

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission San Mateo County, California

Group Home Inspection

Please respond to sections that apply to the facility you are inspecting.
Type or print clearly.

Facility Name: Canyon Oaks

Date of this Inspection: 9/4/2013

Address: 400 Edmonds Road, Redwood City CA

Date of Last Inspection: 10/15/10

Contact Person: Victoria Valencia

Facility Capacity: 12

Phone Number: 650-839-1810

Current Population: 10

Presiding Juvenile Court Judge: Judge Susan Etezadi

Annual Population: 15 - 20

Commission Inspection Team: Mieke Bloomfield Barrows, Richard Boitano

Major Concerns, Observations, and Recommendations

San Mateo county is very lucky to have such an excellent program for youth with severe mental health issues. Canyon Oaks is well resourced (as reported by staff) and has staff that really care about the youth in their care. Each youth gets care that is very tailored to their circumstances and needs. It is clear that a lot of thought has gone into their programs and processes.

The overall program at Canyon Oaks is excellent. There is one area that we noted for improvement - in holding regular emergency drills. The director also noted that they needed to improve in this area.

Fire Inspection Report:

Yes No

Date: 6/20/2013

Health Department Report:

Yes No

Date: don't think they have one - falls under CCL

Miscellaneous: _____

Areas Reviewed

Quality of Life:

- Physical Plants
- Meals/Nutrition
- Mental Health
- Physical/Dental Health
- Religious Services
- Volunteer Involvement
- Visiting
- Other: _____

Programs:

- Education
- Vocational/Employability
- Community Service
- Individual/Group Counseling
- Substance Abuse
- Other: _____

Persons Interviewed:

- Minors
- Director
- Youth Supervisor/Staff
- Food Services Staff
- Other: teacher

General Information

Stated purpose of facility: Canyon Oaks was created 10 years ago as an in-county level 14 group home for youth with severe mental health issues. Before Canyon Oaks, youth would be sent to a locked facility, as far away as Los Angeles or Florida. And, if youth failed out of placement, they would end up in Juvenile Hall Unit X.

Canyon Oaks is a 'no eject, no reject' program. If a youth is violent, they might be temporarily sent to juvenile hall or a psychiatric unit but they will keep a bed open for them so they can return. Staff said this really means that staff and the youth have to work through issues and cannot just pass the problem on elsewhere.

Any youth going to Canyon Oaks must have their case reviewed by IPRC (county committee that reviews group home placement) as well as certification by Mental Health that they have a high level of mental health needs. Their population includes youth with 300 dependency status, 602 designation or an IEP requirement.

Type of operating license: Group Home

License number: 415600309

Most recent licensing inspection: 7/30/2013 – they had an error in medication log involving vitamins that triggered training on the issue.

Rating level: 14

Target population of juveniles: 13 -17

Age range of juveniles: 13-17

Juveniles' home countries: San Mateo – they do not take youth from other counties

Pre-Plan for Emergencies: Yes No **Date of Last Drill:** A few years ago

Comments: Staff said they need to do a better job of emergency drills. They do have emergency supplies and their backup location is the Receiving Home or YSC depending on jurisdiction over the child.

Staffing

Describe staff specialties: Staff includes a child psychiatrist (20hrs/wk – she is also a pediatrician), 2 full time therapists, full time occupational therapist (job training), full time art therapist, full time cook, part time medical office specialist, program specialist (house manager),

Describe staff including numbers, background, ethnicity, language: Staff listed above plus 17 full time residential counselors and 13 relief residential counselors. Very diverse staff that reflects their population. 70% of staff is of color (African American, Asian, Tongan, etc)

They have one therapist who is bilingual (Spanish). They utilize interpreters for languages that they don't have. Youth are not allowed to translate for parents.

Educational requirements for Staff: Everyone has at least a BA, several staff members have Masters Degrees. Clinicians are all licensed. Must have prior experience.

Training provided for staff: 20 hrs/yr required. Done in house. When staff joins they get 20 hrs orientation and 20 hrs Proact training (hands off assault crisis training). Staff can request training. Training topics include medication, self-harm, cultural training, CPR.

Staff to minor ratio: Awake swing shift 1:2; during day staff outnumber youth Sleeping 1:4

How is staff backup handled during grave-yard shift?: They use an on call list

Describe staff turnover, including frequency and reason: Not much turnover. Staff who have left usually go to master's program, out of state or elsewhere in county employment (ie, promotion)

Describe general staff and minor interactions: Youth were in school while we were there. From talking with staff, it seems clear that they care about the youth and approach them in a respectful and caring manner.

