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DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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February 19, 2004

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

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – DRICE HOUSE,
INC., CHILDREN’S GROUP HOMES: DRICE HOUSE AND PEANUTS
GROUP HOME FACILITIES**

We have completed a review of the two group homes operated by the Drice House, Inc., Children’s Group Homes: Drice House and Peanuts Group Home. Each home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Drice House is a six-bed facility located in the Second Supervisorial District, which provides care for boys ages 7-14 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Drice House was providing services for four Los Angeles County DCFS children.

Peanuts Group Home is a six-bed facility located in the Second Supervisorial District, which provides care for boys ages 13–18 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Peanuts was providing services for six DCFS children.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review was to verify that the two agencies were providing the services outlined in their Program Statements. Additionally, the reviews covered basic child safety and licensing issues and included an evaluation of each home’s Program Statements, internal policies and procedures, child case records, facility inspections, and interviews with two children placed in each home at the time of the reviews. Interviews with the residents were designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by each facility, and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

“To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service”

Summary of Findings

Generally, Drice House and Peanuts were providing the services outlined in their Program Statements. However, each home needs to make several repairs to their facilities; develop comprehensive Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports; create activity schedules that specifically state the types of planned activities as required by the Statement of Work; and offer each resident a life book. In addition, Peanuts needs to maintain current court authorizations for psychotropic medications.

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 has agreed to provide DCFS with a corrective action plan within 15 business days from the receipt of this report. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our reviews.

If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact DeWitt Roberts at (626) 293-1101.

JTM:DR:CC

- c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
- David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
- Richard Shumsky, Chief Probation Officer
- Ann Drice, Ph.D., Executive Director, Drice Group Homes, Inc.
- Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
- Public Information Office
- Audit Committee

DRICE HOUSE, INC.
Drice House
3507 West 58th Place
Los Angeles, CA 90043
Phone: (323) 293-5582
License No.: 191801569
Rate Classification Level: 8

I. FACILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Drice House is one of two facilities operated by Drice House, Inc. Located on a residential street, the facility was well maintained and blended in with other homes on the block.

The interior of the home was neat and clean. The den area was nicely decorated, well furnished, and offered a comfortable place for studying and socializing. The bedrooms were attractive, nicely furnished, and personalized by the residents. However, there were areas needing improvement.

In bedroom number one, the finish on the night stand drawers, a desk, and dresser, was chipped and the corners broken. Also, one of the plastic toy holders was cracked.

The bathtub in the resident bathroom was separated from the tile and a temporary rubber strip placed around the tub did not prevent water from leaking into the cavity housing the bathtub. In addition, the frame around the bathroom mirror cabinet door and the wall next to the cabinet were dirty and needed cleaning.

Drice House had a TV, VCR, video games, various learning aids, books, a globe, a wall map, workbooks, dictionaries, pictorial encyclopedias, and a computer. There was sufficient outdoor recreational equipment including two bikes, a foosball table, ping-pong, punching bag, basketball hoop, balls, and a climbing gym/slide set.

There was a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit, properly stored.

Recommendations

- 1. Drice House management:**
 - a. Repair the furniture in bedroom number one.**
 - b. Replace the cracked toy holder in bedroom number one.**
 - c. Repair the bathtub area in the resident bathroom.**
 - d. Clean the wall and the frame around the mirrored cabinet door in the resident bathroom.**

II. PROGRAM SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Both residents met Drice House’s population criteria as outlined in their program statement. One resident received an initial diagnostic assessment and the other resident had been in the facility less than 30 days.

The applicable resident’s Needs and Services Plan (NSP) was completed in a timely manner but did not note the needs of the resident or have measurable objectives. The resident and his authorized representative participated in the development and modification of the NSP. The resident’s Quarterly Report was not comprehensive or focused on the goals in the NSP. The other resident did not require a NSP or Quarterly Report at the time of the review.

Both residents received individual and group therapy. In addition, a behavior modification program provided monetary rewards for good behavior.

