted on the attached and is not suitable for the confinement of minors.

Date: 12/23/2024


Hon. Jose S. Franco
Judge of the Superior Court
County of Santa Clara

Judge of the Juvenile Justice Court
Superior Court of California
County of Santa Clara

¹ Pursuant to Cal. Welf. & Inst. Code § 209, the Juvenile Justice Court judges annually inspect each juvenile commitment facility in Santa Clara County that was used for the confinement of any minor for more than 24 hours in the preceding calendar year to make findings whether the facility is a suitable place for the confinement of minors.

2024 Annual Judicial Inspection of William F. James Ranch Program (WIC 209)

Pursuant to the requirement of Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) section 209, Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Court Judges Andrea E. Flint and Jose S. Franco performed a judicial inspection of the Santa Clara County William F. James Enhanced Ranch Program (Ranch), including the Secure Youth Treatment Facility Less Restrictive Program (LRP) – Learning Independence for Tomorrow (LIFT), located at 19050 Malaguerra Avenue, Morgan Hill, CA on October 4, 2024. They were accompanied by the Santa Clara County Juvenile Probation Department's Institutions Division Co-Manager of the Ranch, Elsa Jennings, and a probation counselor. Mark Camilleri, Principal of the Santa Clara County Office of Education's Blue Ridge High School located at the Ranch, was also present. The judges were able to briefly interact with youth and observe them in activities.

This was the first inspection and report drafted in relation to the Ranch.

This year's inspection began with a meeting in the Administration Building of the Ranch where the judges were provided with a packet that included youth guidebooks for both the Ranch Program and the SYTF LIFT Program. The informational guidebook was comprehensive and easy to understand. It put forth a mission, vision, core values, purpose, and the Ranch's commitment to participating youth. The guidebook further provided brief overviews of the different programs, services, and recreational activities offered at the Ranch, and the Youth Bill of Rights as provided in WIC 224.72.

On October 4, 2024, there were a total of 28 youth at the Ranch (25 boys and 3 girls). The judges observed youth and staff in the living units (pods), a classroom, and the recreational weight room. It was evident the Ranch offers a wide array of therapeutic programs and services in collaboration with the Santa Clara County Office of Education (COE), the Behavioral Health Services Department (BHSD), and many community-based organizations. At the time of the tour and inspection, youth were noticeably engaged in programs, education, and physical activity.

The inspection found that the Ranch functions with the same high quality of collaboration, supervision, and service delivery as in the Santa Clara County Juvenile Hall. Therefore, the judges find that the facility meets the minimum standards adopted by the Board of State and Community Corrections and in compliance with Titles 15 and 24 of the California Code of Regulations.

Overview

The Ranch is a structured six-to-eight-month residential rehabilitative program operated by the Juvenile Probation Department. Youth are transported from Juvenile Hall to the Ranch within

10 days of the Juvenile Justice Court's commitment order. During this 10-day period, youth are introduced to the Ranch program and upon arrival at the Ranch are provided with the information contained in the guidebook.

Youth at the Ranch are housed in one of eight pods, communal open living spaces with no individual rooms. Youth are assigned to an age-appropriate pod and provided with a bunk bed and armoire for their clothing, toiletries, and permitted personal items. These pods contain spacious living areas designed for youth to socialize and develop positive peer relationships. The pods are supervised by probation counselors/staff. Staffing ratio follows statutory standards and requirements as well as compliance with the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA).

The Ranch program is designed to encourage youths' positive behavior and individual growth and utilizes a level system for promotions towards release. Progress and promotions are evaluated on a weekly basis by pod staff. There are four different levels: orientation (four weeks), change (eight weeks), growth (eight weeks), and transition (four weeks). A youth who meets expectations for the week successfully promotes to the next week within the level and eventually between levels. Success and promotions are tied into positive behavior and engagement with treatment services that make up the Ranch program.

