

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

**WILLIAM F. JAMES BOYS' RANCH  
FEBRUARY 2008**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

The William F. James Boys' Ranch (James Ranch or Ranch) is a rehabilitative program offered for boys aged 15½ to 19 by the Santa Clara County Probation Department. The goal of the program is to have each youth return home with the necessary tools for successful reintegration into family and community. The facility is located on Malaguerra Avenue in Morgan Hill.

The Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission (Commission) inspected the James Ranch in a series of announced visits on December 13 and 17, 2007 and January 10 and 21, 2008 pursuant to the State of California Welfare and Institutions Code §229. Commissioners inspected the facility, reviewed programs, observed vocational and academic activities and interviewed youth, and staff. This report provides a summary of information gathered regarding the youth, staff, facilities, programs, medical and mental health services and school. Specific commendations and recommendations are listed.

The Juvenile Justice Commission conducts annual inspections of James Ranch. The inspection reports for prior years are available on the internet and can be accessed at [http://www.sccsuperiorcourt.org/juvenile\\_jjc.htm](http://www.sccsuperiorcourt.org/juvenile_jjc.htm).

**II. POPULATION**

The California Corrections Standards Authority (CSA) rated capacity of the James Ranch is 96 youth. However, concurrent with implementation of the Enhanced Ranch Program (ERP), the Probation Department now limits the capacity to 60 youth. The youth are divided into five "pods" of 12 each, with each pod assigned to a specific set of Probation Counselors. There were 58 youth residing at the James Ranch when Commissioners visited on January 10, 2008. By comparison, there were 57 youth at the Ranch on February 12, 2007, 49 on January 31, 2006 and 84 on April 7, 2005. The population breakdowns by age and ethnicity/race on January 10, 2008 were as follows:

<u>Age</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
15	2	3.0
16	15	26.0
17	29	50.0
18	10	17.0
<u>19</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3.0</u>
	58	100.0%

<u>Ethnicity/Race</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Hispanic	42	72.0
Black	8	14.0
White	6	10.0
Asian	1	2.0
Other	<u>1</u>	<u>2.0</u>
	58	100.0%

It was noted that almost 90% of the youth were identified as youth of color.

### III. STAFFING

Probation Department staff assigned to the James Ranch includes the Ranch Manager, four Supervising Probation Counselors, 32 Probation Counselors (including one assigned to Aftercare and one assigned to the Enterprise Program), and six Probation Assistants. There is also a newly created position for a Community Worker who can assist with Aftercare. In addition, there are 24 part-time “extra help” personnel who fill in for Probation staff members when necessary due to sickness, vacation or training, and are also used for overload situations. The Ranch Manager said he would like to develop a cadre of full-time relief staff trained in ERP so he can reduce the cost of “extra help” staffing and provide more continuity for youth. It should be noted that Probation Counselors must be college graduates, and that staff turnover is very low. Staffing levels have increased significantly with implementation of the ERP:

<u>Position</u>	<u>Number (Current)</u>	<u>Number (Pre-ERP)</u>
Ranch Manager	1	1
Supervising Prob. Counselor	4	3
Probation Counselor	32	21
Aftercare Prob. Counselor	1	1
Enterprise Prob. Counselor	1	1
Probation Assistant	6	4
<u>Community Worker</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
	46	31

Probation Counselors previously worked 16-hour shifts, but this schedule was not consistent with the ERP objective of building one-on-one relationships between youth and staff, and is now used only on weekends. A new schedule, beginning in January 2008, provides overlap between shifts for communication of the day’s issues. Each Probation Counselor not assigned to Aftercare or the Enterprise Program is now assigned to one of three teams. Each team works a rotating series of 8, 10 and 16-hour shifts over a two-week cycle, covering the period from 6:30 am to 10:30 pm, seven days per week. Each Probation Counselor is consistently assigned to the same pod, and is assigned primary responsibility for two youth within the pod. Probation Assistants work the overnight shift from 10:30 pm to 6:30 am.

Two Aftercare Probation Officers also have offices at the Ranch, but they are not formally considered to be part of the Ranch staff.

In addition to Probation Department staff, the following personnel are assigned to the James Ranch:

- Blue Ridge High School staff from the Santa Clara County Office of Education (COE)
- Medical Services and Mental Health Services staff from the Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System (SCVHHS)
- Vocational education staff from the COE Regional Occupational Program (ROP)
- Deputy Sheriff (9 am to 9 pm daily)
- Kitchen staff
- Maintenance supervisor
- Contract staff from Community Based Organizations (CBOs) such as California Youth Outreach (CYO) and Pathway Society

The Probation Department retained Mark Steward, who developed the “Missouri Model,” as a consultant to provide staff training for the ERP, and he continues to provide advanced training and staff consultation. All Probation Counselors have now completed the 96-hour training, and newly hired staff will have to complete the training as well. Training includes principles of effective interventions, behavioral strategies such as modeling and the application of re-enforcers (both negative and positive), motivational interviewing techniques, treatment planning, risk and need factors related to criminal conduct, cognitive group facilitation, role playing and skills development, and the use and interpretation of assessment instruments. School, Mental Health and Pathway staff have also requested more training, so as to better integrate their activities with those of the Probation staff.

Last year, feedback from Ranch personnel indicated concerns that the new culture of counseling might be difficult for some to accept. However, Commissioners have found that staff members appear genuinely eager to develop more personal relationships with the youth and have embraced the new approach. The Ranch Manager said that some Probation Counselors are more successful than others, and he hopes to continue to “raise the bar” of skill development for all staff members. Some Counselors complained about a new policy requiring that they wear what they perceive to be uniforms, including leather jackets, instead of their own clothing.

#### **IV. FACILITY**

The general appearance and condition of the dormitory remains very good. Although construction work associated with permanent improvements has not begun, the former barracks-style room has already been broken up into five individual pods, “A” through “E,” using door-height partitions/room dividers. Bunk beds, lockers, sofas, chairs, desks, tables and area rugs have been provided in each pod. The pods seem to provide a positive environment for the youth, and the dormitory has much less of an “institutional” feel. Construction of permanent pods was to have been finished as of

January 2008, but has not yet begun. It is now anticipated that construction could be completed by the fall of 2008. There is also discussion of enlarging the facility by building additional pods in a new building to alleviate long waits for Ranch placement.

