

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

**MURIEL WRIGHT RESIDENTIAL CENTER
January 2005**

INTRODUCTION

The Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission conducted an announced inspection of the Muriel Wright Residential Center (Center) on January 18, 2005 and an unannounced inspection on January 28, 2005, pursuant to the State of California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 229. Built in 1963, the Center is on Bernal Road in San Jose. Five commissioners visited the facility on the first visit and three commissioners visited the facility on the second visit. Interviews were conducted with youth and staff.

The report is a descriptive summary of the information gathered regarding the overall program, population, staff, reports reviewed, medical health, mental health services, programs, school and survey responses. Observations, concerns, commendations and recommendations for action complete the report.

VISION/MISSION

The Muriel Wright Center is committed to providing a collaborative program to a diverse population of youth, focusing on core services in mental health, physical health, education, vocation, and rehabilitation. The model's intent is to encourage our youth to develop social skills through systematic intervention in thought, belief and action to help our youth transition to a successful future.

GOALS

The Center's goals are to provide mental health, medical, educational, substance abuse, vocational, other rehabilitative, and aftercare services to youth the Court entrusts to the Center. Objectives have been established for each goal.

Goal 1: Rehabilitation *The Wright Center will provide programming to assist in the reduction of delinquent behavior and strengthen the development of pro-social and health lifestyles.*

Goal 2: Education *The Santa Clara Office of Education, Alternative Schools Department will provide an educational environment, which will address the individual learning needs of the students, to include both general and individualized special education services.*

Goal 3: Vocational Training *The Wright Center will seek to enhance its capacity to provide Wright Center Youth with vocational programming that helps build self esteem, as well as improve and develop skills needed for successful reentry into the community.*

Goal 4: Transition/Aftercare *In order to facilitate successful reentry, the Wright Center will develop, prior to release to aftercare, an individualized transition plan for each minor coordinating identified, needed services to the minor and her/his family.*

DESCRIPTION

Program Overview The Center is a minimum-security detention and rehabilitation facility that has a privilege-based positive reinforcement program. The goal of the Wright Center program is to help the wards learn personal responsibility by increasing social, academic, and communication skills prior to their release.

A belt system plays an important component in determining the earning of privileges. "C" belt is the neutral point. "D" belt is for those on restriction who have lost privileges. "B" belt has more privileges. "A" belt provides significant incentives related to home visits, passes, and other program privileges. There are higher behavior expectations for those who earn the advanced "A and B" levels.

All wards receive a copy of the orientation manual, *Welcome to the Wright Center*, which explains the programs and the rules and regulations. The youth can read the pamphlet and learn exactly what is expected of them during their stay. Appeals, the grievance and appeals procedures, and an orientation for parents are also included.

The youth have a prescribed weekly schedule that includes school, housekeeping and handy work on the grounds, assisting in the kitchen, journal keeping, recreation, and quiet time. Rising at 6:30 am and retiring at 9:30 pm, the youth are kept busy all day. The weekend schedule varies from the weekday schedule and may include furloughs, special programs, visiting hours, and work off site. Those who have earned the privilege are allowed to go home for various periods of time over the weekend.

Inspection Reports Documents and inspection reports from various sources were requested and received during the inspection. Included are:

1. Santa Clara Valley Health & Hospital System Medical Department Annual Report for 2003, dated February 4, 2004. The report notes that medical services ranked high in numerous investigations/inspections (Grand Jury, Title XV, Board of Corrections).
2. Board of Corrections (BOC) Biennial Inspection of Santa Clara County Juvenile Detention Facilities, dated June 10, 2004. An area of concern is the potential "suicide hazards" in the individual rooms in the original housing units located in the main building.
3. Office of the Fire Marshall of Santa Clara County Fire Department Inspection, dated September 27, 2004. Six items requiring corrective action were noted.
4. County of Santa Clara General Services Agency Occupational Safety and Environmental Compliance Safety and Environmental Audit Report of Probation Department – Muriel Wright Center, dated August 11, 2004. The report noted 12 items on which corrective action should be taken to bring the facility into compliance.
5. Building Operations Annual Building Inspection Report - Muriel Wright Ranch, dated March 2004. Minor repairs that can be handled by maintenance personnel were noted.
6. Annual School Program Evaluation for Osborne School dated Nov. 1, 2004, from the Santa Clara County Office of Education (COE).
7. Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System Juvenile Probation Medical Services Juvenile Hall/Juvenile Ranches Annual/2004.

Physical Plant The Center consists of one-story buildings. The main building contains a recreation room, kitchen and cafeteria, medical and administrative offices. The boys' Dorms A and B have one boy assigned per room, except in one case. Each of those rooms contains a single bed, a closet, and a desk with chair. In Dorm C girls are housed two to a room. This is new for the girls. Due to population changes, the boys and girls changed living arrangements in the past year. Early indications are that the girls like this arrangement because they "have someone to talk to." Laundry is done at the Holden Ranch laundry facility, but there is a washer and dryer on site for cleaning kitchen linen and sports clothes. Each dorm has a "library" of recreational reading materials for the wards.

