

# Juvenile Justice Commission County of Santa Clara

840 Guadalupe Parkway  
San Jose, California 95110  
(408) 278-5993 FX (408) 294-6879



## SANTA CLARA COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION GROUP HOME INSPECTION REPORT

### SUMMIT RANCH GROUP HOME JUNE 2011

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission conducted an announced visit to Summit Ranch Adolescent Group Home in Morgan Hill, CA, on April 21, 2011. The visit was a routine inspection pursuant to California Welfare and Institutions Code (CAWI) Section 229.5.

Summit Ranch Group Home (SRGH) is privately owned and operated by Advent Group Ministries (AGM). AGM is a faith-based Christian oriented non-profit organization, which began operating group homes in 1986, and currently operates five group homes in Santa Clara County. SRGH has been in operation since 1993 as a licensed home for adolescent girls. AGM is the only group home operator in the Santa Clara County that specializes in adolescents with drug and alcohol addictions. AGM also provides counseling services, outpatient drug and alcohol treatment for adolescents, and operates foster care homes in the county.

SRGH is state-licensed for a maximum of six girls and is classified as a Rate Classification Level (RCL) 12 group home.<sup>1</sup> The following licenses were posted in SRGH during the Commission's visit: a) State of California Department of Social Services (DSS) license, effective date 01/23/93; b) State of California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs Certification with expiration date of 11/30/2012. SRGH was inspected by the Community Care Licensing Division of DSS in January 2009 and July 2010. All deficiencies cited during these inspections have been cleared.

Three Commissioners inspected the facility and conducted interviews with the Chief Operating Office (COO) and the Residential Program Director of AGM.

---

<sup>1</sup> For the purposes of determining state foster care reimbursement rates, all group home providers are classified into one of fourteen RCLs [1 through 14], according to the level of care and services they provide.

## **II. POPULATION**

At the April 21, 2011 inspection visit, there were six girls living in SRGH: three placed by Santa Clara County, two by San Mateo County, and one by Merced County. All were placed by the Juvenile Court pursuant to California Welfare and Institution Code Section 600. All the minors were between 16 and 17 years of age. None of the minors was in SRGH on an emergency placement. The average resident rate for the home for 2010 was 5.7 residents, or 94% of licensed capacity.

Some of the residents are current gang members or are affiliated with a gang. Residents must agree not to engage in gang behavior while in placement. SRGH houses members of the Norteño and Sureño gangs in the same house. AGM has a contract with the Aquarius Project that does gang intervention with residents of SRGH when needed. The minors also receive gang support services at their schools through the California Youth Outreach (CYO) program.

## **III. FACILITY**

The group home is located on a large lot on a rural/suburban road in Morgan Hill, CA. A high row of hedges separates the group home from the road. The front yard is well-maintained with a volleyball court in one section. There are numerous trees on the property. The neighborhood appeared safe and clean. According to the COO, the home has friendly neighbors, and AGM has received no complaints from any neighbors.

SRGH has three buildings: the main house, a second building that houses offices, a back-up kitchen, and a gym, and a third pre-fabricated building with a large room where residents can spend time in the evenings, have meetings, or use the computers with internet access under supervision. There is a swimming pool and a barbeque pit behind the main house. The swimming pool water was clean, as AGM contracts with a professional pool cleaner, however the bottom of the pool is stained and needs to be re-plastered.

The living room, dining area, recreation room, kitchen, bedrooms, laundry area, and utility and storage closets are all located in the main house. There are three resident bedrooms. Each room has two twin beds. The bedrooms are pleasantly furnished and the girls have added many personal touches. There is only one resident bathroom, which appeared clean. Commissioners asked the minors if one bathroom was enough for six girls. The minors responded that they are able to manage, although it would be nice to have two bathrooms. There are two bedrooms for the Resident Counselors.