Programming

The William F. James Ranch Program Guidebook outlines the variety of programs offered. The various programs are meant to "address specific needs, facilitate growth, develop self-awareness, and support success at the Ranch." Programs such as the University of Cincinnati Corrections Institute's (UCCI) Cognitive Behavior Interventions, Victim Awareness, and other programs offered by community-based organizations are targeted to meet youths' criminogenic needs, risk factors, and principal needs. Gang intervention, crisis management, parenting, leadership, and positive health and personal development programs are offered/provided by agencies such as New Hope for Youth (NHFY), Fresh Lifelines for Youth (FLY), and The Young Women's Freedom Center (YWFC). Other programs available at the Ranch include Xinachtli, El Joven Noble, Girasol, Girls Scouts Got Choices, Botvin Life Skills, and the Art of Yoga. The available programs are culturally responsive, and evidence based.

One popular program is the Youth Advisory Council (YAC). The YAC is composed of youth representatives from each of the pods. With guidance from a facilitator, the youth lead advocacy efforts for their pods and the Ranch. Participating youth develop leadership, communication, speaking, advocacy, and presentation skills.

Sports and recreation activities available to youth include basketball, a weight room, and a swimming pool.

The Behavioral Health Services Department (BHSD), in strong collaboration with Ranch staff and counselors offer evidence-based treatment services and counseling (individual, group, and

family counseling). The BHSD has clinicians dedicated to the Ranch who are on site various times during the week and are part of individual pod meetings and multidisciplinary team meetings regarding youth. Mental health service, substance use/abuse counseling services, and services around co-occurring disorders (mental health and substance use) are available.

Education

Blue Ridge High School, run by the Santa Clara County Office of Education (COE), is the onsite school for youth. It is staffed with one principal, three paraprofessionals, one special education teacher, one librarian, one academic counselor, and two college liaisons. Available vocational programs include welding, culinary arts, and other 10-week trade programs related to construction.

The recently inaugurated onsite library is staffed by a Santa Clara County librarian several times a week. The library has a variety of literary genres available to youth in a colorfully and comfortably decorated space that includes couches, lounge chairs, and large bean bags. A music room, adjacent to the library is a work in progress. There are ongoing efforts to provide the same services, activities, spaces, and opportunities available to youth in Juvenile Hall.

Medical

The judges toured the on-site Juvenile Custody Health Services (JCHS) medical clinic and spoke to nursing staff. The medical clinic is staffed by two nurses – one nurse per shift. Many of the services available at Juvenile Hall are available at the Ranch. Enhanced services, such as consultation with a doctor or other specific medical needs, are provided by a telehealth services system connected to medical staff and doctor at Juvenile Hall. Transportation to Juvenile Hall for medical services is provided as needed. Nursing staff also participate in multi-disciplinary team meetings for youth and families to ensure continuity of health services for youth released into the community.

The JCHS is spearheading a Peer Health Education program where peers teach peers about relevant health education information. The Peer Health Education program covers general health, sexually transmitted diseases, infections, substance use, and reproductive health. This new program has been well-received by youth and is expected to continue.

Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) Less Restrictive Program (LRP) - Learning Independence for Tomorrow (LIFT) Program

The James Ranch is home to the Santa Clara County Secure Youth Treatment Facility (SYTF) Less Restrictive Program (LRP) Learning Independence for Tomorrow (LIFT) Program. Like SYTF in

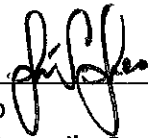
Juvenile Hall, LIFT continues to be a work in progress. There are ongoing improvements to programs, offerings, and opportunities for LIFT youth. The programs, services, and counseling provided to youth who are committed to the Ranch are available to LIFT youth. Additionally, youth are provided with additional opportunities such as home furloughs, furloughs to attend college events and tours, employment at local businesses, and educational field trips throughout the bay area. These additional opportunities are specifically designed to support stated goals in the youth's Individual Rehabilitation Plan (IRP) and eventual safe and successful reentry into the community.

At the time of the tour and inspection, there were 28 youth housed at the Ranch and six of those youth (three male and three female) were in the LIFT Program. LIFT youth are housed in separate pods from youth committed to the Ranch. The judges visited the girls' LIFT pod where one youth was engaged in counseling, another was attending an online college course, and the third youth was getting ready for her employment shift at a local store. The youth in the boys' LIFT pod offered a warm welcome, shared the many things they were doing while in the LIFT program, and demonstrated a different level of growth and maturity than younger youth at the Ranch.