Last year it was noted that the water tank was vulnerable to vandalism. Commissioners noticed that the tank is now fenced in. There is a concern for fire because of the Center's remote location. The original smaller water storage tank has been replaced by a new 100,000-gallon tank.

Construction on the new Programs Building is scheduled to begin in February or March of 2005. Offices in the Administration Building will be renovated and the school will have an addition that will stretch out in the area where the volleyball court is currently located. The year-long project will be done in two phases. There is still need for new equipment to replace the "hand-me-down" chairs and pool table. Commissioners asked if youth in the Center could work on the project. They were told youth cannot perform jobs that a County employee would be hired to accomplish.

There is one GSA staff assigned to both Ranches. One had recently been laid off. Although the response time is not as fast as previously enjoyed by the Center, the GSA staff person is appreciated and very satisfactory according to Center management.

Youth reported to the Commission inspection team that the boys in A and B dormitories had to take a cold shower that morning. Staff placed a service call with GSA. The problem has occurred in the past. A permanent repair is needed.

Probation Department Staffing The Center staffing ratio is based primarily on four factors: (1) Title 15 California Codes Minimum Standards (one staff to 15 minors during awake hours and one staff to 30 minors during asleep hours); (2) physical design of the facility (three separate dormitories); (3) safety and security; (4) the programming goals and objectives.

The Center is comprised of three dormitories. A and B dorms have a capacity of 17 beds each (34 total) and C dorm has 30 beds. The facility houses male and female minors separately, requiring a minimum operation of two dorms even at low population levels. The operation of all three dorms is required when the population reaches 35 or 48 based on the gender makeup of the population. During the operation of two dorms, a minimum of four to five staff is required during the awake hours and three staff during the asleep hours. During the operation of three dorms, a minimum of six staff is required during the awake hours and four staff during the asleep hours.

The Center is coded for 30 staff, based on the facility's capacity, as follows:

- 1 Probation Manager
- 3 Supervising Probation Counselors
- 21 Probation Counselors
- 5 Probation Assistants

Management of this ranch has changed frequently from manager to acting to interim to permanent during the last year. The first day of the JJC inspection was the newly-appointed Wright Manager's first day on the job. She answered as many questions as possible and deferred to her supervisors as necessary.

Probation Counselors are responsible for supervision of wards from 6:30 am to 10:30 pm seven days a week. The function is transferred from the Probation Counselors to the Probation Assistants during the hours from 10:30 pm to 6:30 am.

The staff on the day of the visit consisted of one supervisor and six probation counselors per awake shift, required by code, when all three dormitories are in use.

The Center requires staffing 24 hours a day seven days per week. Consequently, when staff has scheduled time off, sick time, or training, they are replaced. The Center retains a pool of part-time/on call staff classified as Extra-help or Intermittent workers. Some extra help staff are retired managers or counselors; all of the extra help have had core training.

No staff member was on administrative leave at the time of the inspection. Six staff members are on medical or disability/workman's compensation leave. One staff member is bilingual in Spanish and no staff member is bilingual in Vietnamese. This is not currently a problem as there were no Vietnamese speaking wards at the Center. There is staff turnover with many trying for the probation officer position.

The 16-hour work day has been adopted by the counselors at the Center. Each team works three 16-hour days one week and two 16-hour days the next week. Each team is assigned to one of three schedules rotating from one to the next every 28 days. Counselors move periodically during a shift so they are not with the same youth during the entire 16 hours.

The BOC provides funds for training and mandates the hours of training for the various staff classifications. Managers and supervisory staff must complete a total of 40 hours training during the fiscal year. Counselors and Probation Assistants must complete 24 hours of training during the fiscal year. An Individual Training Plan that lists the course title, course required, and course training hours are prepared for each of the mandated classifications.

The kitchen crew consists of five people. Meals are prepared on-site with the Probation Department dietician assisting in the preparation of the menu. Menus are audited to insure the adequacy of the caloric count. The boys and girls at the Center receive the same size servings of food. On the day of the inspection the lunch consisted of a hearty meat soup, sandwiches, milk, carrots and celery strips and peach cobbler

Population The rated capacity of the Wright Center is 64. On the date of the visit, January 18, 2005, there were 23 girls and 17 boys in the facility.

The ethnic distribution on January 18, 2005 was as follows:

<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>
15 Hispanic	13 Hispanic
5 Caucasian	1 Caucasian
2 Black	3 Black
1 Other	

The ages of the youth at the time of the inspection were as follows:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
12	1	0
14	8	5
15	7	5
16	0	5
17	1	7
18	0	1
Total	17	23

This is the only Ranch facility in the county for girls. With the closing of the Holden Ranch this past summer, all younger boys, age 12-15 ½, are assigned to this Center with no screening. On the day of the inspection a new admit came to the facility, a sex-offender boy. This is a major departure from past practice of not assigning sex offender males to the Center as it is the girls' Ranch program. Also, fire-starters can be sent to the Center. At this time approximately 50% of the minors have committed "707B" crimes.