The clean appearance of the recreation hall was also evident. New carpeting has been provided in the large main room, and the walls look clean. Replacement tables, chairs and sofas have been garnered from the closed work furlough site. The main room also contains pool tables and what appears to be a new television. There is an enclosed weight room on one end of the building and another enclosed room on the opposite end that is being converted into a library where youth can have a quiet place to complete homework, pursue independent studies or prepare for the General Educational Development (GED) exam. Shelving was installed in the library shortly after the Commission's visit.

The kitchen and dining room were clean and bustling, but the longstanding problem of a disagreeable smell emanating from the kitchen has reappeared. Commissioners noted that appropriate temperature levels were being maintained for the refrigeration and freezer units as well as the washer unit that sanitizes utensils and trays. The kitchen and storage areas were found to be neat and clean. Youth from the On-Ranch work crew were assigned to kitchen duty and were occupied with serving food and cleaning up afterwards. A hot lunch was served; the meal was exemplary, and Commissioners noted that food was not being thrown away. Kitchen staff members seem to be very invested in the youth, and could be a valuable resource if a new Culinary Arts vocational program is developed.

Newer buildings housing Probation management and staff, as well as Mental Health, Medical and Pathway personnel were in satisfactory repair. The school and vocational classrooms were generally in good order. The most recent Fire Marshall's inspection report noted only minor fire hazards such as obstruction of exits and clearance from water heaters.

The grounds appeared to be in good condition. The grass was generally mowed, and mulch had been applied to some areas that were formerly barren or full of weeds. Youth on the On-Ranch work crew help with Ranch cleanup. Unfortunately, broken walkways and leaking overhangs are still in need of repair or replacement; there seem to be continual temporary fixes that don't last. The swimming pool appeared to be in decent condition and was used during the past summer, but needs to be resurfaced to repair chips and cracked plaster. Youth are required to wear flip-flops in the pool.

A metal security fence was installed around the perimeter of the Ranch in October 2005 to deter runaways. There were only two Ranch escapes in 2007. These escapes occurred when youth waited for the vehicle entrance gate to open and then slipped out. There are plans to build a "sally port" to prevent this type of runaway. By comparison, there were 102 escapes in Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 and 95 escapes in FY 2005.

## **V. PROGRAMS**

### **Enhanced Ranch Program**

Traditional youth offender rehabilitation methods (such as the old James Ranch Program) focus on changing the way the youth acts. The fundamental concept behind the best-practice cognitive models is that faulty thinking patterns result in juvenile delinquency and recidivism. The cognitive model focuses on trying to change the way youthful offenders think, and not just the way they act. Through the cognitive model, youth develop interpersonal problem solving skills and moral reasoning ability, and learn how to see their world in different ways and deal with issues and problems that come up in their daily lives.

The program philosophy has an emphasis on a holistic approach to the development of individual treatment/case plans by a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT). An intake MDT (including Probation Counselor, Probation Officer, Mental Health, Pathway, School, the youth and parents) meets within the first week after a youth arrives at the Ranch to evaluate all relevant case information and develop a treatment plan. An interim MDT meeting can be convened when a youth's progress is poor or when there is concern about his ability to successfully complete the program, and an exit MDT meeting is convened as part of the preparation for transitioning to Aftercare.

The individual case plan guides a youth's progression through the ERP. The program duration is six-to-eight months, and each youth's progress is closely monitored at each level to ensure that progress is being made as outlined in the case plan. There is a strong emphasis on positive peer group dynamics through individual counseling, group counseling, family therapy, substance abuse counseling and additional program services provided by CBOs. The program is designed to be an interactive and participatory experience in which youth acquire skills rather than one in which they are "lectured to." Counselors develop case notes for each youth in a pod to document behaviors and communicate information across all staff shifts. Counselors can also provide family counseling in the homes of Ranch youth.

Orientation is provided when youth arrive at the Ranch. There is also a Ranch orientation program for parents, which is available during family visitation every Sunday. Family visitation is now broken up into two groups: 10am to noon; and 1 to 3 pm.

The family counseling component of the ERP is important, because family members need to acquire the same new skills and problem solving techniques as their son(s). The Mentally Ill Offenders Crime Reduction (MIOCR) grant funds Brief Strategic Family Therapy for some youth in Aftercare. Family therapy provided by the Mental Health Department is increasing since the therapists have been relieved of some responsibility for Aggression Replacement Training (ART).

Probation Counselors hold three group counseling sessions (7:30 to 8:30 am, 12:30 to 1:00 pm and 6:00 to 7:30 pm) in their pods every day, and each youth now receives 400 hours of counseling before leaving the Ranch. The cognitive behavioral skills taught by Probation Counselors through individual and group counseling are:

problem solving; social skills; negotiation skills; managing emotions; values enhancement; and critical reasoning.

Because of a backlog of Ranch referrals, youth are spending two-to-ten weeks in the Ranch Readiness Program (RRP) at Juvenile Hall while awaiting Ranch placement. Youth can receive one day of ERP credit for each two days spent in the RRP, but these hours have only been applied to reduction of the eight-month maximum commitment time. Ranch personnel recommended that Juvenile Hall staff involved in the RRP should participate in the ERP training as available. More creative ways of involving Ranch staff in the RRP need to be identified. A more complete review of the ERP is contained in the February 2007 James Ranch Inspection Report, and a more complete review of the RRP is contained in the December 2007 Juvenile Hall Inspection Report.

Commissioners were very impressed with the leadership, vision and passion that the James Ranch staff have developed to implement the ERP. However, it is too early to focus on outcomes. Youth placed at the Ranch often come from difficult home environments, and have gang affiliations, drug and alcohol problems, limited job skills and limited educational achievement. A total turnaround can't be made in an eight-month program alone.

#### **Aggression Replacement Training**

ART, also known as Teaching Important Pro-Social Skills (TIPS), has been demonstrated to be an effective tool for increasing social skills and reducing recidivism. It is now being provided at Juvenile Hall as well as the Ranches. This 10-week program is provided to youth in their pods in three 1½ hour sessions per week. As problems arise, "mini-ART" sessions are also being conducted in the pods by assigned Probation Counselors trained to conduct ART. The effective use of ART was noted in a report prepared by Community Crime Prevention Associates. A more complete description of ART is contained in the February 2007 James Ranch Inspection Report.