The living room is furnished with two couches, a television, and a bookcase. The dining area has a large wooden table and seats eight comfortably. The kitchen was clean and the refrigerator was stocked with food. Additional food and emergency supplies are kept in a locked pantry. A weekly menu is posted on the refrigerator door. All the appliances were clean and in working order. Cleaning supplies are kept in a locked utility closet.

House rules, expectations and guidelines, and various informational materials including the emergency evacuation chart are posted in the hallway. Grievance forms are located on the wall by the main house computer, which the girls can use for assignments but does not have internet access.

All of the rooms in the main building appeared well-maintained, well-ventilated, and brightened by natural light.

#### **IV. STAFF**

There are eight staff members employed by AGM at SRGH. There is one Case Manager/Social Worker for the six residents. The Case Manager has a Masters' in Clinical Psychology, is a Marriage and Family Therapy Intern, and works 45 hours a week. Three days are spent at SRGH and two days at AGM's main office in San Jose. The Case Manager provides individual counseling for the residents of SRGH and facilitates two group sessions each week.

There are two live-in Resident Counselor/Child Care Workers, who each work 54 hours over four days. The Commissioners learned from COO that having the counselors living on-site added to the "family" atmosphere of the group home. In addition, there is a "3<sup>rd</sup> Counselor" who serves both as an additional in-home counselor, and as the Addictions Counselor. This individual works five days a week for a total of 48 hours. Commissioners met with the 3<sup>rd</sup> counselor who was on duty during the visit.

A Senior Counselor works five days a week from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm. The Senior Counselor trains new staff and provides day-to-day support for the other staff members. The high staff to resident ratio reflects AGM's commitment to successful outcomes for the residents of SRGH. Additionally, AGM's central management team provides support and supervision to the staff at SRGH.

SRGH has two nighttime childcare workers who provide awake night supervision 7 days a week. There is also a Home Supervisor who works 45 hours per week, and oversees all operations and staffing for SRGH.

All counselors employed at SRGH are college graduates. AGM provides a detailed, structured training program for group home staff. The Senior Counselor accompanies new staff throughout each day of the first two weeks of employment. For the first three months of employment, staff must attend weekly training sessions and an all day training once a month. In addition, all staff must attend on-going half-day in-house trainings once a month. Training checklists are used to monitor progress and confirm that all topics are covered and completed by new staff. AGM also has a program of continuing education and staff development.

## **V. SAFETY**

Smoke detectors are located in all bedrooms and hallways at SRGH. Fire extinguishers are located in the kitchen and hallways, and are inspected on an annual basis or as necessary. The Fire Marshall Permit was not posted on the wall or in the house at the time of the inspection. The last Fire Marshal inspection was conducted on 2/24/2003. According to one of the residents Commissioners interviewed, SRGH has not had an emergency drill in the last year. The escape route plan was posted in the hallways by the computer. The Commission recommends that the plan also be posted in additional places around the home..

Female counselors search minors if necessary. In addition, the minors' rooms are searched two times per week for contraband items. If any violations of the rules or expectations are discovered, the minors will lose daily points and may be placed on "yellow light" or "red light" status, which means they lose certain privileges the following day. If the minors lose too many points, they cannot advance to the next phase level (described below) as quickly, and consequently, their release can be delayed. SRGH had 4 escapes in 2010. AGM has a "Runaway Protocol" for all Group Homes." According to the COO, AGM has reduced escapes from its group homes since last year.

## **VI. PERFORMANCE LEVELS, DISCIPLINE AND GRIEVANCES**

The AGM Intake Coordinator interviews each potential new resident entering SRGH for approximately 2 hours, and then makes a recommendation for placement. The COO and the Program Director together make a final decision about whether to accept the minor for an AGM group home. As a matter of policy, AGM does not take any minors who are charged with sexual assault or arson, and carefully considers whether to accept those charged with possession of a deadly weapon. AGM's focus is on minors who have drug and alcohol related charges.