Prior to transfer to the Center, the Ranch Orientation Program (ROP) has been operating at Juvenile Hall (Hall). This allowed for "settling in" time after the court decision, the ranch program explanation, mental health counseling, and completion of medical, educational, and mental health screenings. The JJC was informed that this program is being discontinued in February. The JJC is concerned that the reasons for starting the ROP program are being sidelined.

Counselors told the inspection team that some youth are being held at the Hall for 30 days before being transferred to the Center. The JJC was shown a "wait list" for youth at the Hall. Some are in the Ranch Adjustment Program (RAP) and others in ROP. But, because neither Ranch facility is at capacity, why would there be a waiting list for placement at the Wright Center?

During lunch Commissioners had an opportunity to talk with the wards. One Commissioner said that the three boys at the table were talkative and said that they liked the school, food, and counselors. At least two of the boys are known gang members. They were curious about the Commissioner and asked several questions. They seemed surprised that Commissioners would do this "job" and not get paid for it! One of those minors, a slightly-built younger boy, was the subject of two minor gang-related attacks a few days prior to the inspection. His injuries were minor and residual bruising was not noticeable. He seemed to take it in stride. He and the other member of his particular gang were assigned to a double room. It was also noticed that those two minors sat together with another non-gang minor at lunch and at school. Three youth, eating with another member of the inspection team, complained to the Commissioner about counselors threatening them with assignment to CYA. Two girls, eating with another commissioner, were very tense and stiff. They admitted to being from different gangs, not on speaking terms with each other, and on restriction for gang activity.

Staff Comments The staff noted that they are currently on the alert because two boys are the only members of a rival gang. Gang issues are a growing problem for the staff.

Staff reported there is a critical need for an in-depth Anger Management program presented by an outside agency. The current minimal program is prepared by the probation staff and taught by the counselors.

The staff reported the classes that involve the youth and their parents have generally been unsuccessful, with more than half of the parents unwilling to commit. Parent involvement is an important part of the program. Problems with inflexible parents, single parents, multiple jobs, and parents fed up with the child are more the norm.

Staff added that morale, on a scale of 1-10, is a 5. Staff feels that there is little continuity on counselor teams. The Chief of Probation visited the Center recently, the staff added.

Programs Many programs are available to help young people turn their lives around and become productive members of society. The following is a list of the programs offered for boys: Alcoholics Anonymous, Anger Management, Chemical Dependency Treatment, Domestic Violence Education, Health Realization, Religious Counseling, Sports, Gang Awareness, Tattoo Removal, and Victim Awareness.

The following additional programs are offered for girls: Girl Scouts and Sexual Abuse Treatment. The Health Realization class is not offered for girls.

The Center staff facilitates the Anger Management Program, a six-hour course. The Pathway Society provides the Chemical Dependency Program. The Pathway counselor provides one hour of individual and two hours of group counseling on a weekly basis. Friends Outside provides the Domestic Violence Education, a six-hour course. Parenting classes, such as Boys as Fathers, are not given at this facility because of the young age of the boys.

The staff said there is need for another half-time Pathway counselor and a Health Realization program for girls. The girls' sports program is intermittent due to the number of girls at the Center. The girls programs compete in a "league" with girls from San Mateo and Monterey Counties. Cross county competitions were eliminated due to problems during a boys' meet.

Medical/Dental Care Medical services are provided by staff from Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System (VMC). There is a split shift nurse on duty four hours each morning and four hours each afternoon, seven days a week. If a minor becomes ill, he or she can be transferred to the Hall or VMC. Minors covered by a Kaiser insurance plan are taken to the nearby Kaiser facility.

The nurse, at the Center for several years, dispenses all medications. The split shift allows all medications to be given by the nurse morning and evening. At the time of the inspection, one girl was pregnant (in the second trimester.) She will be 18 in March and is experiencing a high-risk pregnancy. A public health nurse in the *First Time Mom Program*, a special support and health program, visits her every two weeks for maternity and childcare instruction. Currently, there are no diabetic minors at the Center.

Six boys and two girls are on psychotropic medications. If wards refuse to take medications, they cannot be forced. But, if they cannot function without the medication, they are taken back to the Hall.

All wards received a full physical examination at Juvenile Hall prior to admission to the Center and generally are in good health. A ward with a fever is moved to an isolation room, which is not a locked environment, to separate her/him from the general population. This winter some minors have had colds but to date there has been no flu outbreak, as most minors received the flu shot.

Dental care is provided by a dentist at the Hall, where there is always a waiting list for care. Most wards have neglected their teeth, causing decay due to alcohol and drug use. The dental health education program from Cabrillo Community College has been discontinued. Minors may have dental OT's depending on the family dental plan and other considerations.

Mental Health Unit The Mental Health Department provides two full-time Clinicians and two Family Partners (one full-time; and one, two days a week). They are on duty Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. There are no Mental Health services on-site during the evenings or on weekends. A youth in a mental health crisis is transported to the Hall. Staff reported the need for more innovative therapy, including family therapy. When youth are released, they return to families where the same problems persist. At one time it was the practice of some of the youth to threaten suicide to circumvent the system. This practice was curtailed by insuring there were no special privileges available for youth when they were moved to the Mental Health unit.