#### **Aftercare**

Aftercare is a 10-week program for youth who have completed the six-to-eight month Ranch Program. Supervision is provided by the Aftercare Counselor, who formally enters into the MDT process two-to-three weeks before the scheduled Ranch release. Aftercare services to the youth and family are also provided by an Educational Counselor, a Probation Officer and a Probation Community Worker. Youth can use computers at the Ranch to search for job openings before their release.

To qualify for the Aftercare Program, the youth and their parent(s) or guardian(s) must sign an Aftercare Contract in which they agree to adhere to the conditions of the Program as well as specific behavior expectations. The standard conditions include "house arrest" during the first month, a curfew, compliance with an approved school or work program, weekly drug and alcohol testing, a ban on association with known gang members, and a ban on gang colors, clothing, haircuts or paraphernalia. Failure to comply with the stated conditions and expectations can result in a return to the Ranch without judicial proceedings or to Juvenile Hall and the Court as a "Ranch failure."

Aftercare may be considered a trial period which tests the effectiveness of the ERP through: (1) return of the youth to his home; (2) return to the local resident school district or to an educational program provided by the COE; and (3) re-immersion into the broader community. Family strengths and commitment to new patterns of communication, a well articulated transition between educational and/or work settings, and a positive peer and social environment need to be in place at the time of the youth's release from the Ranch if the transition is to be successful.

Youth on Aftercare release are required to contact the Aftercare Counselor each evening before 9:00 p.m. If a youth is not at home at the time of the call, a parent or guardian must be present. Youth involved in school programs are expected to call the Aftercare Counselor if not in school on a school day. The Aftercare Counselor said his relationships with school site administrators are very good and that he will be contacted by the site administrator if a youth is not in school. The Aftercare Counselor sees each youth at least once per week, sometimes more often, and at least twice per week if the youth has a drug or alcohol problem. The Community Worker may also assist in providing supervision.

The Aftercare Counselor said that none of youth he's supervised have had a driver's license, so maintaining a job and/or getting to a school far from home is challenging. There also seem to be problems for youth in securing work permits. He noted a lack of perfect correlation between success in the Ranch Program and success in Aftercare. At times, a youth who has not been a shining example of behavior and attitude adjustment while at the Ranch may do very well when returned to the community, and the reverse is also true. The Aftercare Counselor said that a youth could generally improve his chances of success if he left the Ranch with a job, or even job prospects, and a valid work permit. Youth with jobs and little free time in the community seem to be the most successful in Aftercare.

The Aftercare Counselor noted that many of the youth return to very difficult home and/or school situations, where they might not even have a bed to sleep on. Thought should be given to referring youth to structured programs when it might not be in their best interests to return to the same home and/or school environment. For example, some job programs, such as the Job Corps, also include housing. A new program at the Central County Occupational Center provides fire science and emergency medical technician training for high school juniors and seniors in six local school districts. The San Jose Conservation Corps also recently announced plans to expand to 1000 slots for youth.

Beginning in November 2007, Aftercare family counseling has been offered through a MIOCR grant. One-on-one family counseling services are provided, and group counseling is provided by Gardner Health Center twice per week for sessions of 1½ hours. Two other CBOs, Starlight and Community Solutions, have contracts to offer Brief Strategic Family Therapy and can provide in-home therapeutic intervention. Drug

and alcohol services are also provided, if appropriate. Once per month, the Gardner Health Center provides a dinner and social events for youth and their families.

Aftercare statistics collected by the Aftercare Counselor indicate that 54 youth graduated from the Aftercare Program during 2007 and the first three weeks of 2008, while 11 were absconders and 18 were failures. Ten of the Aftercare failures had been returned to the Ranch for up to 30 days, while seven youth who were temporarily returned to the Ranch eventually graduated.

### **Supplemental Programs**

Supplemental programs at the James Ranch include Chemical Dependency Treatment, Gang Intervention/Refusal Skills, Anti-Criminal Thinking/Behavior Patterns, Gang-Redirect, Health Realization, Career Education Services, Victim Awareness, Sexual Offender Counseling, tattoo removal, religious services and team sports as appropriate to each youth. Most of the programs are conducted through contracts with CBOs such as Pathway Society, CYO and Gardner Family Care Corporation. Commissioners noted that there are no programs for domestic violence prevention or parenting, which can be major issues for youth at the Ranch.

Pathway Society provides the Chemical Dependency Treatment program. Participation can be ordered by the Court or requested by a Probation Counselor. Each group of three-to-five youth receives one 1½-hour group counseling session per week plus individual counseling. This interactive program focuses on helping youth realize the seriousness of their drug and/or alcohol usage and how it affects school, friends, job and family. Resources and techniques for staying clean and sober are emphasized. Pathway also accepts the youth in their community program after release from the Ranch. Approximately 85% of the youth come to the Ranch with an identified drug and alcohol abuse issue. Alcohol and marijuana, followed by methamphetamines, are the drugs of choice. Pathway staff members attend most MDT meetings and also conduct on-site family therapy sessions for an average of three families per week. There are 1½ Pathway counselors at the Ranch, with the full-time counselor currently carrying a caseload of 27 youth and the part-time counselor carrying a caseload of 15. It seems clear that there are not enough Pathway counselors to adequately address the drug and alcohol issues of the youth at the Ranch.

CYO provides Gang Intervention/Refusal Skills and Anti-Criminal Thinking/Behavior Patterns, as well as the eight-session Gang Re-direct program that supplements the two-hour weekly group sessions with individual counseling. The focus of Gang Intervention/Refusal Skills is to develop appropriate pro-socialization skills to steer youth away from their gang involvement. A resource packet is provided to each youth at the completion of the program, and CYO also works to connect youth with community resources through its work with the Aftercare Program. Anti-Criminal Thinking/Behavior Patterns is a cognitive behavioral program directed at challenging criminal thinking, beliefs attitudes and behaviors, and addressing faulty patterns of behavior.