Upon her arrival at SRGH, each minor is informed that she is expected to complete five phases while in the residence. AGM also contracts with Santa Clara County's Department of Alcohol and Drug Services (DADS) to provide a 90-day program to residents of SRGH. Residents referred through DADS are expected to complete 3 phases. Each phase has predefined goals and an assigned point system. The Discipline system is based on Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS). Minors earn positive points by following the rules and expectations of the program. If a minor does not earn enough points in a day, she will lose privileges the following day. A minor may remain at each phase for about 4-8 weeks. A minor's petition to advance to the next phase is reviewed by the Staff. After completing each phase, the minor receives more flexibility and freedom; minors can gain the right to have home visits and attend sporting events or outings, for example. If the minor commits major violations of the rules and expectations, she may be held back from petitioning Staff to move to the next phase, which could extend her stay in the program.

Complaint/grievance procedure forms for the minors are posted in the hallway of the main building, near the computer. The Home Supervisor reviews all complaints and grievance forms submitted by minors. She makes a recommendation for disposition of each complaint/grievance form filed and faxes it to AGM's main office. Grievances are also reviewed by the Group Home Administrator.

From May 2010 to April 2011 there were 24 grievances submitted by minors in SRGH. All of the grievance forms received responses by the responsible staff in a timely manner. Commissioners reviewed these grievances and did not view any of the issues they raised as sources of major concern.

Minors in SRGH receive a weekly allowance of up to \$8.50/week. In addition, they receive a \$30 per month clothing allotment. Residents can use their allowance on Saturday outings or to pay for personal expenses.

There are two ways a minor leaves SRGH: graduation or termination. If a minor graduates, she usually returns to her family. If a minor is terminated, it is usually because she has violated part of her probation terms (some examples are fighting, absconding placement, failure to follow program rules and expectations) which means she must return to Juvenile Hall.

## **VII. FOOD**

Minors at SRGH are served breakfast, lunch and dinner. Staff prepares breakfast and lunch on weekends. Lunch during the week is served at the minors' school. Minors at the house, with the help of staff, prepare dinner. Each minor has a schedule for various chores in the house. Each minor does her own laundry.

State licensing requires that all food shall be selected, stored, prepared and served in a safe and healthful manner. According to COO, there is rarely leftover food but when there is, it must be sealed in a proper container and dated to ensure spoiled food is not ingested. Further, licensing rules require the facility to maintain an emergency food supply. SRGH meets this requirement by storing food in the locked pantry. SRGH maintains an inventory of food items and one staff member is assigned the duty to replenish food items when necessary.

## **VIII. EDUCATION AND PROGRAM PARTICIPATION**

All of the residents of SRGH attend the Odyssey Community School (OCS), an alternative school run by the Santa Clara County Office of Education in San Martin, California. The school day is from 8:30 AM to 2:20 PM. The school program runs year-round with the exception of holiday weeks. The girls are transported to and from school each day by staff in the group home's van. According to COO, the girls perform scholastically between the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and 8<sup>th</sup> grade level, and are all behind in school credits

(from a half semester's to a whole year's worth of credit). The residents are all in either the 11<sup>th</sup> or the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Students at OCS complete all of their schoolwork during the school day, so they don't have any homework to complete in the evenings. This leaves adequate time for SRGH residents to attend counseling sessions and to work on continuing assignments related to their recovery program at the group home. As part of the interview process for SRGH, the Intake Coordinator screens potential residents to ensure they have the academic skills necessary to understand and complete the recovery assignments.

In addition to academic classes, OCS provides art and music programs through Arts Connect, a program of Arts Council Silicon Valley, a non-profit organization. The students also have daily physical education classes and have the opportunity to participate in a voluntary basketball league. Finally, OCS provides Job Development Services on campus.