School The Santa Clara County Office of Education (COE) operates the school at the Center on a minimum-day, year-round program. The school staff is from three COE departments: the Alternative Schools Department (ASD), the Special Ed Department and the ROP Department. There are three full-time regular classroom teachers, one for boys and two for girls. A Special Ed teacher has an SDC class for boys, but it was discontinued at the end of that week. There is also a part-time ROP vocational teacher, a computer instructor, who teaches the girls on Mondays and the boys on Fridays. A Resource Specialist from the Hall, available by pager, prepares Individual Education Plans (IEP) and checks to assure that all the requirements of all IEPs are being satisfied. A special Ed aide provides services to RSP students within the class or in a separate room as needed. All of these are under the joint direction of a Regular Education principal, on-site weekly, and a Special Education principal, rarely on site. All students have come to this Ranch after being in the Juvenile Hall and its Ranch Orientation Program.

Two of the three regular teachers have Special Ed credentials and teach their classes with attention to the Special Day Class (SDC) and Resource Specialist Program (RSP) students at the same time as the regular students. Formerly, students who needed SDC services were not selected for the Center. With the closing of the Holden Ranch this past summer, all young wards come to the Center.

Class size is no longer a problem at this school, but it needs close attention as changes in population occur. On the first day of the JJC inspection, with the boy's population at 17, 13 students were assigned to one teacher and four were in the SDC class. There were 23 girls divided into two classes, one class in the unit and one in the classrooms. On the second day, there were 16 boys and 25 girls, the girls in two classrooms. Since the girls have been divided into two groups, the girls do not exceed the 20:1 BOC ratio. Commissioners are concerned that a future increase in the number of

boys will cause a non-compliant student-teacher ratio unless a second boys' teacher is added. The classes, complicated by the element of regular/special education students in one class, must remain small.

The students attend four periods of class. The current COE curriculum emphasizes literacy and numeracy with two class periods of literacy (English and Language Arts), one period of numeracy (Math), and one of Physical Education (as required by state law). Character-based literature is the foundation for the Language Arts program. Many students are several years behind in their educational progress. During the Hall orientation process, students are given the STAR test for grade placement and the learning plan in the Assessment Center. Individual Learning Plans (ILP) are revised on each incoming student unless that student is special ed and has an Individual Education Plan (IEP). This drives the appropriate grade level instruction.

There is an *ARTSCONNECT* program at Wright Center. The program was founded on the principle that the arts are intrinsic tools for human expression and the building of self-esteem. *ARTSCONNECT* is collaboration between the Arts Council and the SCCOE Alternative Schools Department. This program is a four-day enrichment plan as selected by the teachers to coordinate with their curriculum.

The first session of this program was being presented on the January 18th visit. The instructor, a De Anza College art instructor, made a presentation of art from India and then worked with the students on a hands-on craft project. At the beginning of the program the boys in the class seemed lackadaisical and indifferent towards the project. At the end of the hour, every boy was engrossed in what he was attempting to accomplish. The girls participate in this program during the afternoon session. The projects were to be completed during the second day of this special enrichment plan under the instructor's guidance. The topic was selected by the teachers to coordinate with their curriculum. He will return to help the students complete their art piece. Additional sessions will occur later.

A computer program is available for two hours a week for both the boys and girls. The ROP teacher teaches Microsoft Office and other computer skills in the first hour and integrates these skills into the regular curriculum in the second hour. The ASD and ROP teachers collaborate so each student learns how to research papers using three outside resources, bring in art, graphs, or pictures, and design a cover page to complete their work. The students proudly showed commissioners their completed reports. The computers used in this lab are old and seem to be hand-me-downs from other COE uses. Students must sit idly when there is a frequent breakdown. The JJC felt that this was the most successful integration of computers in any COE school program in a detention facility. New equipment has been ordered but has not yet been delivered. The ROP teacher has offered to expand the program to James Ranch but no progress has been made.

Commissioners briefly reviewed a sample selection of IEPs for Special Ed students. Of those reviewed, 11 are current. Four are outdated. A secretary is present all day on Mondays and can check on missing IEPs if a student arrives without current documentation. However, two boys acknowledge being SDC for a long time and do not have IEPs. Both had been "in the system" for 2 ½ to 3 years and bounced from the Hall to the Center for the last year. Neither boy has had an IEP during that time. The teacher, after personal contact direct to the district, indicates one is coming shortly. If teachers

and students realize the Special Ed status, why hasn't an annual IEP been completed instead of spending a year waiting for prior documents?

There are two SDC boys and three SDC girls. The JJC wonders how the IEP requirements can be met for these students with the SDC class cancellation.

There is no GED for the boys at this facility as most are young enough to return to the public schools for high school graduation. Five girls are participating in the GED program.

The teachers are concerned for security especially because of increasing gang issues and violence. One said she has to know the gang affiliations of the students in her class in order to keep them separated or assigned to congenial small groups. The class ratio is 20:1, there is only a shared aide, and the probation staff patrols the classroom once every 15 minutes. The teachers are issued a hand-held radio, if there is a need to call for help, and there is a security camera to observe if there is a disturbance in the classroom. Teachers can write an Incident Report (IR) if a student becomes unruly or disruptive. At this Center few are ever removed for disruptive behavior. The teachers file an incident report only in severe cases.

