

A SNAPSHOT OF JUVENILE FACILITIES IN ORANGE COUNTY

SUMMARY

All juvenile correctional facilities in Orange County are operated by the County Probation Department. Each facility is routinely inspected by several agencies including the Orange County Fire Authority, State Board of Corrections, state and local health inspectors and representatives of various other oversight agencies. The 2007-2008 Grand Jury inspected all of the County juvenile facilities using the guidelines of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for juvenile halls and camps.

REASON FOR THE INSPECTION

The California Penal Code § 925 provides that “the Grand Jury **shall** investigate and report on the operations, accounts, and records of the ... departments, or functions of the County.... The investigations may be conducted on some selective basis each year....” Acting within this authority, the 2007-2008 Grand Jury conducted an inspection of the juvenile facilities within Orange County to determine if juvenile wards were being offered educational and vocational opportunities, job training, substance abuse counseling, and emotional and mental health care counseling. The Grand Jury also wanted to learn about the physical condition of the juvenile facilities and whether the probation department staff was providing effective counseling and supervision for their juvenile wards.

METHOD OF INSPECTION

Members of the Grand Jury’s Juvenile Justice Committee visited all six of Orange County’s juvenile facilities and interviewed various staff members on site. Some of these were:

- Probation Officers
- Counselors
- School Teachers
- Nurses and medical personnel
- Food and beverage workers
- Maintenance crews
- Wards of the court at each facility

The March 2008 report issued by the Corrections Standards Authority was also reviewed.

BACKGROUND AND FACTS

The goals of the Probation Department are to protect “the community by conducting investigations for the Court, enforcing court orders, assisting victims, and facilitating the re-socialization of offenders.” Through the Probation Department, criminal offenders are held accountable for their crimes by making restitution to their victims and reparation to the community. When offenders leave the probation system, they should be more capable of living productively and being responsible in the community. The Probation Department attempts to help offenders to address the problems that led to their illegal activity and provide the tools to allow them to become law-abiding and productive members of the community.¹

Juvenile offenders who are placed on probation and released conditionally back into their respective communities are monitored by probation officers to ensure compliance with court-ordered terms and expectations. The offender is given an opportunity to redirect his/her life through re-socialization and to make restitution to any victims.

Re-socialization for juvenile offenders means that their root problems must be identified and then matched to the right treatment program. To accomplish this goal, the Probation Department has adopted what it calls “The Balanced Approach” for community protection that equally addresses offender accountability, offender competency and community security.²

The Orange County Probation Department operates six juvenile correction institutions in the County that have a combined capacity of 955 beds, along with a Juvenile Court Work Program. The facilities serve dual functions:

- preparing incarcerated juveniles for a successful and productive return to the society
- protecting the community by providing highly structured and supervised residential settings

Juvenile facilities are well monitored by the State and County as evidenced by the required³ biennial inspections of all juvenile facilities conducted by the California Corrections Standard Authority, a division of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Additionally, building, fire, health and education inspections are also conducted annually or biennially. The Juvenile Justice Commission of Orange County conducted an inspection of all facilities between June 21, 2006 and June 26, 2007 as did Juvenile Court members between June 19, 2006 and May 29, 2007.

¹ Orange County Probation Department, 2007 Business Plan

² Orange County Probation Department, 2007 Executive Summary

³ California Penal Code Sections 209 & 885.

Juvenile Facilities⁴

Juvenile Hall

Orange County Juvenile Hall, located in the City of Orange at the Betty Lou Lamoreaux Justice Center, is a 434-bed institution for juvenile law violators. It houses boys and girls, between the ages of 12 and 18, who are detained pending Juvenile Court hearings or who remain in custody by order of the Juvenile Court.

Orange County Health Care Agency nurses and dentists provide care on site. Psychiatrists and psychologists, also from the Health Care Agency, evaluate and assist minors who exhibit emotional or psychological problems. Minors participate daily in outdoor sports and other recreation. Religious services and studies are available upon request. Representatives from the Corrections Standards Authority, Juvenile Court, and the Juvenile Justice Commission monitor the conditions and care of the youths at Juvenile Hall.