The SYTF LIFT Program continues to be a work in progress as a Less Restrictive Program.

Closing

The Ranch program is therapeutic, well-run, and focused on the youth in their care. The Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Court judges wish to commend the Juvenile Probation Department and all the staff at Ranch for their tireless and thoughtful dedication to the care and well-being of youth committed to the Ranch, and their dynamic efforts in working with other organizations and treatment/service providers for the betterment of the youth.



Jose S. Franco
Judge of the Juvenile Court

12/23/2024
Date

FACILITY INSPECTION AREAS

I. Staffing Requirements

- ☒ Meets minimum requirement for juvenile facilities
☐ Does not meet minimum Requirements

Minimum standards:

1. The facility has an adequate number of personnel to carry out the program.
2. The facility has an adequate number of supervisory level staff to adequately supervise staff.
3. The facility has assigned an adequate number of child supervision staff to provide continuous wide-awake supervision.
 - a. Awake: At least one wide-awake child supervision staff member is assigned for (each ten minors housed in Juvenile Hall) (each fifteen minors housed in a juvenile camp or ranch).
 - b. Asleep: At least one wide-awake child supervision staff member is assigned for each thirty minors.
 - c. At least two wide-awake child supervision staff members are on duty at all times. (If not, backup services are provided for immediate response to emergencies.)
4. The facility (does) (does not) house both males and females. The facility (does) (does not) have at least one male and one female on duty at all times.
5. The facility has at least one person on duty at all times who has training in general fire and life safety.

II. Policy and Procedure Manuals

- ☒ Meets minimum requirement for juvenile facilities
☐ Does not meet minimum Requirements

Minimum standards:

1. The facility manual is available to all employees, is reviewed annually and is updated as necessary.
2. Staff is aware of updates and changes as the changes become effective.
3. The staff is aware of the facility's security policy regarding contraband, physical counts of minors, searches, staffing, perimeter security, fencing and lighting, vehicles, duress alarms, firearms control, training, chemical agents and mechanical restraint devices.
4. The staff is aware of the facility's emergency plans, including the taking of hostages, escapes and disturbances.
5. The staff has knowledge of the evacuation plans.

6. The staff has knowledge of the proper searches for body and property to be conducted on minors and visitors.
7. The staff has knowledge of proper use of restraints, safety rooms and use of force.
8. The staff is aware of the proper writing of incident reports.
9. An orientation is provided to the minors prior to placement in living areas.
10. For minors held 30 days or more, an assessment and plan is developed for each minor within 40 minutes of admission which includes the following elements:
 - a. A statement of the minor's problems (including substance abuse history, educational, vocational, counseling and family reunification);
 - b. For pre-adjudicated minors: objectives and time frames for the resolution of identified problems; and a plan for meeting the objectives (including a description of program resources need and individual responsible for assuring orientation of the plan);
 - c. For post-adjudicated minors; periodic evaluation/progress towards the objectives; periodic review with the minor; a transition/aftercare plan completed prior to release; and contact with the San Andreas Regional Center for Developmentally Disabled, if applicable);
11. Appropriate counseling and casework services are available to provide assistance with personal problems/needs as they arise, assistance in contacting parents, attorneys, clergymen, probation officers or other public officials when requested, and appropriate services (e.g. substance abuse, family crisis/reunification, counseling, public health and mental health).

III. Population

- ☒ Meets minimum requirement for juvenile facilities
☐ Does not meet minimum Requirements

Population capacity: 108

Present status: 28

Length of time over capacity: N/A

[Note: include only if facility is in noncompliance with population capacity.]

Though noncompliance arises from sustained occupancy levels that are above the population capacity permitted by applicable minimum standards, I find pursuant to W&I § 209(e) that the facility is not unsuitable for the confinement of minors because the conditions of the facility do not pose a serious risk to the health, safety or welfare of minors confined in the facility. I have considered the totality of the conditions, including the extent and duration of overpopulation as well as staffing, program, physical plant and medical and mental health care conditions in the facility. This finding does not exempt the facility from having to correct any violations that are not directly related to overpopulation of the facility.

