

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

**MURIEL WRIGHT RESIDENTIAL CENTER
APRIL 2007**

I. INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the State of California Welfare and Institutions Code Section 229, the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) made three announced visits on March 12, March 13 and April 23, 2007 to the Muriel Wright Residential Center (Wright Center or MWC). Five Commissioners were present for the first visit, two for the second visit and two for the third visit.

The following report summarizes the information gathered from Probation staff, youth, school personnel, medical staff, mental health specialists and personnel from Community Based Organizations (CBOs). The report also includes the observations of the Commissioners and a review of documents the Commissioners received. The Commissioners based their Commendations and Recommendations on that information.

II. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

The following reports and documents were received and reviewed:

1. Muriel Wright Residential Center brochure
2. Wright Center Youth Schedule
3. Wright Center – Shift Schedule
4. Wright Center Program Schedule
5. Annual Report for Muriel Wright School for Department of Corrections, dated April 1, 2006
6. SC Valley Health and Hospital System Juvenile Probation Medical Services for Juvenile Hall/Ranches – Annual Report for 2006
7. Office of Fire Marshal – Annual Report, dated November 4, 2006
8. The County of Santa Clara Probation Department, James Ranch and Muriel Wright Residential Enhanced Ranch Program, updated May 2006
9. Wright Center and James Ranch Site Team, Overview and Mission Statement
10. Corrections Standards Authority, Santa Clara County Juvenile Facilities Biennial Inspection, dated August 25, 2006
11. Fleet and Facilities, Annual Building Inspection, dated February 2006
12. Muriel Wright Residential Center Guidebook, revised August, 2006

III. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Muriel Wright Residential Center is a minimum security facility in south San Jose that provides 24-hour supervision for female minors between the ages of 12 and 18

and males 15½ years and younger who have been committed to the program by the Juvenile Court. Since the Enhanced Ranch Program began at Muriel Wright on August 28, 2006, the program is understandably still in transition. The new program has increased youths' stay to 180-240 days, replacing the previous minimum stay of 120-160 days.

The boys and girls attend school and also participate in a Vocational Education program which is available both at Muriel Wright and at James Boys Ranch. A number of programs are offered to give the minors skills and resources for their return to the community. CBOs provide many services such as Gang Redirection and Anti Criminal Thinking. The youth also participate in sports programs, on- and off-ranch work crews, and field trips.

The girls reside in two dorms, with 12 girls in each unit. Each girl is in a private room, which staff members state that they prefer, primarily for privacy. One building is divided into two dorms for the boys. There are 14 boys in each unit, with a large shared activity room. Most sleeping rooms are occupied by two boys. The boys and girls are separated in all activities and programs, including school and meals.

The Enhanced Ranch Program is based on the Cognitive Behavior Management Model, which promotes the development of pro-socialization adjustment and socialization skills. Eight staff members per team are assigned to work with specific girls or boys, and also run the groups. The Center has several Spanish-speaking Probation Counselors and one who speaks Vietnamese.

The system used to evaluate behavior and earn privileges consists of four levels instead of the previous system of three levels. Each level has different requirements and criteria before a youth can move up to the next level. After four-to-six weeks of satisfactory completion, the minor will move to the next level. Level 1 is the orientation month while Level 4 is considered a transition level. There are no home visits for the first three months; instead families will come to the Wright Center. Emphasis is on family engagement and intervention. When minors are on furlough, teams from Wright Center often visit the minors and their families.

When a minor arrives, a Probation Counselor is assigned to complete the Individual Assessment and Treatment Plan, preferably within two weeks, dependent on the Counselor's work schedule. The youth are each given a comprehensive Guidebook for their transition to MWC. The Guidebook is written for youth who have a higher reading level than most of those at the Wright Center, so they have difficulty reading it unassisted. The minors receive orientation in Juvenile Hall and at the Wright Center to help them understand the program and the rules. Program rules are also discussed weekly in groups. At the same time, a brochure and a letter, explaining who the youth's Counselor will be, are sent to the family. The brochure has general information about the facility, such as directions to the Wright Center and the Mission Statement, and program information. Both communications are written in English. There is family orientation on Sunday, which is a regular family visitation day.

