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AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

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April 13, 2005

TO: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley   
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – TEEN'S HAPPY  
HOME GROUP HOME**

We have completed a review of Teen's Happy Home Group Home (Group Home or Agency) operated by Teen's Happy Home, Inc. The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Teen's Happy Home Group Home is a six-bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 13-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Teen's Happy Home Group Home was providing services for six Los Angeles County DCFS children. Teen's Happy Home Group Home is located in the Second District.

**Scope of Review**

The purpose of the review was to determine whether the Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covered basic child safety and licensing issues, and included an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection, and interviews with two children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with the residents were designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency, and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*

**Summary of Findings**

Generally, the Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. However, the Agency needs to develop Needs and Services Plans (NSP) that are specific and measurable; develop comprehensive quarterly reports that focus on the goals of the NSP; maintain a current copy of each resident's progress report and/or report card; provide residents with a sufficient amount of daily educational stimulation away from school; ensure residents participation in emancipation and vocational programs; provide residents with the opportunity to have private, personal telephone calls; and ensure that residents' rights to medical care is respected.

Attached is a detailed report of the review findings.

**Review of Report**

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. The Agency's management is required to provide a corrective action plan to the Children's Group Home Ombudsman within 15 business days from the receipt of this report. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact Mike Pirolo at (626) 293-1110.

JTM:MP:CC:jdh

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer  
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS  
Paul Higa, Acting Chief Probation Officer  
Beautina Robinson, Executive Director, Teen's Happy Home Group Home  
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer  
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**Teen's Happy Home Group Home  
3936 Dalton Avenue  
Los Angeles, Ca 90062  
Phone: (323) 734-0302  
License No.: 198203038  
Rate Classification Level: 7**

## **I. Facility and Environment**

*(Facility Based - No Sample)*

**Method of assessment – Observation**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Two**

### **Comments:**

The Teen's Happy Home Group Home (Group Home or Agency) is located in a residential community. The Group Home is clean, spacious, and comfortable. The Group Home is well maintained, and blends well with the other homes on the block. There were no observable safety hazards.

The interior of the Group Home is generally neat and clean. The décor provides a home-like atmosphere. The common rooms are nicely decorated and maintained. The resident bedrooms are spacious, comfortable, and personalized to each child's desire with posters, pictures, and knick-knacks.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a VCR. There are books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs.

There is a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit. The food is accessible, appropriately dated, and properly stored.

### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

## **II. Program Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Two**

**Comments:**

Residents meet the Agency's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Residents received a complete initial diagnostic assessment after being admitted into the Agency's program.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current. The NSP for one resident is realistic, measurable, and time specific. However, the goals in the NSP for the other resident are not specific and measurable. The quarterly report for this resident is not comprehensive, as it does not appropriately focus on the goals of the NSP. The other resident has not been in the Group Home long enough to require a quarterly report.

The residents are provided with psychological testing, emotional and developmental counseling as required by the Program Statement. Case files reflect adequate documentation to show evidence of residents receiving regular individual and/or group therapy.

**Recommendations**

- 1. Teen's Happy Home Group Home management:**
  - a. Develop the NSPs to include specific and measurable goals.**
  - b. Develop quarterly reports that are comprehensive and discuss the goals of the NSPs.**

**III. Educational and Emancipation Services**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Two**

**Comments:**

Residents are attending school. There was a current semester report card for one of the residents. There was no documentation of the other resident's educational progress. Residents are not provided with a sufficient amount of daily educational stimulation away from school; however, they feel that the Group Home is supportive of their academic progress.

The Agency's program includes the development of residents' daily living skills. The residents are involved in the planning and preparation phase of meals. Hygiene care is discussed as needed.

Residents are offered minimal opportunity to participate in emancipation and vocational

programs; however, the Agency does not ensure their participation. In addition, employment preparation is not sufficiently encouraged.

Residents have the opportunity to work and manage their own money.

### **Recommendations**

#### **2. Teen's Happy Home Group Home management:**

- a. Maintain copies of each resident's progress report and/or report card.**
- b. Provide residents with a sufficient amount of daily educational stimulation away from school.**
- c. Ensure residents participation in emancipation and vocational programs.**

### **IV. Recreation and Activities**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Two**

#### **Comments:**

The Agency provides its residents opportunities to participate in recreational activities. The residents expressed satisfaction with the recreational activities and stated that the recreation schedules are followed.

The Group Home utilizes local community organizations for recreational and program resources. The residents reported that they participate in planning some of the activities. Residents have free time and are able to participate in self-selected activities.

Transportation is provided to and from the activities.

### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

### **V. Psychotropic Medication**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents for two case files**

**Comments:**

Residents have current court authorization for psychotropic medication or the authorizations have been appropriately submitted to the court in a timely manner.

Documentation confirms that the prescribing psychiatrist routinely sees the children who are prescribed psychotropic medication.

Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**VI. Personal Rights**

**Method of assessment – Resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Two**

**Comments:**

Residents expressed satisfaction with the Agency and its staff. Residents participate in an initial orientation and the Group Home's policies and procedures are posted. Residents reported that they feel safe in the Group Home and that there is no interference with their daily living functions.

Residents reported satisfaction with the taste of the food and with their ability to participate in menu development. They reported that there is sufficient staff supervision and expressed satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with most staff. Residents feel there is at least one staff member they can easily talk to and trust.

Residents reported that they are assigned chores to complete on a daily basis that are reasonable and not too demanding. Residents are able to have visitors and make and receive personal telephone calls; however, their telephone calls lack privacy, as the pay phone is mounted between the living and dining/den areas. They are permitted to contact their worker, attorneys, and family members as needed. Residents are able to attend weekly religious services of their choice and feel that the Agency is respectful of their cultural lifestyles. The Agency allows the residents to celebrate holidays.

Residents reported that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

One resident's right to receive medical care was undermined due to a variety of reasons. There was a question with regard to whether the needed service was

covered; the service required a physician with special training and there was difficulty locating the appropriate specialist; and there were problems with the benefit (Medi-Cal) card, and all services were being denied. The resident did not feel that appropriate advocacy was provided to ensure that he received medical treatment in a timely manner.

Residents are aware of their right to refuse medication.

### **Recommendations**

#### **3. Teen's Happy Home Group Home management:**

- a. **Provide residents with opportunities to have private telephone calls with their friends and family.**
- b. **Provide appropriate advocacy necessary to ensure that residents are provided with appropriate medical care and treatment in a timely manner.**

### **VII. Clothing and Allowance**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Two**

#### **Comments:**

The Agency provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. The Group Home supplies its residents with the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance and the residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to residents is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Agency provides residents with the required minimum base allowance, which they are able to increase according to the Agency's behavioral system. Residents are permitted to spend their allowances as they choose.

The Agency provides residents with adequate personal care items and adequate storage.

Residents are provided with regular opportunities to maintain photo albums/life books.

### **Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**