The SCVHHS Department of Alcohol and Drug Services provides the Health Realization program, which focuses on the innate health and well-being inherent in every human being. Victim Awareness workshops are offered by volunteers trained as facilitators through the California Department of Juvenile Justice and Mothers Against Drunk Drivers. This program is based on a best-practices model that has been shown to help youth achieve a level of empathy toward their victims. All youth may participate in church services on Sunday morning and bible study on Thursday evening.

Once they've reached Level 2, all youth may participate in team sports through the Central Coast Ranch Athletics League. The five available sports are basketball, volleyball, softball, kickball, and cross-country. Most athletic contests are played as "away games" at other Ranch facilities that provide gyms and athletic fields for their incarcerated youth. There is space for an athletic field lying barren at the James Ranch, and funds have been allocated by a community organization to renovate the field, but this hasn't been a priority.

## **VI. BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT PROGRAM**

### **The Level System**

Progress must be exhibited by growth in approved and desired behaviors and attitudes, as recognized by advancement through a new "level" system. The level system is a working performance scale comprised of four graduated steps and is designed to enable the youth to acquire specific skills and competencies. Each of the four levels contains objectives and expectations measurable by all staff members. Youth enter the Ranch at Level 1 and must actively work toward Level 4 in order to graduate. The four designated levels and their approximate durations are:

- Level 1 (Orientation) – one month
- Level 2 (Program/Treatments) – two months
- Level 3 (Family Reunification) – two months
- Level 4 (Continuing Care Plan) – one month

There are specific expectations, privileges and restrictions at each program level. For example, youth are first eligible for field trips, sports programs and Off-Ranch work crews at Level 2, while youth at Level 3 are eligible for daytime weekend furloughs after completion of three family counseling sessions and youth at Level 4 are eligible for overnight weekend furloughs. Youth are evaluated weekly to assess their progress. A "successful week" would result if the youth is working on current expectations and their overall behavior is congruent with expectations and goals. A specific number of successful weeks are required at each level to qualify for advancement. An Incident Report (IR) might result in an "unsuccessful week," lengthening the youth's stay by one week, although a grievance can be filed regarding that status. Some youth are returned to Juvenile Hall for a period of one week to one month for a "cooling off" period when serious transgressions are documented. Youth in any one pod are all at different levels. They do not graduate as a group, but rather complete the program as individuals.

### **Incident Reports**

Incident Reports (IRs) are prepared by Counselors and other James Ranch staff members to document violations of Ranch rules, use of restraints and/or injuries to youth or staff, as well as for informational purposes. Commissioners reviewed 32 IRs documenting events during a randomly selected month, December 2007. These IRs were categorized as follows:

- Contraband (4)
- Fight, minor on minor, restraints applied (1) – involving two youth
- Injury/illness (5)
- Behavior issues such as refusal to follow directions (4)
- Escape, Ranch weekend furlough (1)
- Ranch failure, contraband, return to Juvenile Hall (4)
- Child abuse report to Department of Family and Children’s Services on behalf of youth’s brother (1)
- Ranch Aftercare absconder (2)
- Ranch Aftercare failure, return to Ranch (4)
- Sexual, inappropriate behavior (1)
- Informational, including gang insults, confrontations and “other” (5)

The Juvenile Justice Commission and the Juvenile Hall Advisory Board receive monthly “Salient Features” Reports summarizing the numbers of significant incidents at Juvenile Hall and the Ranches. The Commission uses this information to gauge the level of stability in the programs. However, Commissioners noted that some of the significant incidents listed above were not included in the December 2007 Salient Features Report provided following the February 7, 2008 Commission meeting. Specific examples, including explanations for the discrepancies as provided by the Ranch Manager, are:

- Escape, Ranch weekend furlough (IR #5001) – this specific category was not requested for inclusion in the Report
- Ranch failure (IR #4970, 5020 and 5119) –the IRs were not appropriately categorized; they were categorized based on the behavior rather than the subsequent outcome
- Ranch Aftercare absconder (IR #311269 and 322899) – the IRs were not completed and processed in a timely manner
- Ranch Aftercare failure (IR #5223 and 5226) – the IRs are in the process of being appropriately re-categorized as “Aftercare violation – Ranch return”

With changes in the Juvenile Hall and Ranch programs, the data in the monthly Salient Features Reports may not be providing all of the information needed by the Commission. It also appears that more consistency is needed in categorizing IRs and improved timeliness is needed in completing and processing IRs so that relevant data can be properly captured in the Salient Features Reports.

### **Grievances**

A grievance procedure is available to all youth. Matters subject to the grievance procedure are those related to any condition of confinement including, but not limited to, health care services, program participation, telephone, mail or visiting procedures, food, clothing, bedding, and any alleged violation of “Rights of Minors.” Youth may file a

written grievance on a form obtained from any Probation Counselor or from a box on the side of the dormitory office.

Commissioners reviewed all 15 grievances filed in 2007. They were properly written, signed by youth and supervisors and, in some cases, appealed to the Ranch Manager if the youth was not satisfied with the staff response. Youth grieved because their counselor had declared their progress that week as unsuccessful for a variety of infractions including accessing MySpace, gang behavior or being fully clothed in bed (potential escape hazard). No particular youth, pods or Counselors were noted as having an abundance of grievances.

### **Appeals**

At the time of preparation of an IR, the youth is notified in writing of the rule violated using the “Notice of Violation” form. The youth may file an appeal on a form obtained from any Probation Counselor or from a box on the side of the dormitory office.

## **VII. MEDICAL SERVICES**

The SCVHHS provides medical services at the Ranch. The Nurse Manager at Juvenile Hall, who also supervises medical services at the Ranch, described three major health goals:

- Comprehensive health assessment screenings
- Treatment for diagnosed medical problems
- Health education and health prevention activities such as immunizations

All youth are given a comprehensive medical examination by the Medical Director at Juvenile Hall before being sent to the Ranch. A Registered Nurse is at the Ranch seven days per week from 7 to 11 am and 5 to 9 pm, and a doctor comes to the Ranch two half-days each month. Depending on the circumstances, youth needing additional medical care can be taken to Valley Health Center – San Martin, Juvenile Hall Medical Clinic or, if necessary, the emergency room at Valley Medical Center (VMC). A morning “sick call” is conducted by the nurse right before or after breakfast.