School enrollment after a youth leaves this program is a continuing concern for the staff. Counselors, parents and students are "put through the hoops" to find a place for these students. The public high schools are not willing to enroll the students or pay the additional cost of placement in the COE Alternative Schools classes. Some public schools recommend Independent Study. These students need the structured environment of a classroom. Most of them are not able to operate on an "independent study" basis.

Incident Reports The inspection committee reviewed the Incident Reports (IRs) for the first 24 days in January 2005 and for the months of November and December 2004. There were 47 events that resulted in an incident report being written during the first 24 days in January. The reasons the January IRs were prepared was as follows:

Informational	18
Contraband	8
Escape	5
Fighting	5
Insubordination	5
Aftercare failure	3
Other	3
Total	47

There were five escape events in January; four escapes involved two youth and one escape involved a single youth. During December there were two escape events involving three youth. Five escapes occurred in November. There were two youth involved in two of the escapes and three solo escapes. The staff reported that the Chief Probation Officer and the Deputy Chief Probation Officer are notified, even at home, if there is an escape or if a major incident occurs.

Grievances A system is in place that allows a youth with a complaint to file a grievance report. The Commission reviewed the 38 reports filed during 2004. The number of reports varied from a high of eight grievances filed in August to zero

grievances filed in January and March. Each grievance is reviewed and signed by the Superintendent. The Superintendent's comment on 19 of the grievances was "no further action needed" or "resolved at Supervisor level." It was noted that four of the grievances, after review by senior staff, contained the comment "penalty reduced after review". These grievances were actually appeals from IRs that had been written. There is need to clarify for youth at the Center the difference between an appeal and a grievance.

Survey The Center's minors were asked to complete the *JJC Ranch Youth Survey* during the inspection. The Spanish language version of the form was not needed. Commissioners distributed the form and an envelope and conducted the process without staff involvement. Minors were assured that all information would be confidential. The Boys and Girls Surveys with responses and comments are attached to this report. Table A lists several survey items and separate responses of the boys and girls. As noted, percentages are used as all items were not answered by all minors. Although all of the boys (17) submitted surveys, one boy's survey was not tabulated as he was admitted the morning of the inspection. Three girls were at a work assignment so they did not complete the survey and an additional three girls did not return envelopes leaving a total of 17 girl respondents.

Table A Wright Center Survey Responses January 18, 2005

<u>Item</u>	<u>N= 16</u>		<u>N=17</u>	
	<u>Boys' Responses</u>		<u>Girls' Responses</u>	
1. Do you get enough to eat?	No	56%	Yes	94%
2. Were the rules explained to you?	Yes	62%	Yes	70%
3. Are you on medication?	Yes	37%	Yes	75%
4. Can you get the classes you need?	Yes	65%	Yes	30%
5. Can you get in touch with your PO?	Yes	31%	Yes	11%
6. How often does your PO contact you?	Never	71%	Never	47%
7. Would you rather do time at the Ranch?	Yes	53%	Yes	88%
8. Talk freely with staff/counselors?	Yes	50%	Yes	53%
9. Is discipline handled fairly for everyone?	Yes	29%	Yes	6%
10. Are you subj. to verbal abuse from staff?	Yes	21%	Yes	23%
11. Are you subj. to physical abuse from staff?	No	86%	No	94%
12. Do you feel safe at the Ranch?	Yes	77%	Yes	100%

Note: The %'s are from the number of respondents to the particular question.

There was one gang tagline printed on a boy's returned form. Some vulgar language was used on the boys' forms-- a rare occurrence in the three years of the JJC survey. As evidenced in the last survey, the boys made fewer comments than did the girls. This year a majority of the girls and some of the boys complained about the hygiene products they must use. They said that the products dry out their hair and skin and give them rashes. They also claimed that the deodorant "doesn't work." This is the first year that so many complaints were listed about hygiene products. Commissioners learned that no items from the outside are permitted due to contraband issues. Therefore, youth are provided everything, including hygiene products. Perhaps the brand could be changed.

The girls overwhelmingly (88%) would rather be at the Center than at the Hall. On the other hand, the boys were split almost 50-50 about where they would rather be.

Both groups who preferred the Center indicated OT's, more freedom, able to be outdoors, and the food as the main "pluses" of the Center.

The open-ended questions elicited some important information. When asked about the challenges facing them upon release, the girls were most concerned with finishing school and getting a job (4), aftercare (3), and staying home (3). For the boys, the Aftercare program (6) was listed as their significant challenge. Other concerns were mentioned by only one minor each.

Thirteen girls mentioned that the "best" thing about the Center is the OTs. Three boys had OT's listed in that category. For the "worst" part of the Center, the boys said teachers (5), working (2) and staff (2). The girls listed the shampoo and deodorant (5) as the "worst" thing about the Center. One girl mentioned in two different places that the gang-related belts were bad and created gang tensions. Three girls asked if they could have pencils in their rooms. This evidently was a privilege that was recently removed.