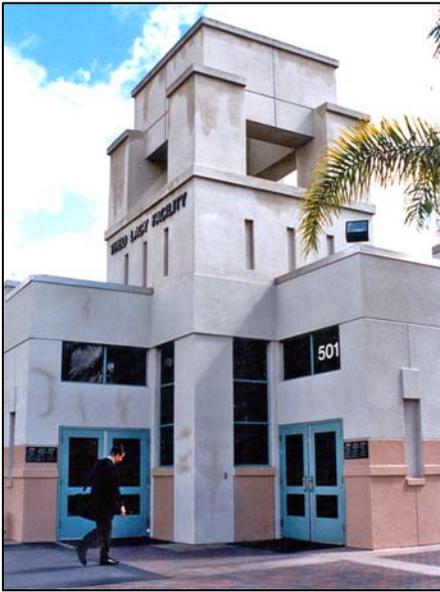


The Orange County Department of Education provides a fully accredited program at Juvenile Hall. Educational opportunities are offered in a centralized school setting at the Otto Fischer School, which is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

The older portions of this facility were constructed in 1956 and 1963, while newer units were constructed in 1992, 1997 and 2001. Corrections Standards Authority inspectors were generally praiseworthy of the facility, but did note that most of the older rooms lack toilet facilities. They also noted “deterioration and massive wear and tear” of the facility, but gave credit to the Orange County Probation Department for their “outstanding job” in maintaining the buildings and grounds, “in an attempt to provide exemplary services to the minors in their care.”

⁴ Many of the descriptions of the juvenile facilities were taken directly or in part from the Probation Department’s brochures on each location.

Lacy Juvenile Annex



Lacy Juvenile Annex in the City of Orange, near the Betty Lou Lamoreaux Justice Center, houses up to 56 older teenage boys serving Juvenile Court commitments. This section of the Theo Lacy Branch Jail houses the Extreme Security Risk Unit that is made up of minors who have been charged with the most serious offenses (murder, attempted murder, rape and robbery). The young men housed in this facility are separated from the rest of the juvenile population due to the serious nature of their crimes and the need for enhanced security.

Youths in the Lacy Juvenile Annex are separated from the adult inmate population and are carefully monitored to be free from all adult inmate contact. Adult inmates are always

removed from hallways, common areas and recreation areas when juveniles are present. The average length of stay of a minor at Lacy Juvenile Annex is 116 days. Some may be transferred directly to a state prison. These young men can participate in an educational program, including college courses, aimed to fit their particular needs. The juveniles are supervised by Deputy Juvenile Correction Officers.

Youth Leadership Academy



The Youth Leadership Academy is a 120-bed treatment facility located in the City of Orange at the Betty Lou Lamoreaux Justice Center. This facility provides a comprehensive residential program designed to enhance competency and socialization through remedial education, rehabilitative

treatment programs, substance abuse programs, mental health services and community outreach opportunities.

There are two living units, each with a distinct program. Unit 1 focuses on building living skills that older boys (ages 17.5 – 19) will need as they transition to life as an adult. Programs are designed to enhance communication and interview skills, and residents are given the opportunity to attend school and seek employment outside the facility. Unit 2 focuses on the needs of those offenders who have been less successful in open camp settings. Some of these offenders have been identified as having serious mental health issues. The Orange County Probation Department received a grant from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to meet the needs of these offenders. The program offers rehabilitation services and intensive individual and family therapy. Rehabilitation programs include:

- anger management
- drug and alcohol awareness
- victim awareness
- character and values education and development
- social skills training
- gang intervention.

Youth Guidance Center

The Orange County Youth Guidance Center (YGC) is a 125-bed facility centrally located in Santa Ana to meet the commitment needs of the Juvenile Court, which offers Substance Abuse rehabilitation for minors ranging from 11 to 18 years of age. YGC offers unique programs aimed at drug and alcohol abusers which focus on the wide-ranging needs of juvenile offenders. All minors are required to participate in an academic program at the institution's Rio Contiguo High School. Work experience is an integral part of life at YGC. Both boys and girls perform basic housekeeping, assist with the laundry and building and grounds maintenance, and take part in the culinary arts program. Restorative Justice is also part of the program at YGC. Minors give back to the community through community service and volunteer work.



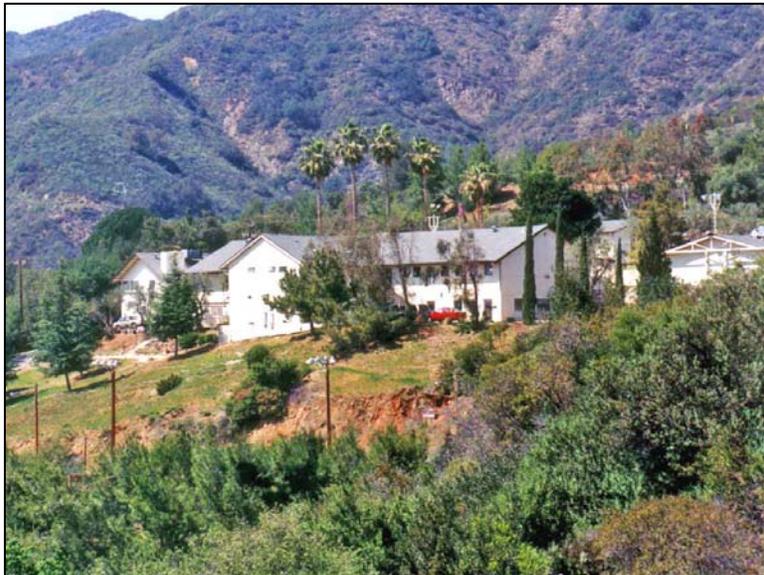
Three special programs are offered at this center. The Breakthrough Therapeutic Community program, housed in one of the male dorms, is a voluntary confrontational program to combat drug and alcohol abuse. During the course of the program, juvenile wards interact with mentors and peers during group process and

