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AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
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April 25, 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 – TRINITY
WHITEWATER GROUP HOME**

We have completed a review of Trinity Whitewater Group Home (Group Home or Agency). The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Trinity Whitewater Group Home is a 120-bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 12-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Trinity Whitewater Group Home was providing services for 64 Los Angeles County Probation children, five Alameda County children, nine San Diego County children, three Sacramento County children, two San Luis Obispo children, one Tulare County child, and one San Joaquin County child. Trinity Whitewater Group Home is located in Riverside County.

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, facility inspections, and interviews with six 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

The Agency was providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. The Agency needs to develop Needs and Services Plans with realistic and measurable goals, and comprehensive quarterly reports for each resident.

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 Probation Department within 20 days from the date 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:cr

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
Paul Higa, Chief Probation Officer
Jeff Bierlein, Facility Director, Trinity White Water
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**Trinity Whitewater
55860 Verbenia Avenue
Whitewater, CA 92282
Phone: (760) 325-1387
License No.: 330900909
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Trinity Whitewater is located in a remote residential community. The Group Home is clean, spacious, and comfortable. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained, nicely landscaped, and blends well with the residential community. 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/DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

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: Six

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) for two of the residents did not have realistic or measurable goals. There is documentation to support the placement workers' participation in the development and update of the NSPs.

Quarterly Reports for two of the residents were not comprehensive.

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. Trinity Whitewater management:**

- a. **Develop Needs and Services Plans for each resident to include realistic and measurable goals.**
- b. **Develop comprehensive Quarterly Reports for each resident.**

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Six

Comments:

Residents are attending school. Their records contain current semester report cards and/or progress reports. Residents reported that they are provided with a sufficient amount of daily educational stimulation away from school and feel that the Group Home is supportive of their academic progress.

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

Residents are offered the opportunity to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Six

Comments:

The Agency provides its residents opportunities to participate in recreational activities. 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. 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 14 case files

Comments:

Residents have current court authorizations for psychotropic medications. Documentation confirms that the children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

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: Six

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 the staff.

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. They are permitted to contact their placement workers, 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 different holidays.

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

Residents are aware of their right to refuse medication.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Six

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 residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to residents is of good quality and sufficient quantity.

The Agency provides residents with the required minimum weekly 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.