

1985-86 Grand Jury

JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMITTEE

Overview

The Juvenile Justice Committee, a branch of the Criminal Justice Committee, has undertaken to follow through on the considerable groundwork performed by the 1984-85 Child Abuse Committee. Not only has the present committee determined the extent to which previous recommendations have been implemented, it has concerned itself with possible continued use of the VisionQuest program for young offenders and has investigated the method of making restitution payments to victims.

Interviews were conducted at Alameda County Probation Department, Juvenile Hall, Chabot Boys' Ranch, Los Cerros, Snedigar Cottage and Central Collection Agency Offices.

Also interviewed was personnel from Children's Protective Services, Children's Placement Services (foster home recruitment/licensing), Commission for Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency, Committee for Children's Interests and Western Regional and Local Directors of VisionQuest.

RECOMMENDATION 5: That the Board of Supervisors consider it of paramount importance to undertake an immediate program of rehabilitation of Snedigar Cottage, inside and out.

Findings

Children entering Snedigar Cottage are there for protection from damaging or threatening circumstances over which they have no control. Such upheaval cannot help but be intensified upon placement in this drab, poorly maintained, shabbily furnished facility where the aim is to provide a pleasant atmosphere to help ease the trauma.

We of the Juvenile Justice Committee of Alameda County Grand Jury recognize many of these wards come from surroundings less than desirable. The County is

not obligated to provide them a Utopian environment. However, it has a moral obligation to maintain a haven of cleanliness and repair in which some healing process can occur.

While we realize Snedigar's proximity to Juvenile Hall is not desirable, it could be given a feeling of isolation by proper landscaping. A more cheerful interior could be achieved by colorful decorating and upgraded furnishings.

Justification

The committee feels the staff of Snedigar also would respond beneficially to a more cheerful atmosphere and wishes to commend it for its excellent performance of duty conducted in surroundings dictated by limited resources.

We believe such revitalization and maintenance of Snedigar Cottage will encourage more public approval and support, and will become a facility which board members can look upon with pride and satisfaction.

Conclusion

CHILD ABUSE

Much of the territory regarding Child Abuse was well-covered in the previous year and the present committee finds it unnecessary to make additional recommendations. It would like to stress however, that while adequate legislation has been enacted, teachers, doctors, nurses and other authorities continue to be alert for possible instances of child abuse and that these professionals should report such suspicions immediately to local authorities.

VISIONQUEST

This Grand Jury reiterates last year's Grand Jury recommendation that Juvenile Judges continue to send qualified youngsters to VisionQuest as a desirable alternative to California Youth Authority.

WORK FURLOUGH PROGRAMS

Work Furlough Facility - Male

2425 E. 12th Street, Oakland

The facility is in general compliance with state standards. Nutrition meets state standards.

The Work Furlough program is administrated very well and functions smoothly.

The waiting list for in-custody and out-of-custody persons awaiting assignment to the Work Furlough facilities averages approximately 35 in-custody and 135 out-of-custody applicants.

There is a clear need to expand the program now as the backlog will increase in the future and create a problem at Santa Rita in over-crowding.

Word Furlough Facility - Female

3408 Andover Street, Oakland

This facility is in general compliance with state standards. The program is well administered and functions smoothly. Kitchen facilities are adequate but oven should be replaced.

ALAMEDA COUNTY JUVENILE DETENTION FACILITIES

Juvenile Hall, San Leandro

This facility is in compliance with policy and procedural standards. Food meets state nutritional standards. Facility is clean and well-maintained. Programs well-managed and staff adequately trained.

Chabot Boys

Facility is in compliance with policy and procedural standards. Food meets state nutritional standards but committee received a number of complaints that food is lukewarm or cold at time of service. Committee noted this to be true at time of its visit. Internal security good but problem exists in that road to facility is open to public and allows access to grounds by unauthorized persons.

Los Cerros - Boys

Facility clean, well-maintained, and in compliance with state policy and procedural standards. Programs well-managed and staff adequately trained. Food meets nutritional standards. Dining hall is overcrowded during meal periods. Internal security adequate but open roadway to facility presents external security problems allowing access from outside onto grounds.

Chabot Girls

Facility clean, adequately maintained, program well-managed, in compliance with policy and procedural standards; food meets nutritional requirements.

400 Broadway

The facility is in general compliance with state standards. Food meets nutritional standards. Security system recently surveyed by Alameda County Sheriff's Office. (See report for security recommendations. Requested 9-12-85 by Probation Department.)

RECOMMENDATION 29: That the Board of Supervisors fully support the request of the Sheriff's Department to expand the Work Furlough Facility. The 1983-84 and 1984-85 Grand Juries made similar recommendations.