Table B lists the responses from the 2004 survey at the Center using the same items as listed for this year

Table B Comparison of Last Year and Current Year of the Survey Responses

<u>Item</u>	<u>Boys' Responses</u>		<u>Girls' Responses</u>		
		2004	2005	2004	2005
1. Do you get enough to eat?	No	65%	56%	Yes 100%	94%
2. Were the rules explained to you?	Yes	45%	62%	Yes 75%	70%
3. Are you on medication?	Yes	19%	37%	Yes 54%	75%
4. Can you get the classes you need?	Yes	37%	65%	Yes 67%	30%
5. Can you get in touch with your PO?	Yes	29%	31%	Yes 46%	11%
6. How often does your PO contact you?	Never	80%	71%	Never 50%	47%
7. Would you rather do time at the Ranch?	Yes	65%	53%	Yes 93%	88%
8. Talk freely with staff/counselors?	Yes	20%	50%	Yes 55%	53%
9. Is discipline handled fairly for everyone?	Yes	15%	29%	Yes 46%	6%
10. Are you subj. to verbal abuse from staff?	Yes	70%	21%	Yes 15%	23%
11. Are you subj. to phy. abuse from staff?	No	85%	86%	No 100%	94%
12. Do you feel safe at the Ranch?	Yes	70%	67%	Yes 85%	100%

Note: The %'s are from the number of respondents to the particular questions.

In 2005 boys' and girls' responses noted a significantly increased percentage of minors for whom medications are prescribed over the previous year's groups. Among these medications are: anti-depressants, asthma/allergy, vitamins and birth control medications. More boys (by 30%) this year feel they can "talk freely and openly" to counselors. This major improvement may indicate that either different counselors are at the Center or training has made a difference. Comparison of the girls' responses to the same item showed a slight decrease of 2%. Nearly twice the percentage of boys this year (29%) over last year (15%) indicate that "discipline is handled fairly for everyone." The girls' opinion on the same item regarding the "fairness of discipline for everyone" decreased by 40% this year. This was evidenced also by their comments.

The JJC survey continues to provide youth with an opportunity to voice their opinions and concerns in a confidential manner. Maintaining data that can be tracked over several years is important in order to look at trends. As with all data about youth in the justice system, the population changes each year there are different participants!

OBSERVATIONS

Commissioners talked freely with probation staff, medical and mental health staff, teachers, and youth. There was willingness on the part of all individuals interviewed to be open and candid. The day of the first inspection visit was the first day on the job for the new Superintendent. She had been prepared for the visit by the departing Superintendent and was able to answer all of the Commissioners questions. She was ably assisted by the Probation Supervisor who had worked with the Commission last year. Reports and grievances for the past year were examined. Incident Reports for the past 90 days were reviewed and tabulated.

Five of 16 boys this year indicated on the survey that the "worst part of being at the Center" is the teachers. Last year only one boy so indicated. Only one girl from last year and none from this year indicated such an opinion about the teachers. Obviously, there is a change in either the boys' group dynamic or that another variable is causing this change.

The issue of the ineffectiveness of and the discomforts experienced by the youth from the hygiene products was a theme throughout the girls' survey responses and surfaced also in the boys' comments. This is also the first time that so many youth indicated such strong dislikes about the aspect of hygiene since the Commission began surveying the youth three years ago. An adjustment in the brand of products might be a prudent move for the Department.

CONCERNS

1. The Commission is concerned that gang problems persist at the Center.
2. The Commission is concerned that too many extra help staff are used to fill positions at the Center. Permanent staff report that the time they spend working with the temporary staff would be better spent working with the youth.
3. The Commission is concerned that a sex offender is now sentenced to the Center, a facility with a mixed population.
4. The Commission is concerned that the survey results still indicate that youth, particularly the girls, feel that discipline is not handled "fairly" by the staff.
5. The Commission is concerned with the number of escapes from the Center.
6. The Commission is concerned that staff morale, at low ebb last year, is still rated as 5 on a scale of 1 to 10.
7. The Commission is concerned about the length of time needed for current IEPs and the lack of SDC services for both the boys and the girls.
8. The Commission is concerned about the reduction in the ROP program.

COMMENDATIONS

The Juvenile Justice Commission commends:

1. The Chief of Probation and the Deputy Chief of Probation for requiring that they be called, even at home, if an escape or major incident occurs.
2. The Probation Department and the Wright School staff for conducting an Open House in conjunction with the Holiday Program. This gave the parents an opportunity to learn about their child's education.

- 3 The collaboration between the ROP and ASD teachers to integrate the computer lab program into the curriculum and make the computer an effective tool for the students.
- 4 The nurse for her willingness to work a split shift and return from home to the facility when the need arises.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends that the Probation Department:

1. Ensure that the Anger Management classes, currently taught by staff, be presented by contract specialists.
2. Investigate to determine the possibility of changing the brands of the hygiene products' currently used to brands more generally accepted by the youth.
3. Continue the Center Site Team's effort to monitor the population concern for compliance with the BOC-required maximum class size. When the number of boys or girls exceeds 20, the student-teacher ratio should focus on the needs of the students.
4. Suggest that the Site Team begin to measure outcomes of some of the programs.
5. Direct Probation Counselors to prepare a progress report and recommendation for the court review of each ward. Satisfactory progress that a ward is making during the Center's program is vital information and best assessed by the individual's Counselor.
6. Consider the addition of another half-time Pathway counselor. The youth speak highly of the benefits of this program.
7. Monitor the behavior and attitude of incoming wards following court placement in view of the cancellation of the ROP program.