house meetings. Physical fitness is a key element to the program. Upon completion of the program, there is aftercare for six months for the participants.

The A.S.E.R.T. (Addiction, Substance Abuse, Education, Recognition and Treatment) program is housed in three male dorms. This non-voluntary program uses a cognitive behavioral treatment curriculum. It emphasizes social awareness including anger management, simulated parenting and vocational programs.

The S.T.E.P. (Sobriety through Education and Prevention) program, located in a female dorm, is supported by three therapists who provide therapy, treatment and counseling for female wards. It emphasizes life skills such as anger management, relapse prevention, “Baby Think it Over” experience (utilizing a computerized baby doll to simulate parenting) and sexual assault/victimization recovery.

Joplin Youth Center



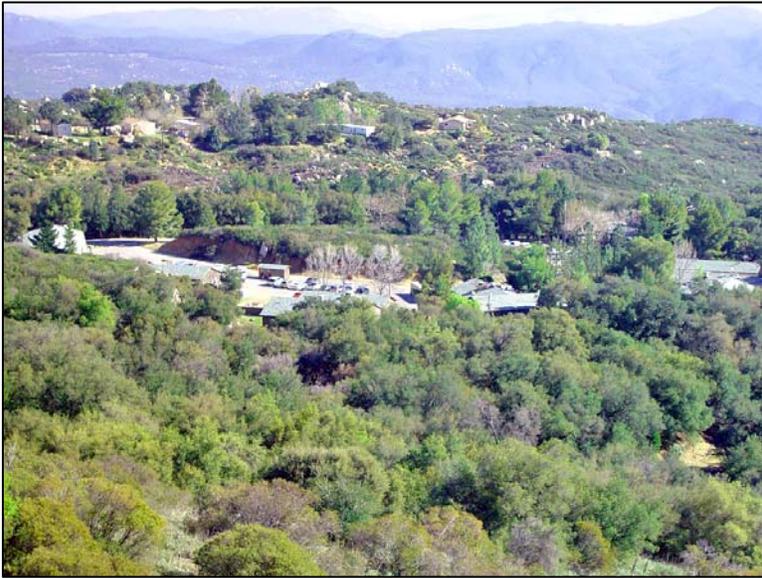
The Joplin Youth Center is a residential treatment facility for boys ages 13 to 15 located in the foothills of the Santa Ana Mountains in Trabuco Canyon. Originally established in 1956 as the Joplin Boys Ranch, it has a maximum capacity of 64. These boys typically have 30 to 90 days remaining on their Juvenile Court

commitments. Youths assist in maintaining the site by providing kitchen, laundry and custodial services. They attend regular school days consisting of five 55-minute classes with individualized courses of instruction. Rehabilitation along with academics is stressed at Joplin. The goal of this program is to help these young men avoid future law violations, gain self-esteem and be productive citizens.

Several of the programs offered at Joplin are outstanding examples of the efforts being made in Orange County to provide vocational training and social awareness to youthful offenders. Education is a high priority for this institution, with programs and incentives to encourage scholastic performance, such as honor roll placement, “student of the week” status, and open house where parents and guardians are informed about their child’s educational experiences. A culinary arts program is also offered where the minor is in charge of planning and preparing an entire meal for the camp as part of the requirement for graduation. In the Angels of Love program, the minors create stained glass angels and later present them to patients in local hospitals.

The project M.O.V.E (Mobility Opportunities Via Education) program is perhaps one of the most rewarding for the minors, with a long waiting list for those who wish to participate. The Joplin students assist severely handicapped children who have multiple physical and mental disabilities. Twice a week for six hours, they visit and work with the children, many of whom are unable to walk, stand or sit without assistance. They help feed and assist these children in their daily schedules. Occasionally, they are able to offer the children outdoor activities, including swimming. The Joplin students derive a great sense of accomplishment, understanding and self-worth from this activity.