The court dictates who can visit a minor. Probation Counselors apply to the court for permission for any visitor who is not on the list. Siblings under 12 years of age are allowed to visit. Non-family members can be approved for visitation if they are deemed significant in the minor's life.

When a minor is ready for release, he/she participates in a 10-week intensive Aftercare program that is supervised by the Aftercare Counselor. Prior to release, a Multidisciplinary Team (MDT) meeting is held to plan for the minor's return to the community. At that time, the Aftercare Counselor and the Education Specialist make arrangements for the minor to return to school in the community, if appropriate. The minor returns to school with confirmed placement the first day after he/she is released.

IV. FACILITY

Near the entrance to the Wright Center is a new asphalt-paved basketball and volleyball court which is used for physical education and sports by both the girls and the boys. New lawn and more trees have been planted near the dorms and the new Administration Building, along with a sprinkler system between A and B Dorms.

The new building, which was opened in November 2006, is currently used for administration. There are also conference rooms and interview rooms that can be used by different programs. The Administration Building is being remodeled and will be available for occupancy sometime in May, at which time the school, Pathways and Mental Health will move into the new building. After the school moves into the new building, the portable buildings will be torn down.

The rooms in the buildings have been painted and the bathrooms have been improved. There are new bedspreads, carpet, drapes and sofas. The living units have been decorated for a homier, warmer appearance in an effort to make the Wright Center as attractive as possible. A and B Dorms (Girls' Units) have been air conditioned this year. The Boys' dorm is also air conditioned, and the Probation Manager is seeking a grant to secure air conditioning for the Administration Building. Many repairs have been made, and the Wright Center is a clean, freshly painted facility. The Probation Manager, the staff and the minors who have also helped are to be commended for the work they have done.

The Wright Center offers the minors access to a canteen which is available every Friday evening based on positive behavior for the week. The canteen consists of special treats such as soda, chips, lotion and crafts. There is also an incentive program based on positive performance for extra canteen privileges. Families can bring shampoo if it can be shared with all of the minors.

V. STAFFING

The Probation Manager also functions as manager for the Women's Residential Center (WRC), an adult women's program nearby in south San Jose. Her hours at WRC are approximately 12-16 hours per week. The WRC program is designed for women to

reside in custody at night, but to work outside during daytime hours. The Probation Manager believes that her dual responsibility is possible because of her excellent supervisory and counseling staff at MWC.

The new Enhanced Ranch Program staffing consists of 29 full-time personnel, which includes one Pre-release Counselor and one Program Coordinator who divides her time between MWC and James Boys Ranch. One staff member is currently on maternity leave. There are also 20 extra-help personnel, many of them only available on weekends.

As of April 27, 2007, 27 staff members had received the new program training. Extra-help personnel receive two days of training and teachers and the school principal receive one full day of training. The initial, intensive training will be supplemented all year for everyone at the facility with periodic four-hour updates. It is described as an expanded program of “train the trainers” and coaching.

VI. POPULATION

The capacity of the Wright Center is 48 minors. On March 12, 2007, there were 46 minors (22 girls and 24 boys). The overall population statistics on that date were as follows:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>
13	0	1
14	3	5
15	0	9
16	5	9
17	9	0
18	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>
	22	24

<u>Ethnic/Racial</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>
Hispanic	18	16
White	1	2
Black	2	2
Asian	0	2 (Cambodian)
Samoan	1	0
American Indian	<u>0</u>	<u>2</u>
	22	24

There was one pregnant girl. The Wright Center can take disabled minors, including any in a wheelchair. There were no out-of-county minors. Eight additional minors were in the Aftercare program.

As reported on March 30, 2007, there were eight boys and three girls in Juvenile Hall on the waiting list for placement at MWC. Juvenile Hall time is now partially credited toward fulfillment of commitment at the ranch.

The Wright Center does not take minors who have committed crimes involving knives or guns. These minors are referred to California Department of Juvenile Justice (DOJJ) alternatives or other programs. Typical offenses of minors at MWC are Violation of Probation or Assault and Battery.

Every case referred or returned to the Wright Center is assessed and screened individually by the Probation Manager within 48 hours.