Comments: _____

Conditions of Grounds and Building Exterior

Give a general description of the property: A 6000 square foot building located off Edgewood Road near Edgewood Park and next to a fire station. They have an outdoor area for recreation and are preparing to plant a garden as well.

Give a general description of the main facility including housekeeping and sanitation:

The main facility is neat and clean. It consists of several classrooms, offices, a kitchen, bedrooms, bathrooms and common rooms.

Lawns: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Playing Fields: Acceptable Unacceptable: n/a

Blacktop: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Paint: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Roof: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Drains and Gutters: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

General Appearance: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Condition of Interior of Building

Walls: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Paint: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Floors: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Ceilings: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Drains: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Plumbing Fixtures: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Air Vents/Heating/Windows: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Smoke Alarms: Acceptable Unacceptable: smoke alarms and fire extinguishers regularly checked by the county

Storage of Cleaning Fluids/Chemicals: Acceptable Unacceptable: locked cabinet

Recreation/Sports Equipment: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Hallways Clear/Doors Propped Open: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Sleeping Rooms: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Beds: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Art, Books, Personal Items Allowed in Rooms: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Graffiti Present: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Ample Blankets: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Study Area: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Adequate Lighting: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Temperature: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Orientation of Minors

What is in intake process for the facility?: When a child is placed at Canyon Oaks, they meet with the child prior to arrival. They get a sense of who they are, what they need to work on, what their triggers are, etc. They develop an individual support plan for the child which is shared with the staff prior to the child's arrival. When the child arrives, they review things with the child depending on their capacity at that moment. Each child is assigned 2 residential counselors as their 'go-to people'

Are minors oriented to the house rules and procedures?: Yes No Explain: Youth are oriented on arrival depending on their capacity at the time. They go through an orientation phase where they learn the house rules and procedures.

Are house rules and grievance procedures posted?: Yes No Explain: They are listed in the resident handbook which all youth receive and posted in the office.

What is in place to ensure that these rules and procedures are understood by minors?: Reviewed during orientation phase.

Are clothing and possessions inventoried on arrival and departure?: Yes No

How are juvenile's clothing and possessions protected or stored?: They keep a running inventory of the youth's possessions. They are told not to bring anything valuable. Possessions that are not allowed in bedrooms can be kept in the personals closet. They also have a hygiene closet.

Interviewed Minors: Yes No Details: Youth were in school and are difficult to interview because of their mental health issues.

Meals/Nutrition

Kitchen: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Do the youth share in preparation of meals?: Yes No Details: Youth are not expected to share in preparation in meals, but they can. On the weekend, the cook leaves the ingredients for staff to prepare meals and youth can help. The occupational therapist will often work with youth on cooking skills.

Are meals served family style?: Yes No Details: _____

Are minors permitted to converse during meals?: Yes No Details: _____

Are staff present and supervising during meals?: Yes No Details: _____

Are weekly menus posted?: Yes No Details: _____

Are servings ample, nutritious, appetizing?: Yes No Details: we were not there during mealtime

Weaker minors protected from having food taken from them?: Yes No Details: _____

Are snacks and beverages available?: Yes No Details: Available all day long. Can ask for fruit anytime and there are schedule snack breaks.

How do you meet special nutritional needs?: They accommodate special dietary needs. The menu is also OKed through the county nutritionist.

Length of time allowed to eat?: _____

Mealtimes (no more than 4 hours between meals, breakfast to dinner, without a snack)

Breakfast: 7:30 – 8:15 **Lunch:** 12:10-12:45 **Dinner:** 5:30pm until done eating

Comments: The cook from Camp Glenwood is now at Canyon Oaks. He prepares homestyle cooking. They try to create a family environment. They recently implemented a feedback form for the food which is reviewed with the cook. For evening snack, the kids who take a long time to eat will get served first. They have a youth with an eating disorder and she eats whenever she wants to.

Personal Appearance of Minors

Appearance: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Showers (frequency, privacy, supervised): Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Condition of clothing (clean, fit, etc.): Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Clothing appropriate to current weather: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Comments: _____

Programs

Recreation (type, amount, etc.): Acceptable Unacceptable:

Exercise (daily schedule, amount, etc.): Acceptable Unacceptable: Movement is designed into the day treatment plan. They have one 20 minute session and one 45 minute session Monday – Thursday. In the afternoons, they go on hikes or play basketball. Outings might also involve exercise (like going to the Skate Park)

Access to Religious Services: Acceptable Unacceptable: As requested. It is rare that the youth ask for it. They often go to services during home visits. If requested they would take them to services or bring someone in. They had one youth who kept going to her youth group because it was important to her.