The nurse monitors medications and distributes all medications in four “pill calls” each day. By law, youth cannot be forced to take medication. Most of the medications are over-the-counter items such as cold and allergy medications, and the doctor occasionally prescribes a sleeping pill such as Benadryl. The number of youth taking prescribed psychotropic medications varies, but is typically no more than 10% of the population. There were eight youth at the Ranch on January 21, 2008 taking prescribed psychotropic medications. The nurse may also provide medical education, such as proper skin care, Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) prevention and sex education, to individual youth as necessary or as requested. Chlamydia is the most commonly seen STD among youth at the Ranch. Classes on health topics have been available in the past, but are not currently being conducted. Youth have an opportunity to take these classes at Juvenile Hall while awaiting Ranch placement. Medical records are still maintained in paper form, but there is a plan to upgrade to electronic records within the year.

As noted previously, there is no nurse on duty between 11 am and 5 pm or between 9 pm and 7 am. Thus, injuries that occur on work crews, during Physical Education or during altercations often happen when there is no nurse on the premises. In December 2006, the SCVHHS installed video cameras and communications equipment to provide a videoconferencing link between the James Ranch Medical Clinic and the Juvenile Hall Medical Clinic. Probation Counselors at the Ranch can now use this link to obtain remote nursing assessment of medical problems when there is no nurse on duty.

There is no dentist on-site, but youth can receive restorative dental care at Juvenile Hall. If a youth has off-site privileges and appropriate permission, his family may take him to a private dentist. During their visit, Commissioners learned that 33 youth from James Ranch have been referred to LensCrafters for eye exams and glasses.

The following data from the SCVHHS Juvenile Hall/Juvenile Ranches Annual Report/2007 reflects 12 months of medical activity at the James Ranch:

Doctor appointments	89
VMC Emergency Department evaluations	9
Hospitalizations	4
Sick call assessments by nurse (not including drop-ins)	721
Dental referrals (not including referrals to private dentists)	16
VMC Outpatient Clinic appointments	45

## **VIII. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

Mental health services at the Ranch are provided by the SCVHHS Mental Health Department. The Program Manager, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), is also responsible for mental health services at the Wright Center and Juvenile Hall. The full-time staff at the Ranch includes an LCSW, an Associate Clinical Social Worker and two Mental Health Community Workers/Family Partners. Family Partners are paraprofessionals who work with youth and their families, including home visits, and also provide case management support. They can be called upon when incidents arise that are not necessarily mental health issues, but which require intervention.

Commissioners met with the Program Manager. She said Mental Health coverage is provided at James Ranch from 8:00 am to 6:30 pm, Monday through Thursday, and from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm on Friday. There is no overnight or weekend coverage, although the Mental Health staff can be reached by cell phone. If the need arises, a youth can be moved to Juvenile Hall or, in an emergency such as a severe suicide gesture, to Valley Medical Center. There is no isolation or time-out room at the Ranch. Mental Health staff members now have walkie-talkies to summon assistance, if necessary, when talking to youth.

Mental Health staff members attend MDT meetings to screen for mental health issues. There are currently 30 open cases of youth having mental health diagnoses.

Youth are seen by Mental Health staff about one hour per week individually and 1½ hours in family therapy. A psychiatrist is available to prescribe psychotropic medications. The Program Manager said the Mental Health staff is 100% trained on ART, although they are currently co-facilitating only one ART group with Probation Counselors. They are more often brought in to help with specific issues. A state grant has enabled Probation Counselors to receive ART training and they are now using ART within the pods. Previously, when there was a behavior or anger problem, the youth might be referred to Mental Health. Now, the Probation Counselors first try to work out the problem within the pod.

The Program Manager said her staff received two days of ERP training, and some have asked if they could enroll in the whole 96-hour ERP training so they could better reinforce the model. She said the Mental Health role has changed, with staff doing more therapy rather than counseling. She felt her department was truly dealing with mental health issues rather than with behavior problems and noted that they do not get involved with youth concerning drug and alcohol issues. Youth generally receive mental health services because they are having family problems or emotional problems. The Program Manager said that, on average, about five youth are typically on psychotropic medications for treatment of attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, depression and/or bipolar disorder. She said that staff members have limited training in working with “dual diagnosis” youth.

Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT), a new program, is an evidence-based, problem solving practice that lends itself to the Aftercare Program. The Program Manager said she would like her staff to be trained in BSFT so they can provide consistency with Aftercare. This family-oriented approach helps the family to focus on reframing false beliefs, emotions and negative thoughts that lead to misunderstandings rather than focusing solely on behaviors. BSFT is provided, at no cost to the family, while youth are in Aftercare. It is up to the staff to encourage family involvement, as the family cannot be forced to participate.

## **IX. EDUCATION**

The on-site Blue Ridge High School is run by the COE Alternative Schools Department in facilities maintained by the Probation Department. The Principal is responsible for both “regular” and special education at Blue Ridge High School, Osborne School (at Juvenile Hall) and the Wright Center School. The full-time teaching staff at the Ranch is comprised of three credentialed “regular education” teachers, a special education Special Day Class (SDC) teacher and an SDC aide. Part-time positions include a special education Resource Specialist Program (RSP) specialist (0.5) and an RSP aide (0.5). Special education personnel are under the direction of the COE Special Education Department. Commissioners interviewed the Principal and the head teacher, and visited each of the four classrooms.

A part-time, credentialed School Counselor expedites the compilation of school transcripts for the youth and works to implement continuity of the educational process as

a youth moves from their regular school to the Osborne School at Juvenile Hall, to Blue Ridge High School at the Ranch and then back out to their assigned school placement in the community. An Educational Counselor from the Probation Department Community Services Division works part-time with the School Counselor in assisting Blue Ridge students with school placements as they leave the Ranch. A part-time (0.4) assessment technician conducts reading and math testing every 90 days, and part-time support is also provided by an office coordinator, school secretary and custodian.

COE has expanded the school program at James Ranch from 240 minutes to 300 minutes per day by providing credits for vocational and General Educational Development (GED) programs currently being offered.