Los Piños Conservation Camp



The Los Piños Conservation Camp, established in 1971 on a former Jobs Corps site, is a 156-bed facility. It is situated at a 3,100 feet elevation within 37 acres of the Cleveland National Forest, two miles off Ortega Highway in Lake Elsinore. Boys, 16 years and older, and girls, 14 to 18 years of age, are

housed here. These young men and women participate in a variety of vocational programs through the Regional Occupational Program, learning landscaping, forestry, computer technology, auto repair, painting, construction and custodial maintenance. Also, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, and as a part of their vocational training, these wards work in crews to clear brush in the surrounding forest, clean and maintain local campsites, and construct and maintain trails.

Los Piños High School is an accredited high school with a goal to have its minors graduate from their traditional high school. General Education Development is offered in Spanish, French and English. Classes are offered in life skills, career training, job preparation, parenting skills, and drug and alcohol abuse. Community service at the camp or off the grounds is a requirement for high school graduation at camp.

Juvenile Court Work Program

In lieu of serving an institutional commitment in Juvenile Hall or juvenile camp, young men and women in the Juvenile Court Work Program literally work off their debt to society on weekends. Typically, a juvenile will serve 20 eight-hour days (10 weekends) on a work crew. The program is well structured and the work is tough. It is not an “easy out” for delinquent behavior. Juveniles who fail to complete the Work Program are returned to Juvenile Court and generally serve a commitment in a juvenile institution.

CONCLUSION and OBSERVATIONS

After a complete inspection of all of the Juvenile Detention Facilities in Orange County, the Grand Jury observed the following:

- All of the juvenile detention facilities were found to be well maintained and the grounds were kept well manicured.
- The management and staff appeared to perform their duties and responsibilities in a diligent manner. The staff at these facilities appears to be well trained and efficient in communicating day-to-day assignments and duties to the wards.
- There was good communication between staff members and among all personnel at the juvenile facilities with communication between staff and management open and frequent. The disciplinary rules and grievance procedures for juvenile wards were posted, as required by law, throughout all of the facilities.
- Many educational and public service programs were offered.

The Grand Jury also observed construction at Los Piños and learned that this facility is in the fourth year of a ten-year renovation plan. Major remodeling of the kitchen and dining room was underway. The gym was being temporarily used as a food service area during the remodel, which is scheduled to be completed by October 2008. Plans for the remodeling of two dormitories are in the planning stage. The girls’ classrooms have been upgraded and refurbished. The restrooms in all classrooms will also be renovated.

FINDINGS

In accordance with California Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, each finding will be responded to by the government entity to which it is addressed. The responses are to be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court. The 2007-2008 Orange County Grand Jury has arrived at the following findings:

- F-1 Los Piños Conservation Camp is in the fourth year of a ten-year plan to refurbish and upgrade the facility with some projects completed, some projects in progress, and other projects in the planning stages.**
- F-2 Some of the older rooms at Juvenile Hall do not have toilets.**

Responses to Findings F-1 through F-2 are requested from the Chief Probation Officer of the Orange County Probation Department.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with California Penal Code sections 933 and 933.05, each recommendation will be responded to by the government entity to which it is addressed. The responses are to be submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court. Based on the findings of this report, the 2007-2008 Orange County Grand Jury makes the following recommendations:

- R-1 Complete the ten-year plan to refurbish and upgrade the facilities at Los Piños Conservation Camp.**
- R-2 Authorize a study of the facilities at Juvenile Hall to determine if portions of the older living quarters without toilets should be remodeled or replaced.**

Responses to recommendations R-1 through R-2 are requested from the Chief Probation Officer of the Orange County Probation Department.

REQUIRED RESPONSES:

The California Penal Code specifies the required permissible responses to the findings and recommendations contained in this report. The specific sections are quoted below:

§933.05

(a) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury finding, the responding person or entity shall indicate one of the following:

- (1) The respondent agrees with the finding.
- (2) The respondent disagrees wholly or partially with the finding, in which case the response shall specify the portion of the finding that is disputed and shall include an explanation of the reasons therefore.

(b) For purposes of subdivision (b) of Section 933, as to each grand jury recommendation, the responding person or entity shall report one of the following actions:

- (1) The recommendation has been implemented, with a summary regarding the implemented action.
- (2) The recommendation has not yet been implemented, but will be implemented in the future, with a timeframe for implementation.
- (3) The recommendation requires further analysis, with an explanation and the scope and parameters of an analysis or study, and a timeframe for the matter to be prepared for discussion by the officer or head of the agency or department being investigated or reviewed, including the governing body of the public agency when applicable. This timeframe shall not exceed six months from the date of publication of the grand jury report.
- (4) The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not warranted or is not reasonable, with an explanation therefore.