VII. PROGRAMS

A full time Program Coordinator oversees all of the programs at the Wright Center as well as at the James Boys Ranch. The programs at MWC include:

Aftercare is a ten-week program offered to youth who have completed the Enhanced Ranch Program. Two-to-three weeks before a youth is released, a Multi Disciplinary Team meeting is held with a Mental Health representative, the Educational Specialist, the Probation Counselor, the Probation Officer and representatives from Gardner Health Center, Department of Alcohol & Drug Services (DADS) and California Youth Outreach (CYO). The youth is always present and the family is also encouraged to participate.

The Wright Center has an Aftercare Counselor who supervises the minors in this ten-week program. Gardner Family Health Center offers drug and alcohol, dual diagnosis, mental health, anger management, gang intervention, life skills and family counseling to youth and families in Aftercare.

Aggression Replacement Therapy (ART), which focuses on controlling anger, is currently offered to the boys only. Although eight Probation staff members are trained to help administer the program, the regular facilitators are the Mental Health staff and one trained Probation staff. A strong component of the program is conflict resolution.

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is facilitated by AA representatives who are recovered alcoholics. AA has had some difficulty providing facilitators with regularity, so the class is just offered on the third and fourth Wednesdays of the month. The value of this class is in question since the AA program is designed to impact alcoholics who are seeking community support. However, the Program Manager believes that introducing the youth to the organization in one-hour meetings could provide useful knowledge when they become adults.

Anti-Criminal Thinking is administered by CYO, a non-profit of trained professionals under contract to the Probation Department. It focuses on having the youth take ownership of their behavior, subsequently trying to change their behavior. The program has been at Wright Center for two years and is not a mandated program, so the youth are frequently excused from the sessions to attend other activities, such as Chapel.

Chemical Dependency Treatment, administered by the Pathways Society, emphasizes intervention and drug education. Pathways provides one full-time drug and

alcohol counselor in addition to the staff's group program that emphasizes the negatives of drug use.

Health Realization, provided by the Department of Alcohol and Drug Services (DADS), focuses on the impact of substance abuse on everyone's health.

Gang Redirection is a court-mandated program which is currently being facilitated by CYO. A female facilitator leads the girls, once per week for eight weeks. A male facilitator (who also facilitates at Juvenile Hall and James Boys Ranch) leads the boys for the same time period.

Gateway Hero Program is new to the facility, and is operated by the County Office of Education (COE). It is a carryover from the Holden program, offered in conjunction with Gateway School for Mentally and Physically Disabled Children in Gilroy. For an eight-week period, Wright Center minors who have been selected by Probation staff spend a two-hour weekly session mentoring and helping disabled children. The girls mentor on Tuesday afternoons and the boys on Friday afternoons. To date, it has had a positive impact on the Wright Center youth, not only for the positive attitude of the mentors but also with the bonus of having bilingual mentors to assist the disabled youth. Working with disabled youth also gives Wright Center youth a view of children who have tougher problems than their own. The Program Manager of Wright Center has contacted the principal of Gateway to suggest that the Wright Center youth might receive school credits for this activity. The Challenge school, which heard of the success of this program, has also asked the Wright Center for minors to help, although, regretfully, the request cannot be fulfilled at this time.

Girl Scouts is an eight-week program implemented by a regular staff member who invites Girl Scout facilitators to lead the program on Thursday evenings. The girls enjoy this project-based program, such as the current project of creating a book entitled, "What Makes Me Feel Safe?" Since Boy Scouts is organized differently, it was considered inappropriate to have the program for boys.

Sexual Abuse Counseling (Gardner Health Center) provides individual (one hour) counseling as well as group (two hours) counseling on a weekly basis. The program is designed to help erase denial, to develop non-deviant sexual behavior and to promote victim empathy, among its many goals.

Sports Program is offered to both girls and boys. A girls' team, which is implemented by an Alternative Placement Academy (APA) supervisor at Wright Center, has just been organized. The girls at the Wright Center will compete in a league against other COE schools, beginning with basketball. This is a very popular activity that has improved the girls' morale. The boys' teams also play with other juvenile facilities in the Bay Area such as James Boys Ranch, APA, San Mateo County, Monterey, Sacramento and Alameda Counties.