Classes are held Monday through Friday from 1:00 to 5:10 pm, with a schedule consisting of five 50-minute periods: two periods of English/language arts; two of math and/or independent studies; and one of physical education. This equates to one high school credit for 15 days of instruction in a given subject (which is consistent with the statutory requirement of one credit for 12 hours of instruction or five credits for 60 hours of instruction). Some students initiate an independent studies contract for other classes required for a high school diploma, such as science and social studies. Teachers utilize some of their contract time not normally involved in classroom instruction to engage youth in independent studies. Ranch personnel try to avoid interruptions of the school day due to unnecessary student “pull-outs.” Youth on the kitchen duty miss some class time, but such duty is rotated, thus minimizing pull-out time for individual students. Pulls-outs also occur for mental health counseling and the Pathway program.

Each regular education student receives an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP), as specified by the CSA, with specific goals for that youth. Blue Ridge teachers must often prepare ILPs because youth continue to arrive from Juvenile Hall without them. However, most teachers felt they would have prepared a new ILP for each of their students based on their personal evaluation of the student.

Commissioners visited each of the classrooms on December 13, 2007. Individual class sizes numbered 14, 14, 12 and 13 students, which does not represent the full complement of youth at the Ranch that day. Commissioners did not ascertain where the “missing” students may have been. While visiting classrooms, Commissioners noted that some Probation Counselors stayed in the classrooms with the youth from their pods and went around the rooms helping students with their studies. The Counselors provide for safety and security in the classroom, and discipline is not a major issue. New school furniture arrived during January. These desks and chairs really enlivened the rooms, and teachers finally got teacher’s chairs. The old furniture had been there since the 1950s.

During the Commission’s visit, youth in one classroom were engaged in reading Charles Dickens’ “A Christmas Carol.” The teacher tested the students’ ability to understand difficult words such as “implored, morose, destitute, misanthrope, void and ponderous.” Students playfully read the play and discussed each scene. All of the students appeared to be engaged. Another classroom was reading “Gift of Magi.” Books

are read and shared among classes. The teachers were all enthusiastic, well-prepared and in control of their classrooms. The teachers requested that they receive more ERP training, as they had received only two days of training and wanted to support the program more fully.

Unfortunately, the current structure of the school program does not mesh well with the structure of the ERP, in which youth are divided into five self-contained pods. With three regular teachers and an SDC teacher, it is not possible to maintain each pod as a self-contained group. Teachers have accommodated this by taking youth from more than one pod into their classrooms. The only way the pod structure could be maintained within the school program would be to open at least one additional classroom and assign additional full-time teachers accordingly. One additional classroom is available.

The youth do not have homework, although some are involved in journal writing after school as well as reading to achieve independent studies credit. Teachers update their students' behavior and educational progress once per week, and students are placed on the Superintendent's list every Friday. Teachers provide their own treats for students, but youth on the Superintendent's list often go on an outing or have a pizza party. Youth are tested every 30 days to document progress, and specific socio-emotional and academic goals are measured every three months.

The head teacher reported that she had set up a meeting with the Ranch Manager to discuss a "Code Red" emergency plan for addressing a potential crisis, catastrophe (such as a major earthquake or collapse of a nearby dam) or intruder. She said teachers needed to get keys to the Ranch and, perhaps, two-way radios. In an emergency, she said she would send an "A boy" (equivalent to a Level 4 youth) to the office if no Probation Counselor were in the classroom. She felt that a plan and drill were needed for such a situation. The Ranch Manager subsequently indicated that he had met with school personnel and was pursuing the development of an emergency response plan. The head teacher also mentioned that, in the past, there had been more community volunteers at the Ranch, including some who helped youth with community college exploration and/or career development. She felt that this was very much needed.

Youth sign up to use the bathroom attached to each classroom, and there was a steady flow of youth in and out of the bathrooms during the Commissioners' visit. Youth have very little privacy at the Ranch, and it appears that bathroom breaks have become a coveted "time-out" activity. The teachers wondered if this could be handled differently.

### **Special Education**

The RSP specialist prepares an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each special education student if an IEP doesn't already exist or the existing IEP is outdated. The IEP lists specific goals and services to be provided for the youth as required by federal law. School staff members noted that not all students who are in need of special education services arrive at the Ranch with a current IEP, often because of frequent moves from school to school or lack of school attendance. About 60 days are required to complete an IEP, with a parent's signature required before the process can begin. The

IEPs for all youth eligible for special education services are brought up-to-date, including the triennial review (as appropriate), by the time the youth complete the ERP.

There is one self-contained Special Day Class, with a teacher and an aide. While class size may vary depending upon the Ranch population, the SDC is envisioned to be the smallest class in order to provide time and attention to the goals and objectives as specified in the IEPs. There were 13 SDC students as of December 13, 2007.

The RSP specialist and aide work individually or in small groups with identified RSP students for up to five hours per week per student. As of December 13, 2007, there were nine RSP students.

### **GED**

The combination of a high school diploma or equivalency certificate and job skills with career training may provide the best hope for a youth's success after leaving the Ranch. The opportunity to obtain the high school equivalency certificate is critical since timely high school graduation is out of reach for many Ranch youth. A student in an institution may take the GED examination at age 17 in order to receive a high school equivalency certificate, and may take GED preparation classes earlier than that. GED preparation classes were reinstated at the Ranch in January 2007, and four youth are currently enrolled. Teachers give up part of the two hours per day provided for preparation time, independent studies and lunch to rotate monthly in providing GED preparation from 11am to noon, three days per week. The GED exam is administered at Juvenile Hall.

### **Enterprise Program**

The Enterprise Program is a partially self-sustaining vocational training program that teaches entry-level job skills while producing marketable products. The goals are:

- Give youth at the entry-level job skill training in viable career fields, so employment may be more readily sought upon release
- Develop revenue from the programming, to make it self-sustaining and to allow future wage earning potential for youth to be directed toward the payment of court-ordered victim restitution

A Ranch Enterprise Trust Fund was established in May 2001, and all revenue earned from products made in the vocational programs and from Off-Ranch work crews goes into the Trust Fund. The balance in the Trust Fund was \$209,343 on November 30, 2007, as compared to a balance of \$170,850 on December 31, 2005.