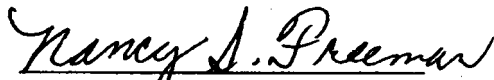
The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends that the Santa Clara County Office of Education:

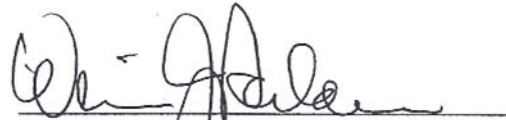
1. Prepare an education report for each minor as part of the court review process as needed. The Probation Officer needs data on academic progress, behavior, and, if Special Ed, the IEP testing and services.
2. Monitor the Special Ed requirements and services to comply with federal law. The JJC suggests a "Special Services" class of two hours each for both boys and girls to address the needs of SDC, RSP, GED and other identified needs.
3. Expand the ROP program's computer skills class to the James Ranch.

SUMMARY

Although there are some areas for improvement, the Juvenile Justice Commission is satisfied that the Muriel Wright Residential Center is a safe environment and the youth who are in the program are receiving services and programs needed to help them succeed.

Approved by the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission on March 1, 2005


Nancy S. Freeman, Ph.D., Chair
Juvenile Justice Commission


William J. Scifacci, Chair
Wright Center Inspection Committee

ATTACHMENT 1

Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission Muriel Wright Residential Center Youth Survey Boys' Responses N=16 January 18, 2005

Please, complete the following survey, place it in the envelope, and return it to us. Your comments are important to us. To keep your answers confidential, please DO NOT give your name.

How long have you been here? 2 weeks 5 1 month 2 more than 3 months 9

How often do your parents visit? Weekly 11 Sometimes 2 Rarely/never 3

How is the food? Good 8 Fair 7 Poor 1

Do you get enough to eat? Yes 7 No 9

Are you supplied the necessary clothing items? Yes 13 No 3

Are you supplied the necessary soap, shampoo, deodorant, etc.? Yes 11 No 4

When you came here, were the rules explained to you? Yes 10 No 6

Do you have a copy of these rules? Yes 11 No 5

Can you get an explanation, if you ask for it? Yes 8 No 8

Do you get time each day for:

- recreation? Yes 11 No 5

- sports activities? Yes 7 No 9

- exercise? Yes 10 No 6

Do you have the opportunity to participate in church or religious services? Yes 13 No 2

Do you have problems Getting medical care? Yes 6 No 9

Seeing a therapist? Yes 6 No 8

Are you on medication? Yes 6 No 9 If yes, what kind? _____

Are medications given at the right times? Yes 6 No 2

How many hours do you spend each day in school? 5 hrs 3 4 hrs 12

Can you get the school classes you need? Yes 9 No 5

Can you get GED classes if you want them? Yes 9 No 6

Do you have help with your schoolwork or homework if you need it? Yes 9 No 5

Do you know how many units you have now for high school graduation? Yes 1 No 12

Do you have an opportunity for job training? Yes 0 No 12

Is this the class you want? Yes 6 No 5

Can you get in touch with your PO? Yes 5 No 11

How often does your PO contact you? Never 10 Rarely 2 Once 2

Where would you rather do your time? at the Ranch 8 at Juvenile Hall 7
 Why? *AT THE RANCH* *AT JUVENILE HALL*
OT's—3 More free time—1 *"cuz I think it's better—1*
Out in open—1 *'cuz I won't run*
Easy—1 *to fight—2 I have more friends there—1*
Better counselors—1 *less to worry about—1*
More freedom—1 *Counselors don't threaten us— 1*
 Do you feel like you can talk freely and honestly with staff/counselors? Yes 8 No 8

Is discipline handled fairly for everyone? Yes 4 No 11
 Comments
Teachers aren't fair—1, Can't be ourselves—1, Handle issues too severe—1, Favoritism—1,

Are you subjected to verbal abuse (this would mean profanity, verbal put-downs, angry name-calling) from staff? Yes 3 No 11 Other kids? Yes 5 No 10
 Comments
Counselors cuss at us—1

Are you subjected to any physical abuse (hitting or injury connected with discipline or punishment) from staff? Yes 3 No 11 Other kids? Yes 3 No 11
 Comments

Are there any specific needs you have that are not being met? Yes 5 No 9 yes/no 1
 If yes, what? *I can't get into sports—1 Need more food—1, Our own cosmetics—1*
I can't get counseling (he also said yes to having trouble seeing a therapist)

Do you feel safe at this Ranch? Yes 10 No 3 yes/no 2
 If no, why? *Too tempting to run— 1*

Do you know the terms for your release? Yes 7

What will be your biggest challenge after completing the Ranch program?
Aftercare—6 curfew, be good, staying out, drugs, beating someone up each had 1 entry