IV. Room checks

- ☒ Meets minimum requirement for juvenile facilities
☐ Does not meet minimum Requirements

Minimum standards:

1. Staff does conduct one visual observation of minors every fifteen minutes when asleep or confined to a room. Audio/visual equipment does not replace direct visual observation.
2. All checks are documented.

V. Programs and Activities

- ☒ Meets minimum requirement for juvenile facilities
☐ Does not meet minimum Requirements

Minimum standards:

1. Education: The facility does provide an adequate level of education for minors learning abilities. Accommodations are made for minors with special needs, including non-English speaking minors. The number of teachers and classrooms is proportionate to the number of minors attending school in the facility. The classrooms have adequate supplies.
2. Social Awareness Programs: Appropriate programs are provided (e.g. victim awareness, conflict resolution, parenting skills and family reunification).
3. Recreation and Exercise (Minimum time is three hours per weekday, five hours each Saturday and Sunday or other non-school days): Appropriate recreation and exercise time is provided.
4. Religion: The minors have access to services, counseling and diets that are appropriate for their religion.
5. Work Programs and Vocational Training: Programs and training (are) (are not) available at this facility.
6. Visiting: Adequate opportunities are available for the minors to visit with their families.
7. Correspondence and Mail: Reviewing staff does practice adequate security and safety procedures while maintaining the confidentiality of the correspondence.
8. Telephone Access: Appropriate access to telephones is provided.
9. Legal Services (access and confidentiality): Minors have appropriate access to confidential interviews with their attorneys.

VI. Discipline

- ☒ Meets minimum requirement for juvenile facilities
☐ Does not meet minimum Requirements

Minimum standards:

1. The definitions of minor and major rule violations are clear to each minor.

VII. Health Services

- ☒ Meets minimum requirement for juvenile facilities
☐ Does not meet minimum Requirements

Minimum standards:

1. The facility has a physician who is responsible for clinical policy.
2. The facility has adequate materials, staff, supplies, space, equipment, and resource manuals.
3. First aid kits are readily accessible and staff aware of their locations.
4. Health education provided to the minors is age- and sex-appropriate.
5. Dental and mental health services are available and accessible to the minors.
6. Pharmaceuticals are secured.
7. The facility's suicide prevention plan does include trained staff to recognize the warning signs and counseling for the minors.
8. The facility's sexual assault plan (when the assault occurs in the facility) does include reporting the incident, examination and treatment for the minor-victim and investigation of the incident.

VIII. Food

- ☒ Meets minimum requirement for juvenile facilities
☐ Does not meet minimum Requirements

Minimum standards:

1. The minors are allowed a minimum of twenty minutes to consume each meal, except those on a medical diet prescribed by a physician may have time that exceeds the twenty minutes.
2. At least one meal each day is hot food.
3. Menus are planned up to one month in advance and retained for one year.

IX. Clothing and Personal Hygiene

- ☒ Meets minimum requirement for juvenile facilities
☐ Does not meet minimum Requirements

Minimum standards:

1. Clothing is clean, reasonably fitted and in good repair.
2. The facility has a contamination and/or vermin plan to clean, store or dispose of infested clothing, to eliminate spreading.
3. Minors are not deprived of showering or haircuts as part of discipline.

X. Bedding and Linen

- ☒ Meets minimum requirement for juvenile facilities
☐ Does not meet minimum Requirements

Minimum standards:

1. Bedding and linen are clean and in good repair.
2. The facility has a contamination and/or vermin plan to clean, store or dispose of infested bedding and linen, to eliminate spreading.

XI. Facility Sanitation and Safety

- ☒ Meets minimum requirement for juvenile facilities
☐ Does not meet minimum Requirements

Minimum standards:

1. The facility is clean and safe from hazards.
2. The facility has adequate lighting inside the facility and outside the perimeter.

XII. Smoke Free Environment

- ☒ Meets minimum requirement for juvenile facilities
☐ Does not meet minimum Requirements

Minimum standards:

1. Minors are prohibited from smoking.
2. Minors are free from second-hand smoke.



Jose S. Franco
Judge of the Juvenile Court

12/23/2014

Date