The 2006-07 Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury (Grand Jury) issued a report that identified issues regarding administration of the Fund. The Grand Jury found evidence suggesting that the Fund was not being used as intended for restitution and labor compensation. At the time of the report, victims had received less than \$900 and youth had been paid less than \$300 for their labor. The Grand Jury recommended that the Probation Department administer the Fund to ensure that victim restitution is paid in all eligible cases and that youth be compensated for their labor. The Grand Jury also

recommended that guidelines be modified to allow restitution and labor compensation upon release from the Ranch program rather than completion of Aftercare. The Probation Department response noted that all youth are provided the opportunity to participate in the Enterprise Program and to have an opportunity to earn funds toward payment of their restitution orders. The response also noted that the Aftercare Program is part of the Ranch commitment order and must be completed before the order can be vacated.

In reviewing the Fund's daily transaction log for the Fiscal Year 2007-08, Commissioners noted income from interest accrued, sale of items (such as pig traps and magazine racks) made in vocational classes and payment for youth labor in Off-Ranch work crews. Eighteen different entries were noted for reimbursement to minors for work and/or payment of fines and restitution. One of the larger transactions, at a cost of almost \$6000, was the purchase of a forklift in August 2007.

### **Vocational Training/Work Crews**

The James Ranch currently offers the following vocational training programs, which are described in more detail in the February 2007 James Ranch Inspection Report:

- Construction Technologies
- Welding
- Auto Technologies
- Horticulture
- Computer Technology

The Construction Technologies, Welding, Auto Technologies and Computer Technology programs are provided under the auspices of the COE Regional Occupational Programs, although the Welding program is funded by the Probation Department. The Horticulture program is supervised by County Park Rangers. A Culinary Arts program continues to be considered. As part of such a program, it may be possible for youth to prepare meals for catering at the Justice Training Center, located on the site of the former Holden Ranch. The James Ranch staff has been exploring this option with Mission College, but talks have not led to a result. This seems like a concrete program that could lead to entry level job opportunities for many youth graduating from the Ranch program.

On-Ranch and Off-Ranch work crews are also part of the vocational program. On-Ranch crews are responsible for kitchen duty and other assigned tasks at the Ranch. The Horticulture program is integrated into On-Ranch work crews during the spring, summer and fall. Off-Ranch crews do work such as trail building and water conservation projects throughout the County, with County Parks, State Fish and Game, the Conservation Corps and the City of Morgan Hill. Youth must advance to Level 2 before they are eligible to participate in Off-Ranch work crews.

With the exception of Computer Technology, which has been incorporated into the afternoon school program, vocational training programs are conducted from 8:30 am to 12 noon, Monday through Friday. Youth receive additional school credits under work experience for the vocational training programs and work crews. This work experience has typically added between nine and twelve additional school credits to each youth's

regular school curriculum, and will now add even more credits because of the longer stay under the ERP. The youth must attend a minimum of one hour per week in subjects such as resume writing, preparing for job interviews, and tips on how to find jobs. The youth in each pod rotate as a group to a different program every ten weeks. The five programs in the rotation are: (1) Construction Technologies; (2) Welding; (3) Auto Technologies; (4) On-Ranch work crew, which includes Horticulture on a seasonal basis; and (5) Off-Ranch work crew.

Commissioners visited the Construction Technologies, Welding and Auto Technologies classes. The instructors said they are glad that the rotation has been increased to 10 weeks as recommended by the Commission last year. The youth are learning tenacity, patience, responsibility, self-esteem and peer assistance in addition to vocational skills, and many are genuinely proud of their products. The computer lab was visited, but class was not in session at that time. The lab contains computers for 15 youth plus one for the instructor. A visit was also made to the Horticulture program greenhouse. Instructors stated that a few youth had used their vocational training to get a job in construction, welding and/or auto repair. It may be necessary to track this more closely to ensure that youth are receiving training in jobs that are available to them.

## **X. FEEDBACK FROM YOUTH**

Commissioners met and ate lunch with youth in the cafeteria. One youth stated he did not like everyone in a pod being penalized for an error or act by one individual in the pod. This was his disagreement with the program. The youth, currently taking college courses, spoke freely and openly about the new program. He felt that each individual should be responsible for his own action. Other youth at the table did not express this disagreement with the program. Several youth interviewed during lunch said they were just going along with the program so they could get out and do what they wanted. On another topic, some youth indicated that they would like to have larger portions of food served in the cafeteria.

One youth interviewed in his pod was excited about the ERP program. It was with great pride that he showed a Commissioner his personal chest with numerous changes of clothing. He talked enthusiastically about his classes and the program. Two youth were interviewed about the school program. They both said that their teacher was really structured and that she wouldn't put up with any nonsense in the classroom. "But she really wants you to learn," said one youth. "Yes," said the other youth, "she's working with me extra so I can graduate from high school."

## **XI. DOCUMENTS REVIEWED**

Copies of documents and reports from various sources were requested as part of the inspection, but some of the 2007 reports were not yet available. The following documents/reports were reviewed:

1. Office of the Fire Marshal, Inspection Notice, dated November 14, 2007

2. *Welcome to the James Ranch*, orientation booklet, undated
3. *William F. James Boys Ranch Guide Book*, dated August 25, 2006
4. *James Ranch & Muriel Wright Center, 6-8 Month Proposed Program*, dated September 1, 2006
5. Juvenile Justice Commission Inspection Report, William F. James Boys' Ranch, dated May 4, 2007
6. Probation Department response to James Ranch Inspection Report, dated July 9, 2007
7. COE response to James Ranch Inspection Report, dated September 10, 2007
8. SCVHHS response to James Ranch Inspection Report, dated June 12, 2007
9. James Ranch current Program Schedule, undated
10. James Ranch Organization Chart, undated
11. James Ranch Shift Schedule, dated January 14 – February 10, 2008
12. Aftercare Contract form, dated September 21, 2005
13. Enterprise Fund Daily Transaction Log for Fiscal year 2007-08, dated January 23, 2008
14. Incident Reports, dated December 1-31, 2007
15. Grievances filed during 2007
16. Juvenile Institutions JJC and Juvenile Hall Advisory Board Report (Salient Features Report), dated December 1 – December 31, 2007.
17. *Enhanced Ranch Program Evaluation Report, 2007*, Rex Green, PhD, Community Crime Prevention Associates
18. *Probation Department's Restitution Program Fails Victims and Wards, 2006-07* Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury, dated May 24, 2007
19. Probation Department response to Grand Jury Report, dated August 20, 2007.
20. *Juvenile Hall/Juvenile Ranches Annual Report/2007*, Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System, Juvenile Probation Medical Services, undated