What's the best thing about being here?
OT's - 3, More freedom—2, Open dorm, Being outdoors more, Nothing—each had 1 entry

What's the worst?
Teachers—5, Working—2, Staff& counselors—2
They don't care what you think & Everything each had 1 entry

Is there anything else you want us to know about?
Counselors are very disrespectful & bad, Water is cold, Kitchen workers treat us like XXXX
Need better sports equipment, staff are XXXX, I don't get enough privacy to do my own thing, Sometimes I feel like running

ATTACHMENT 2

**Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission
Muriel Wright Residential Center Youth Survey
Girls' Responses N=17 January 18, 2005**

Please, complete the following survey, place it in the envelope, and return it to us. Your comments are important to us. To keep your answers confidential, please DO NOT give your name.

How long have you been here? 2 weeks 1 1 month 8 more than 3 months 8

How often do your parents visit? Weekly 15 Sometimes 2 Rarely/never 0

How is the food? Good 9 Fair 8 Poor

Do you get enough to eat? Yes 16 No 0

Are you supplied the necessary clothing items? Yes 17 No 0

Are you supplied the necessary soap, shampoo, deodorant, etc.? Yes 4 No 10 yes/no 3

When you came here, were the rules explained to you? Yes 12 No 5

Do you have a copy of these rules? Yes 13 No 4

Can you get an explanation, if you ask for it? Yes 11 No 6

Do you get time each day for:

- recreation? Yes 14 No 3

- sports activities? Yes 16 No 1

- exercise? Yes 15 No 2

Do you have the opportunity to participate in church or religious services? Yes 12 No 5

Do you have problems Getting medical care? Yes 4 No 12

Seeing a therapist? Yes 0 No 17

Are you on medication? Yes 12 No 5 If yes, what kind? _____

Are medications given at the right times? Yes 13 No 0

How many hours do you spend each day in school? 4-13 5-4

Can you get the school classes you need? Yes 3 No 12 yes/no 11

Can you get GED classes if you want them? Yes 12 No 4

Do you have help with your schoolwork or homework if you need it? Yes 13 No 4

Do you know how many units you have now for high school graduation? Yes 14 No 3

Do you have an opportunity for job training? Yes 1 No 16

Is this the class you want? Yes 9 No 4

Can you get in touch with your PO? Yes 11 No 6

How often does your PO contact you? A lot—2 Once—4 Seldom—1 Never—8

Where would you rather do your time? at the Ranch 15 at Juvenile Hall 2

AT THE RANCH

OT's—9 *More laid back/learn more—1*
More freedom/earn privileges—4
Better food—4 *See my daughter more—1*
Get to go outside—1 *Programs help me do better—1*
School is better- help to get credits—1

AT THE HALL

Can talk openly with counselors—1
Time is easier—1

Do you feel like you can talk freely and honestly with staff/counselors? Yes 8 No 7
Depends on who is working Sometimes 2

Is discipline handled fairly for everyone? Yes 1 No 15 Sometimes 1

Comments— *Favoritism— 7*

Not fair—2 *Hold grudges—1* *We get blamed for little things—1* *Depends on staff—1*
Blame everyone—2 *Single out minors & punish them more—1*

Are you subjected to verbal abuse (this would mean profanity, verbal put-downs, angry name-calling) from staff? Yes 4 No 13 Other kids? Yes 9 No 7

Comments *Staff turn backs when people argue—1, Only from one staff—1,*
Staff help us and don't try to put us down—1 *Girls stir up drama—1,*

Are you subjected to any physical abuse (hitting or injury connected with discipline or punishment) from staff? Yes 1 No 16 Other kids? Yes 4 No 13

Comments *Girls fight over stupid stuff—1, They throw things in class—1, People push me—1*

Are there any specific needs you have that are not being met? Yes 10 No 6

If yes, what? *Better shampoo & deodorant—7, Better clothing—1*

Do you feel safe at this Ranch? Yes 16 No 0

If no, why?

Do you know the terms for your release? Yes 13 No 4

What will be your biggest challenge after completing the Ranch program?

School & job—4, Completing Aftercare—3, Staying home—3, Staying sober—2
Finishing college—1, Getting GED—1.

What's the best thing about being here? *OT's—13, Nothing—2, Better food—1,*

I'm learning not to be so angry—1, Learn how to express myself better—1,

Ignoring people talking smack—1

What's the worst? *Shampoo & deodorant—4. Away from family—2, The program period!—2,*
Some staff are rude—2, Staff talk out angry feelings on us—2, gang related belts—1, the girls—

1,
Things ain't fair—1, Sometimes workcrew—1, Getting up too early—1, Being here—1

Is there anything else you want us to know about?

We should have our own hygiene products—3, Can we have our pencils back in our rooms?—3,

Better shampoo etc, bring it from home—2, They give us red and blue belts—gang tensions—1,

Shampoo & deodorant and other supplies do not work—damage hair & skin—1,

When counselors are in a bad mood they take it out on us—1, Staff talk to other minors about matters that are confidential—I know this is illegal—1.