Tattoo Removal Program is offered by a medical doctor in Los Gatos who charges \$75 per treatment, depending on the intensity of the tattoo and the number of

treatments that the minor needs. The cost is borne by the parents of the minor. Prior to the initial treatment, the minor must complete a questionnaire, and the minor and a parent must attend an interview with the doctor.

Victim Awareness Training is a court-mandated program coordinated by the Probation Department, which contracts out to various professional facilitators such as Project Sentinel. The sessions are held four times per month, the first through the fourth Saturday of the month, during the first three months when youth remain at the facility on Saturdays.

Vocational Education on the Wright Center campus is now limited to Computer classes, which are offered weekly for two hours each to the girls on Monday and to the boys on Friday. There is a class limitation of twenty students per session. One of the advantages of computer classes is the orientation to doing school work on a computer, a new perspective for the students. The gain in applying computer skills to their school work also should ease the youths' transition when they return to school. The classes are part of the COE instructional services of the Regional Occupation Program (ROP). The Program Manager hopes to expand the classes and has submitted a grant proposal for this purpose. The teacher would be available for both ranches full time.

The Enterprise Program at James Boys Ranch now includes the boys (minimum age of 15½ years) from MWC as well as the girls. Although the girls have been participating in the program for several years, the boys from MWC had not been participating until recently because it was felt they were too young to benefit. The girls resisted Auto Shop (did not want to get their hands dirty) but they do attend Construction class one day per week and Welding class on another day. The boys attend Auto Shop one day per week. Although the boys at James Boys Ranch receive money for their participation in the Enterprise Program, which is to be applied to their restitution and fines, participating youth from MWC are not currently eligible to receive compensation. However, all youth can earn work experience school credits for their participation in the vocational education program.

VIII. MEDICAL/DENTAL CARE

There is a full-time nurse working a split shift every day of the week. The regular nurse works five days and a relief nurse fills in on her days off. The Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System employs the medical staff, with supervision by the Juvenile Hall Medical Clinic. The relief nurse also works at Juvenile Hall on the alternate days. Nurses divide their time based on the needs of the minors. Generally the nurse works from 6:15 am to 11:15 am, returning to work from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. This split shift usually covers both the morning and evening medications and necessary sick calls.

A psychiatrist and a medical doctor visit the Wright Center every two weeks on a regular basis to see medicated youth and new referrals, a program that is enthusiastically supported by the Mental Health team.

If an emergency occurs, the nurse is available either by staying at the facility or by returning as needed. The regular nurse lives near the Wright Center. If the problem requires a doctor's attention, the minor is taken to Juvenile Hall or, if the problem is more serious, they go to the Valley Medical Center.

There were 33 minors on medications as reported by the Program Coordinator on April 30, 2007. Four (two boys and two girls) were taking psychotropic medication.

There is one pregnant girl whose family usually transports her to her doctor's appointments at a private medical facility. Whenever the family is unable to do so, a member of the Probation staff will transport her. The nurse supervises her nutrition and arranges for additional snacks at MWC. The nurse also provides a medical, nutritional and child development program for pregnant girls.

With the addition of the second girls' dorm in February, the work load has increased significantly. According to the nurse, the girls are "needier", asking for more sick calls and medications. One girl with mental health problems required additional medications and medical supervision. The supervisor has occasionally provided additional staff to cover the evening portion of the shift when the day portion was extended.

There is no dental care at the Wright Center. The dentist at Juvenile Hall provides dental care twice each month, unless there is an emergency. Most minors are in need of dental care, as they usually have not received dental care in the community. If a minor is covered by his/her family dental plan, he/she may be allowed to have an "OT" (Out Temporarily), if approved by the Wright Center staff.

IX. MENTAL HEALTH

The Wright Center has a full-time therapist and a full-time Family Partner. Both are bilingual, Spanish-speaking.

The therapist, who has a Masters Degree in Social Work, does crisis intervention, ART and individual, group and family therapy. Her goals are to help stabilize the youth, prepare them for eventual release to their homes and address mental health needs. Approximately 20 youth are being counseled, including 8-10 who are being seen in family therapy. These youth are seen at least weekly and some are seen biweekly as deemed necessary. She handles emergency calls and oversees updating of all of the relevant data within five days of contact. She would welcome the addition of at least one part-time therapist but Mental Health is projected to have huge budget cuts in the coming fiscal year.