At the group home, Commissioners observed the in-door basketball court, the volleyball courts (one on the front lawn and one set up in-doors on the basketball court), and the swimming pool. Several of the counselors are certified lifeguards or water safety-certified and the girls said that they use the pool frequently in the hot summer months. In the recreation room there is a Ping Pong table, a billiard table, and a Wii game system available. There is also a small cabinet with books. There are ample physical fitness and recreation opportunities at SRGH.

On the day of the Commission's visit, some of the girls left SRGH after school to attend an "Equine Therapy" program at a nearby horse ranch. Beginning with mini-ponies, the girls learn how to clean and groom the animals. As they progress through the program, they graduate to caring for larger animals and eventually learn to ride. The program teaches responsibility, rewards positive performance, and provides a unique opportunity to learn a new skill while enjoying time with the horses.

Recreation days are on the weekend. During school holidays, the girls have gone on camping trips and snow trips, and recently went Whitewater rafting on the American River, Tubing at Lake Calero, and Paintballing. Funds for these trips are raised through car washes, bake sales and doing face painting at local fairs. One of the girls mentioned that she enjoys her part-time weekend job at Gilroy Gardens, a local amusement park, where she works as an attendant on one of the rides.

Finally, the girls participate in the culinary program at the Rebekah's Children Services in Gilroy.

## **IX. HEALTH CARE**

AGM accepts minors with Medi-cal, Kaiser, or other health insurance plans. Minors receive full physical and dental examinations within two weeks of admittance to SRGH. Resident staff transports minors to all appointments. A complete medical and dental history is taken at the youth's intake interview. SRGH only accepts ambulatory

youth.

As discussed above, SRGH is a drug recovery placement. Therefore, the youth placed there have an addiction to a drug and/or alcohol, which interferes with their health. The Program Director said that the residents do not have other serious medical issues

Residents at SRGH go to Dr. Joseph Barbara in Gilroy for routine and emergency medical care. SRGH has excellent policies and procedures concerning the provision of medical care in emergencies and non-emergencies. Staff completes a form about the minor and then the treating physician completes the form with prescribed medications or other recommendations or restrictions. About 30% of AGM youth take some type of psychotropic medication. The facility has strict policies concerning the administration of medications. The medications are distributed by staff and are kept in a locked cabinet in a locked closet.

Commissioners discussed personal hygiene with the Director. He stated that minors are educated about reproductive health needs and challenges. According to the Director, minors come forward with requests to talk to a counselor when needed.

## **X. MENTAL HEALTH**

The Mental Health model for the AGM Program is described as trauma-informed treatment. A mental health assessment is completed for each youth admitted to an AGM facility. An assigned Social Worker is responsible for guiding minors through the treatment program. Youth pass through five phases of treatment lasting a total of 9-12 months. Youth set their own goals and objectives with the help of AGM staff.

Phase I of the treatment program takes approximately 6-8 weeks. In Phase I, the youth agrees to enter Drug Treatment and attend daily on-site and off-site 12 step meetings. Each youth establishes a relationship with a Drug Recovery Sponsor. This stage is described as “Pre-Contemplation.” Phase II is described as Contemplation. In this phase, the youth focuses on learning how to deal with the ambivalence of change, and assesses the pros and cons of his or her behavior choices. Phase III is “Ready to Change” or “Preparation.” Here the youth learns strategies to change his or her behavior. Phase IV is called “Action.” In this phase, the youth learns how to recover and how to avoid lapses. Phase V, the final phase, is called “Maintenance.” This phase teaches the youth how to get back on the road to sobriety if and when the youth relapses.

While the minors in SRGH are focusing on their drug recovery, they are also learning social skills by living with other adolescents. Each resident has her own mental health clinician. Resident staff transport the youth to their weekly off-site mental health appointments at the AGM Therapy site. An AGM Clinical Supervisor oversees the therapists at the site. Youth and their families also may receive family therapy sessions so that family issues can be addressed, and the youth’s return to the community can be

successful. Aftercare is also available through AGM's Outpatient Program to provide support as the youth transitions back to her home.