## **XII. COMMENDATIONS**

The Juvenile Justice Commission commends:

1. The Santa Clara County Probation Department for continuing to adapt the Enhanced Ranch Program (ERP) and making related improvements to the facility. Commissioners were pleased to see that ongoing training and consultation was being provided by the Missouri Youth Services Institute.
2. The Santa Clara County Probation Department for adapting Aggression Replacement Training from a Mental Health program to an in-pod counseling program.
3. The Santa Clara County Probation Department for contracting with community-based agencies to provide family therapy for youth in Aftercare.
4. The Santa Clara County Probation Department for adding a Community Worker to assist in Aftercare responsibilities.

5. The Santa Clara County Probation Department for developing and providing family therapy through a Mentally Ill Offenders Crime Reduction grant.
6. The Santa Clara County Office of Education for maintaining the General Educational Development (GED) program so that youth can prepare for the GED exam in order to receive a high school equivalency certificate.
7. The Santa Clara County Office of Education for expanding the school program from 240 to minutes to 300 minutes per day.
8. The Santa Clara County Office of Education for replacing the aging school furniture.

### **XIII. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. Initiate and complete construction work to implement a permanent pod structure within the dormitory building.
2. Explore ways for Juvenile Hall staff in the Ranch Readiness Program to receive Enhanced Ranch Program training.
3. Consider improving transition to the Ranch through Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings held when youth enter the Ranch Readiness Program rather than waiting until youth are actually placed at the Ranch. Ensure timely, up-front communications with parents/guardians so that Ranch orientation can be scheduled and family therapy initiated as early as possible.
4. Continue to implement independent evaluations of the Enhanced Ranch Program to consider the relationship between program success and community success as well as the overall effectiveness of aspects of the program such as family therapy.
5. Develop and implement a Culinary Arts vocational program.
6. Continue attempting to work with community groups to build an athletic field.
7. Utilize the services of the Probation Community Worker to help youth find employment when entering Aftercare.
8. Work with the SCVHHS and COE to offer Brief Strategic Family Therapy training for Mental Health staff and more Enhanced Ranch Program training for both Mental Health and school staff.

9. Work with the Facilities and Fleet Department to improve ineffective repair practices. Replace or make appropriate repairs to the leaking overhangs and broken walkways to eliminate safety hazards for youth, staff and visitors.
10. Work with the SCCVHS to ensure that preventive dental care is available on-site.
11. Consider increasing the funding for Pathway, so that staffing can be increased to more effectively address drug and alcohol issues.
12. Evaluate “bathroom break” behavior at Blue Ridge High School to see if there is a way to significantly reduce class disruptions while still meeting legal mandates.
13. Explore the development of a corps of volunteers to tutor and/or provide career modeling for youth, such as the program at Contra Costa County’s Ranch.
14. Continue working with the COE and other partner agencies to develop and implement a site emergency response plan addressing a variety of potential crises.
15. Work with the COE to evaluate the relationship between the current vocational programs and job openings in Santa Clara County.
16. Consider adding Domestic Violence and Parenting classes to the mix of programming.
17. Explore partnerships with San Jose Conservation Corps, Central County Occupational Program, City Year, and/or the Job Corps to provide structured referrals for youth whose best interests might not be served by returning to the same home and/or school environment.
18. Improve the accuracy and relevancy of data reported in the monthly Salient Features Reports to correct serious deficiencies noted in the December 2007 Report. Provide staff training to ensure consistency in categorization of Incident Reports, and work with the Juvenile Justice Commission to reassess categories of incidents to be included in the Salient Features Reports.

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

1. Explore the possibility of adding a fourth regular teacher to the staff to better accommodate the pod system. An additional classroom is available.

2. Evaluate the effectiveness of rotating teachers through the GED program, given the lack of staff continuity in working with the youth, and consider having an aide conduct the program under the supervision of a teacher.
3. Work with the Probation Department to offer more Enhanced Ranch Program training for school staff.
4. Explore ways to address budget issues involved in providing classroom aides.
5. Continue working with the Probation Department to develop and implement a site emergency response plan.
6. Work with the Probation Department to evaluate the relationship between the current vocational programs and job openings in Santa Clara County.
7. Explore the process to secure work permits for youth assigned to the Ranch.

**The Juvenile Justice Commission recommends that the Santa Clara Valley Health and Hospital System:**

1. Work with the Probation Department to ensure that preventive dental care is available on-site. Continue to explore community programs such as the Health Trust's mobile dental van and potential funding sources such as the Valley Medical Foundation.
2. Allow the nursing staff time to provide classes on health topics such as Sexually Transmitted Disease prevention.
3. Work with the Probation Department to offer Brief Strategic Family Therapy training and more Enhanced Ranch Program training for Mental Health staff.

**XIV. SUMMARY**

The Juvenile Justice Commission has completed its annual inspection of the James Ranch. The Enhanced Ranch Program has completed its full one year anniversary, and most staff members appear to be enthusiastic about the program's goals. Increased training and communication are needed to allow School and Mental Health personnel to reinforce this new approach of working with youth and their families. The addition of family therapy in Aftercare should increase the success rate of youth leaving the program. For some youth, returning home may not be the best alternative, and community programs should be tapped more uniformly for youth transitions. Most of last year's recommendations have been addressed, although some appear to merely be under study.

Based on this inspection, the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission believes that the William F. James Boys' Ranch meets the Commission's standards for assuring the safety, well-being and rehabilitation of youth in a juvenile detention facility.

**Approved by the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission on  
March 4, 2008.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Patricia Khan, JJC Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Nora Manchester, James Ranch Inspection Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date