The needs of the girls are intensifying since most of them have been victims of sexual and/or physical abuse. All minors are screened for mental health services, with over one-half of them having mental health issues.

The Family Partner is the primary contact with the families to orient them to Mental Health services and respond to their questions. She has been a Family Partner for

eight years and has been at Wright Center for five years. Her contact process combines phone conversations with home visits. She is also at James Boys Ranch as needed. She is usually the first contact for the families at the Wright Center, and is considered very helpful because of her language skills and the climate she engenders of “being their friend,” alleviating any apprehensions the youth and parents may have. She interviews families and listens to any expressed concerns and issues. She refers all of this information directly to the full-time therapist. She is working with 25 youth and 14-15 families.

Both the Therapist and the Family Partner believe that ongoing Mental Health training of all staff members is valuable and critical to the success of the Enhanced Ranch Program, which requires a shift in approach to problem-solving and emotional challenges. The Mental Health staff believes that not all Probation Counselors fully appreciate the value of Mental Health counseling. One approach to improve this situation would be to provide greater communication and collaboration, e.g., ART.

X. SCHOOL

The Santa Clara County Office of Education (COE) is responsible for the Wright Center School, and has classes in the morning all year round. It is currently planned that the school day will be increased from 240 minutes to 295 minutes in July 2007. Language arts/social studies; math and physical education classes are offered. Social studies is combined with language arts, including reading, grammar, vocabulary improvement, and silent reading, to cover both subjects. There is currently a shortage of social studies books due to a change in standardization by the state. Other textbooks are adequate.

Science, art and music classes are not offered, but Independent Studies is arranged if a student is deficient in high school graduation requirements. Overall, the student-to-teacher ration is 12:1, although the current census accommodates two classes with 14 males in each. Since the education level of the youth determines their residential placement, the units stay together in the classroom. Of the minors at the Wright Center identified as needing Special Education services, one girl receives individual instruction and attention from the lead classroom teacher, who is also a credentialed Special Education teacher. Fourteen boys receive Special Education services in a separate classroom (SDC) that functions all day for five periods, beginning at 7:50AM. There are no pullouts from classes, because education is a priority in the MWC rehabilitation program.

There should be three students graduating from the Wright Center School at the COE graduation ceremony on June 21, 2007.

Currently there are no students in the General Educational Development (GED) program due to lack of eligibility. Students must be age 17 and at the ninth grade reading level to take the GED test.

The Wright Center Principal also supervises Osborne School (Juvenile Hall) and Blue Ridge High School (James Ranch) for both regular and Special Education programs. His appointment provides coordination for all the facilities. There are four full-time teachers at the Wright Center, with on-site coordination by the Head Teacher. The Wright Center school secretary also works at James Ranch, receiving and preparing transcripts for the youth.

The Enhanced Ranch Program appears to offer greater interaction between student and teacher. The Probation Counselors and teachers meet with their dorm groups at the start of each school day, which has helped to resolve issues before instruction begins. There appears to be less disruption and greater focus on the classroom material.

Although the Probation Counselors are to be with their dorm youth at all times, they have been reported as not consistently being present in the classrooms to assist the teachers. A few Counselors apparently rely on the teachers to call them into the classroom *after* a disruption occurs instead of their being in the classroom to anticipate the disruption and thereby minimize the problem as it occurs. The Counselors' observations and assistance would be more effective if they were in the classroom as a disruption begins to arise so that they could also intervene, instead of being summoned in to exercise control after the fact. It would also improve the rapport with the teachers who often are not apprised of events and personal situations in a youth's life that might impact the youth's concentration abilities and receptivity to instruction. For example, one boy seemed to be disinterested in classroom activities for about a two week period. The teacher, who would have been sympathetic and helpful, was not informed until later that the youth was distressed over having a hospitalized, dying relative. The Probation Counselor did not share the significant information. It would not have been a breach of confidentiality since the teacher is also a stakeholder in the children's welfare.

Another challenge is out of date Individual Education Plans (IEP) when a youth arrives at the facility and many records from local schools are very slow in transmission.