Recommendations

- 2. Drice House management:**
 - a. Develop Needs and Services Plans that are specific and measurable.**
 - b. Develop comprehensive Quarterly Reports that address goals in each resident’s Needs and Services Plan.**

III. EDUCATIONAL AND EMANCIPATION SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

One resident attended the local public elementary school and the other resident was in the process of being enrolled in school. Both residents required and had Individualized Education Plans. In addition, the applicable resident had a current report card on file. Both residents received daily cognitive stimulation and were provided with tutorial services twice a week.

The residents were not old enough to participate in emancipation, independent living, or vocational training courses, but were taught activities of daily living appropriate for their age group. The residents did not work and were able to spend their allowances as they wanted.

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: Two

Comments:

The residents participated in appropriate and adequate on-ground and off-ground recreational activities. The residents expressed satisfaction with the variety of activities, which included going to the movies, McDonalds, Challenger’s Boys Club, YMCA, and the park.

Local community organizations were utilized for recreation and program resources. However, the activity schedule was very general and did not note specifically planned recreational activities as required by the Statement of Work.

The residents had free time to use as they wanted and transportation was provided to and from activities.

Recommendation

- 3. Drice House management develop activity schedules that specifically state the types of planned activities.**

V. PSYCHOTROPIC/OTHER MEDICATION

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents.

There were four residents placed at Drice House at the time of the review. A review of case files was conducted for the three residents prescribed psychotropic medications.

Comments:

The resident receiving psychotropic medications had current court authorizations on file. Documentation confirmed that the residents were routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist for an evaluation of their medication.

Medication logs were 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:

The residents were informed of the facility's rules and regulations. The residents understood the point system and felt that the rewards for good behavior and consequences for inappropriate behavior were appropriate.

The residents were provided with appropriate supervision and indicated that they felt safe in the home. The residents reported that they had a good relationship with the staff and believed that staff was concerned about them. The residents felt that their ethnic and cultural backgrounds were respected. The residents had minimal chores that they did not feel were too demanding.

The residents were free from interference to engage in activities of daily living inclusive of getting water and snacks. Drice House participated in a State sponsored meal

service that provided menus. The residents reported an overall satisfaction with the facility and the food.

Visits and phone calls were permitted with sufficient privacy and residents were able to have telephone contact with their authorized representatives. The residents had religious freedom, their health care needs were met, and they were 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: Two

Comments:

The clothing for one resident was of adequate quality and quantity. The other resident was recently placed at the facility with only one pair of pants. According to management, they will address the resident’s clothing deficiency once he is enrolled in school (in case school uniforms also have to be purchased). The facility maintained a record of clothing expenditures and supplied each resident with the required monthly clothing allowance in the amount of fifty dollars. Residents were allowed to choose their own clothes with the assistance of staff.

The residents received at least the required weekly minimum allowance which they were able to increase based on the Agency’s behavioral system.

Drice House provided residents with adequate personal care items and sufficient, secure space to store their personal items.

One resident did not have a life book.

Recommendations

- 4. Drice House management offer each resident a life book.**

**DRICE HOUSE, INC.
Peanuts Group Home
1100 West 40th Place
Los Angeles, CA 90037
Phone: (323) 296-2798
License No.: 191801729
Rate Classification Level: 8**

I. FACILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Peanuts is one of two facilities operated by Drice House, Inc. Located on a residential street, the exterior of the two-story house was marginally maintained but blended in with other homes on the block.

The interior of the home was generally neat and clean with nicely furnished and comfortable common rooms. The bedrooms were spacious, neat, and personalized by the residents. However, there were areas needing improvement.

The large couch in the den area was worn with flat pillows. The floor tile in the residents' upstairs bathroom was worn and permanently stained, giving the bathroom a dingy appearance. The regular sized twin beds were too small for the two teen-aged residents interviewed. In addition, the beds did not have a full complement of linens (mattress pad, bottom sheet, top sheet, and blanket) and most of the bed pillows were flat and worn.

Peanuts had a TV, video games, board games, various learning aids including an encyclopedia computer program, books, a wall map, two computers, and a printer. There was sufficient outdoor recreational equipment including a pool table, basketball, and bikes.

There was a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit, properly stored.