Access to Medical Services: Acceptable Unacceptable: They set up appointments for them, some youth continue to see their doctors. Lab tech comes once a month for blood tests.

Access to Mental Health Services: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Individual Counseling: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Group Counseling: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Substance Abuse Counseling: Acceptable Unacceptable: They have an empty 20hr/week position for a substance abuse counselor that they trying to fill now (this position was previously filled). They have an in-house AA group. They work to support families where substance abuse is a problem.

Victim Awareness Classes: Acceptable Unacceptable: No class

Gang Awareness Classes: Yes No Details: _____

Sexual Harassment Classes: Yes No Details: There is not a class for this, but there is a constant conversation about behavior. Things will also come out in therapy.

Parenting Classes: Yes No Details: _____

Vocational Classes: Yes No Details: This is an integral part of their week. The occupational therapist works with them. They have can have jobs if they want to and are able.

Work Program: Yes No Details: Gardening position on site. Youth can also work in the kitchen. One youth earned a food handling certificate. Some low functioning youth work on assembly of hygiene kits for hall and get paid

Other: _____

Discipline of Minors

Describe the discipline process of minors: When they first opened, Canyon Oaks had a level system. But they discovered that level systems do not work with this population because going down a level makes them feel like a failure. Instead, they use a color system and a phase system.

The color system is a real time reflection of what is going on with the youth. Green means they are involved in school and treatment; yellow means they needed redirection and have feedback on what needs to happen to get back to green; red is the lowest color can result from an AWOL or violent act. The youth can change these colors faster than they can change a level . It is real time and gives them a reason to keep trying.

Phases are a longer view reflection on where the youth is. They start in the Orientation phase and then move through Learning, Practicing and Succeeding. Youth get a wrist band for each phase. They cannot move backward through the phases.

When problems come up, staff talk and provide feedback about behaviors. They might have the youth take some space. There is no set discipline procedure – it depends on the youth. They utilize behavior change analysis (BCA) which works to try and understand the chain of events and how to prevent issues. They work to give the youth strategies. They keep several behavior logs (provoking, self harm, AWOL, violence). For the self harm log , they will process it with a therapist. For the violence log, they process the log and present it to the community. They have several community meetings a day to check in and see how the day is going.

Comments: _____

Grievances

Grievance Process: Acceptable Unacceptable: Youth fill out form and then the Administrator/Unit Supervisor will meet with that youth. If appropriate, they will meet with staff involved with the grievance as well. Even if the grievance is a result of paranoia, staff will meet with the youth to discuss the issue and see how they can address it. Most grievances are about consequences that they have received. Staff is always being coached on how to interact with the youth.

Number of grievances this year: _____

Trends and/or Comments: There is no grievance log. They use the form from licensing and put those forms in the youth's file when the grievance is resolved.

Correspondence / Telephone

Access US Mail?: Yes No Details: _____

Postage Free?: Yes No Details: _____

Incoming/Outgoing Mail (Screened? Confidential?): Yes No Details: Not screened. They need to open in front of staff and empty the envelope to make sure no drugs, etc.

Access to Telephone?: Yes No Details: Phone hours are 6-9 at night. As needed during the day for business day items and crisis issues. Must be on approved contact list.

Visiting

Visiting Schedule: Weekdays n/a Weekends n/a Special Events n/a

Do all minors have access to visitation?: Yes No Details: Parents can visit right away – they start with a 1-2 hour visit on site and see how it goes. They visit on site for 3- 4 weeks then they might do a few hours offsite. Then work on going home for weekends where appropriate. Their therapist arranges home visits and coordinates with the court, probation, social worker, etc.

Under what circumstances would visitation be restricted?: Child could refuse or court could restrict. But there is never a consequence of no visitation.

Are visitation logs kept?: Yes No Details: No specific visitation log exists. Visitation is documented and the therapist will make progress notes.

Adequate Space: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Staff Supervision: Acceptable Unacceptable: no supervision unless required

Privacy Provided: Yes No Details: _____

Games or Activities Provided: Yes No Details: _____

School

List the schools your residents attend:

All residents attend school onsite. However, depending on each student's individual circumstances, part-time attendance at an offsite school is possible. In fact, one student is currently attending a class at the local community College.