An educational incentive program for the extra privilege of using the site canteen has been successful. Any student who earns placement on the "Superintendent's List" which is actually a site facility award, then qualifies for the privilege by maintaining a B grade or higher in each subject for two consecutive weeks.

Another improvement has been the notification to teachers of scheduled MDT meetings at noon so that the teachers can submit important information about the youths' progress and grades in each subject.

XI. INCIDENT REPORTS

The inspection team reviewed all Incident Reports (IR) written during the month of December 2006. Reports from all areas were entered in the database sequentially, so that only 42 of 433 entries (0436 to 0869) made in the database during December were Incident Reports.

The classification or reason that each of the IRs was written during December 2006 was as follows:

- Behavior Report (refusal to follow directions, disrespect to staff, insubordination, refused programming, disruptive conduct) 13
- Informational 6
- Escape, Aftercare 4
- Escape, Ranch 1
- Assault 3
- Injury 3
- Fight 3
- Contraband 2
- Under influence 2
- Gang activity 2
- School removal 1

XII. GRIEVANCES

There were two grievances written during the month of December 2006. Seven boys, requesting that they be allowed to remain in B Dorm, signed the first grievance. The second grievance was written by a youth who was being harassed by another youth. The harassing youth was notified that a repetition of the action would result in his being returned to Juvenile Hall.

XIII. GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Commissioners had an opportunity to visit with ten boys and girls at their lunch sessions or in their dorms. The minors were eager to talk to the inspection team during the lunch sessions. Four commissioners visited with the boys and one commissioner visited with the girls. Comments that were repeated at different tables with the boys were complaints that they did not feel that the Probation Counselors cared to listen to them. A few of the boys insisted that they had not had any individual counseling during their stay. It was noted that the Guidebook given to each youth is very comprehensive and lengthy, and is written at an adult reading level. Since many of the youth function below grade level, it is difficult for them to refer to Guidebook on their own, as they are not able to read and understand the instructions. Since the Guidebook is also available on request by families, it might be beneficial to have an additional version in Spanish.

A few of the girls who had been with the former program expressed mixed feelings about the new program. Some thought it was too long and too hard but most said that it made them think more. Two girls expressed concern that rules were not applied evenly, a complaint that was echoed by some of the boys. Seven boys complained that they saw no difference with the new program, especially with counseling. They also claimed that individual counseling was non-existent and that some Probation Counselors were more lenient than others. Three boys complained about being called to attention by a shrill whistle (“like being in the army”), while one complained that no music was

allowed. There were also complaints (two girls and three boys) about being punished as a group for the infraction of one individual in their group, which they felt was grossly unfair. Three boys said that they went to bed hungry or woke up with hunger pangs because no snacks were allowed before bed time and no seconds were allowed at meals.

The Wright Center is clean, and the staff is making it as attractive as possible. The Probation Manager has been instrumental in bringing about these improvements, which include the trees at the front entrance, the basketball/volleyball court and the new furniture. Most of the interior has been painted. Staff members made themselves available on multiple occasions to answer Commissioners' questions.

The Commissioners agreed that the atmosphere at Wright Center still felt "jail-like," reminiscent of the old program and not as familial and intimate as expected with the new program. Perhaps this is due, in part, to the fact that a "pod" arrangement for groups and a more relaxed movement of youth is absent. The construction of the facility would, however, present a challenge for such a conversion.

Staff members do try to be creative and innovative. The Probation Manager was able to arrange for the donations of books. More are needed because so many are lost when they are taken home during furlough. The Computer Lab teacher stated that the purchased headsets (for minors to listen to filtered music as they work) were proving effective as an incentive reward. Members of the school staff also valued the Superintendent's List to reward positive academic achievement.

XIV. FOLLOW-UP TO 2006 INSPECTION REPORT

There were six Recommendations to the Probation Department, five to the County Office of Education and one to the Health and Hospital System in last year's inspection report.

Santa Clara County Probation Department

Recommendation #1 concerned the frequent change of Probation Managers, which has been rectified.

Recommendation #2 concerned staff morale and acceptance of the change from 16-hour shifts to 8-10 hour shifts during weekdays with 16-hour shifts during the weekend. The staff has apparently adapted successfully.