Recommendations

- 1. Peanuts management:**
 - a. Replace the couch in the den area.**

- b. Replace the floor tile in the residents' bathroom.**
- c. Provide appropriate-sized beds for the teen-aged residents.**
- d. Replace flat bed pillows as needed and provide each resident's bed with a full complement of linens.**

II. PROGRAM SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Both residents met Peanuts' population criteria as outlined in their program statement and they received an initial diagnostic assessment.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) were completed in a timely manner, but were not specific and measurable. Each resident and their authorized representative participated in the development and modification of the NSPs.

The residents' Quarterly Reports were not comprehensive or focused on the goals of the NSPs.

Both residents received individual and group therapy. In addition, a behavior modification program provided monetary rewards for good behavior.

Recommendations

2. Peanuts management:

- a. Develop Needs and Services Plans that are specific and measurable.**
- b. Develop comprehensive Quarterly Reports that address goals in each resident's Needs and Services Plan.**

III. EDUCATIONAL AND EMANCIPATION SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

One resident attended a local public high school. His file contained an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) and progress/report cards. The other resident attended an alternative education program through Los Angeles Unified School District's adult school program which did not require an IEP. Both residents received daily cognitive stimulation and were provided with tutorial services twice a week.

Development of daily living, survival, and emancipation skills was part of Peanuts' program. The residents were expected to maintain good personal hygiene, keep their rooms clean, and do their laundry. The Department of Children and Family Services provided residents with various courses that focus on emancipation and independent living. In addition, there were vocational training resources for those residents interested in obtaining a job.

The residents did not work and were able to spend their allowances as they wanted.

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: Two

Comments:

The residents expressed satisfaction with the variety of activities available at the facility including renting movies, playing pool, video games, and riding bikes. Local community organizations were utilized for recreation and program resources. However, the residents stated that they did not routinely participate in off-grounds activities. This was disputed by management who stated that the residents go on activities each weekend. Management did admit that there had been some difficulty getting a driver for some of the events but that had not stopped the outings from occurring.

The activity schedule was general and did not note specifically planned recreational activities as required by the Statement of Work. The residents had free time to use as they wished and were able to participate in self-selected activities.

Transportation was provided to and from activities.

Recommendation

- 3. Peanuts management develop activity schedules that specifically state the types of planned activities.**

V. PSYCHOTROPIC/OTHER MEDICATION

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

There were six residents placed in Peanuts at the time of the review. A review of the one case file was conducted for the resident prescribed psychotropic medication.

Comments:

The resident receiving psychotropic medication did not have a current court authorization on file. Documentation confirmed that the resident was routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist for an evaluation of medication.

The medication distribution logs were properly maintained.

Recommendation

- 4. Peanuts management maintain current court authorizations for psychotropic medications.**

VI. PERSONAL RIGHTS

Method of assessment – Resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents were informed of the policies, procedures, rules, and regulations at the facility. The residents understood the point system and felt that the rewards for good behavior and consequences for inappropriate behavior were appropriate.

The residents reported that a sufficient number of staff was always in the home when the residents were present. They felt safe in the home and indicated that staff treated them well. The residents stated that staff was culturally sensitive to their background and ethnicity. The residents were appropriately free of interference with daily functions inclusive of getting water and snacks. Peanuts participated in a state sponsored meal services that provided menus. The residents reported an overall satisfaction with the facility and the food.

Resident chores included the maintenance of their own rooms which they did not feel were too demanding.

Visits and phone calls were permitted with sufficient privacy and residents were able to have telephone contact with their authorized representatives. The residents had religious freedom, their health care needs were met, and they were 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: Two

Comments:

Peanuts provided appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. Peanuts supplied its residents with the required monthly clothing allowance in the amount of fifty dollars, and the residents were given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to the residents was of good quality and sufficient quantity.

The residents received at least the required minimum weekly allowance that they were able to increase based on the Agency's behavioral system.

Peanuts provided residents with adequate personal care items and sufficient, secure space to store their personal items.

One resident did not have a life book.

Recommendation

- 5. Peanuts management offer each resident a life book.**