How is transportation to school provided?: Transportation is not necessary for students attending class onsite. However, staff will provide transportation for those students attending an offsite program.

Are students able to participate in school-based extra curricular activities?: Yes, to the degree that they are available in this self-contained program.

Is tutoring available?: After class tutoring with teachers and clinical staff is available.

Adequate Supplies, Books, Paper, Computer?: School supplies are adequate, up to date and readily available to all students. The use of educational technology is a program-wide focus. Accordingly, new computers have been installed in each of the classrooms and are regularly used by all students. Current plans feature the use of iPads in the school's math program.

Access to Computers/Internet?: Yes No How is this managed?: Access to the Internet is an ongoing concern. Accordingly, a vigorous filter is in place that permits the appropriate educational use of the Internet while denying access to sites deemed dangerous or inappropriate. This protocol seems to be working well as no complaints were forthcoming during the inspection.

Describe the relationship between school and staff: The relationship between students and staff seems to be quite good. The student to staff ratio is quite high and it is readily apparent that program staff are very concerned about the progress of their students. Both of the program's teachers are Highly Qualified in accordance with the requirements of NCLB and both have previously worked in academic programs housed in therapeutic settings. In addition, both teachers are CLAD certified. Both teachers have access to the County's computerized SEIS information system that enables them to view a student's IEP history.

Comments:

Currently, boys and girls are separated during the school's academic day. While this was initially done for safety reasons, both staff and students feel that this separation has helped to provide a better academic setting and the further academic achievement. Classrooms are small but neat and well appointed while textbooks appear to be new, are approved by the County Office of Education and are high school appropriate.

The school's program currently focuses on the required academic core, including Language Arts, Social Studies, Math and Science. As previously noted, the school's teaches are both HQT in these areas. Elective programs are combined with the afternoon's programming and with the school's therapy program. These include art therapy, "movement" and creative writing. Like most therapeutic programs, the Canyon Oaks educational program operates on a point system, with daily points awarded for good behavior and academic production. Points can be redeemed in the school's "small Mall" canteen.

The school staff is very aware of the impending implementation of the Common Core Standards. Accordingly, utilizing the concept of "backwards mapping", they have already received extensive training regarding the design of academic lessons aligned to these standards. This year's professional development program will continue this focus as well and will further support the teaching of academic language throughout the school's four core content areas. Working with the San Mateo County Network for Success, additional professional development will focus on the school's recently developed Common Core Implementation Plan.

The school staff has prepared a current Single Plan for Student Achievement and a Parent Involvement Plan and has recently been approved for Candidacy Status by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

Canyon Oak Students also have the ability to enroll in local community college classes as appropriate and also have access to the Compass Online Learning Program, which offers the opportunity for credit recovery or to complete a class necessary for graduation that is not offered at the school.

A visit with the school's staff provides clear evidence that their primary focus is on both the personal and academic success of all students. Upon arrival at the program, a teacher will sit with the student and conduct a comprehensive review of all available transcripts, in an effort to make certain that no credits from another program have been left out. Individualized classes are then assigned based on this evaluation. When students are ready to leave, a "hand-Off" IEP is held to make certain that all academic issues are covered and that the student is transferring to the appropriate academic program.

Comments

General comments or concerns that should be noted that have not already been addressed?:

There is a residential council made up of the youth in residence. They meet every other week and come up with ideas and suggestions. They then pick 2 representatives that present these ideas at the next staff meeting.

Youth earn money for chores that they do. They can also earn extra money for extra chores. Their money is handled by the staff like a bank. Each youth even designs their own deposit slip.

Staff really care about the youth and seem very thoughtful about the activities. The overnight staff have certain rituals to comfort the youth (since nighttime can be scarier for the youth esp those who have been abused). They have a book club with special cocoa, for example. Every child gets a cake on their birthday (Cakes for Kids makes them) and they get a special birthday dinner. The staff go out of their way to accommodate the youth and keep them in touch with family – one girl had 12 family

members come to Canyon Oaks for her quincinera dinner. The cook makes big Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for youth who cannot go home and their families are invited to come.

Signature of Commissioner(s) preparing this report:

/s/ Mieke Barrows Date: 09/04/2013

/s/ Richard Boitano Date: 09/04/2013

_____ Date: _____