Residents of SRGH also complete a two month long gender specific program entitled "Voices," where they focus on personal self-worth and goal-setting, and a group program entitled "Seeking Safety," which addresses trauma and substance abuse. They also complete an anger management course. Staff meets weekly to discuss each youth's progress in drug recovery, educational programs, and mental health therapy.

## **XI. FAMILY VISITATION**

Family visitation is offered once a week to residents of SRGH. During family visits, staff meets each parent or guardian and depending on the minor's Phase level, the minor may meet with her parent or guardian at SRGH, or go home for a weekend visit. Parents or guardians are also allowed to call residents. Only approved individuals are allowed to visit SRGH. Typically, this is limited to parents and siblings. When a minor leaves the facility with a non-staff person, a document called "Assume Responsibility form" is completed, which contains information about the person taking the minor out and the time she will be away from the facility. Also prior to any off-site visit, the minor is required to fill out a "pass request" form with all the details of the visit, including who is picking her up. SRGH maintains a daily log of who visits the minor.

## **XII. FEEDBACK FROM MINORS**

The Commissioners interviewed all minors residing at SRGH. Minors described SRGH staff as friendly and caring. Minors appeared to be happy and engaged. They did not complain about rules and regulations. They spoke highly of their therapists and "3<sup>rd</sup> counselor who have been helping them to overcome their addictions and other problems.

## **XIII. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED:**

- 1) Community Care Licensing Manual
- 2) Community Care Licensing Self-Assessment Guide
- 3) Department of Alcohol And Drug Program Certification – valid until Nov. 30, 2012
- 4) Department of Social Services License
- 5) Fire Marshal Report (Feb. 24, 2003)
- 6) All in-house forms to operate the Group Home:
  - a) Intake Interview Form
  - b) Minor Psycho-Sexual History Form
  - c) Staff application forms for all positions from Social Worker to COO



- d) House Rules and Expectations
- e) House Recovery Program Guide
- f) Four Phases of Improvement Guidelines and guidelines for earning points during stay
- g) Color Guidelines for award or reduction of points or reduction
- h) Gang Controls Rules
- i) Disaster Drill
- j) Evacuation Plan and Map
- k) Runaway Protocol
- l) Planned Discharge Form
- m) Emergency Discharge Form
- n) Counselor Training Checklist
- o) Visitor Pass Form
- p) Grievance form
- q) Daily Log of visitors, medication schedule for minors, school and doctors' visits logs.
- r) Schedule for Meals
- s) Food Inventory Checklist

#### **XIV. COMMENDATIONS**

The Juvenile Justice Commission commends:

1. AGM and its staff for the overall cleanliness of SRGH and its furnishings. The organization and tidiness of the facility were most impressive. AGM has all necessary forms and guidelines to protect the safety and well-being of the minors from intake to discharge.
2. The Administrators, Resident Program Director, and other staff for their dedication to the minors residing at SRGH. It is notable that there has been limited staff turnover at SRGH in recent years
3. The COO, for her cooperation in scheduling the Commission's visit to SRGH, and for her prompt response to follow-up phone calls necessary to complete this inspection and report.

**XV. RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. A valid Fire Marshall permit should be displayed at SRGH. According to the COO, because SRGH is outside the jurisdiction of the City of Morgan Hill, annual inspections are not needed. The Commission recommends that, in the interest of personal safety, an annual inspection be conducted.
  
2. An escape route plan should be posted throughout the home, not just in one hallway.
  
3. The swimming pool is in need of maintenance. The Commission recommends that AGM have the pool re-plastered.
  
4. An emergency evacuation drill should be performed monthly.

**XVI. SUMMARY**

Based on the information gathered during this inspection, the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission concludes that SRGH has met the standards and requirements for a well-run group home for minors with drug and alcohol addictions.

**Approved by the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission on June XX, 2011.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Pam Serrano, JJC Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vinod Mehta, JJC Inspection Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date