Recommendation #3 concerned the extensive training in Cognitive Behavior for **all** staff members at the Wright Center, to include personnel from Community Based Organizations. Currently, the counseling teams have been trained, but the training of other personnel is incomplete and ongoing.

Recommendation #4 concerned close involvement of line staff in implementing the Enhanced Ranch Program. Work is still in progress

Recommendation #5 concerned scheduling MDT meetings at times that teachers can attend. The MDT sessions are now held at noon, and the teachers are alerted to the dates in advance.

Recommendation #6 concerned the routine reporting of numbers of escapes and subsequent action to the Commission on a monthly basis. This is still not done on a regular basis.

Santa Clara County Office of Education

Recommendation #1 concerned the reinstatement of the full time Classroom Instructional Aide position. Because Counselors are in the classrooms, the only Instructional Aide is in the Special Education Class.

Recommendation #2 concerned the reinstatement of the Special Education program, especially the Special Day Class, in order to comply with state and federal regulations. Currently there is one SDC for boys and the lone girl who needs special education is taught in the regular classroom by a credentialed special education teacher.

Recommendation #3 concerned the need for consistency of systems and criteria applied by teachers in evaluating students' work. This situation appears to be continuing in 2007.

Recommendation #4 concerned the provision of opportunity for teachers to attend the MDT meetings so that they could participate in the on-going evaluation of progress. That has been done with advance notice to teachers for the noon sessions.

Recommendation #5 concerned the need for additional money to purchase books since so many were missing or old. This has not been done, and the Recommendation is repeated.

Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System

Recommendation #1 concerned revising the work schedule of Mental Health clinicians to avoid conflicts with the school schedule. Scheduling has been revised with implementation of the new program.

XV. COMMENDATIONS

The Juvenile Justice Commission commends:

1. The Probation Manager and the Wright Center staff for the improvements they have made to ensure that the Wright Center is a clean and attractive facility.
2. The Probation Manager for monitoring the pace of improvements so that progress has been very pronounced and timely.
3. The Probation Manager for establishing a tutoring program and finding resources in the community to provide books for the program.

4. The Wright Center staff for enthusiastically endorsing the Gateway Hero Program, encouraging youth to become mentors and enriching their own perspectives.
5. The Chief of Probation for addressing Recommendations from the 2006 Inspection Report and implementing them.
6. The County Office of Education staff for continued efforts to obtain parental permission for special education evaluations and to have the parent(s) involved in the Individual Education Plan meetings process.
7. The Probation Department and the County Office of Education for their recognition of the importance and value to the Wright Center youth in having the opportunities to participate in Vocational Education.

XVI. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Intensify its ongoing training of all personnel in the new Enhanced Ranch Program.
2. Intensify its training specifically in the area of sound mental health practices, and take steps toward greater communication and collaboration with Mental Health staff.
3. Consider re-designing the Muriel Wright Residential Center Guidebook to simplify the contents commensurate with the general reading level of the youth
4. Consider designing an informational brochure in Spanish for appropriate families.
5. Focus the attention of the staff on the need for consistency in the application of general rules.
6. Investigate the feasibility of installing pod-style living quarters for both boys and girls at the Wright Center.
7. Consider making the Wright Center youth eligible to receive the wage/restitution monies available from the Enterprise Fund.

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

1. Provide additional money to purchase books, perhaps implementing the process with a petty cash fund to purchase textbooks and supplementary reading materials. This is a repeat Recommendation.

2. Fund the Computer Lab teaching position so that the teacher can be available full time at the Wright Center to increase the number of computer class offerings.

XVII. SUMMARY

Many positive changes have taken place at the Muriel Wright Residential Center. New staff members were hired to work in the Enhanced Ranch Program. The program at the Wright Center is no longer based on behavior modification, but is based on cognitive behavioral control. The Juvenile Justice Commission looks forward to visiting the Wright Center in the coming year to assess how well the new program will be implemented when all of the staff is fully trained and the Enhanced Ranch Program is considered to be “in full swing.” Based on this inspection, the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission believes that the Muriel Wright Center has met the Commission's standards for a safe juvenile detention facility for the youth of Santa Clara County.

Approved by the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission on June 5, 2007.

William J. Scilacci, JJC Chairperson

Date

Vilma K. Palette, JJC Inspection Chair

Date