



**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION  
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 525  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-2766  
PHONE: (213) 974-8301 FAX: (213) 626-5427

J. TYLER McCAULEY  
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

March 4, 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 - TRINITY  
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES, TRINITY-WHITewater**

We have completed a review of Trinity Children and Family Services' Whitewater site. Trinity-Whitewater contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation). Trinity-Whitewater is a 120-bed residential facility located in Riverside County that provides care for boys ages 13-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Trinity-Whitewater was providing services for 85 Los Angeles County Probation children; 11 children from Riverside County Probation; eight children from San Diego County Probation; four children from Alameda County Probation; three children from Santa Barbara County Probation; two children from San Mateo County Probation; and one child each from San Francisco, San Joaquin, and Santa Clara County Probation.

**Scope of Review**

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

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

**Summary of Findings**

The review disclosed that Trinity-Whitewater was not in full compliance with the contract requirements. The following is a summary of areas requiring improvement. Trinity-Whitewater needs to:

- make substantial repairs to its facility;
- maintain current Needs and Services Plans for each resident;
- include the resident and the resident's placement worker in the development and updating of the Needs and Services Plan;
- provide current, comprehensive Quarterly Reports specific to each resident;
- ensure that each resident requiring an Individualized Education Plan has one;
- provide residents with sufficient educational stimulation away from school;
- maintain current court authorizations for psychotropic medications;
- inform all residents of their medication and their right to refuse medication;
- properly maintain monthly clothing logs; and
- allow residents the option of shopping in the community for their clothing needs.

Attached is a detailed report of the monitoring findings.

**Review of Report**

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. The Agency's management has agreed to provide Probation with a written corrective action plan within 15 business days from the receipt of this report. We thank Trinity-Whitewater's management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

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

JTM:DR:CC

Attachment

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer  
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS  
Richard Shumsky, Chief Probation Officer  
Jeffrey Bierlein, Director Trinity Whitewater  
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee

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

**I. FACILITY AND ENVIRONMENT**

**Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Eight**

**Comments:**

Trinity-Whitewater is a residential facility in Riverside County consisting of ten residential units (Rams, Packers, Chargers, Jets, Colts, Bears, Vikings, Dolphins, Patriots, and 49'ers), a private school, athletic fields, swimming pool, gym, weight room, game rooms, staff offices, infirmary, conference room, counseling and administrative offices, a central kitchen, and an adjoining dining room. There were also a variety of vocational training areas and maintenance facilities.

The grounds were nicely maintained with walkways, grass areas, shade trees, and foliage.

Each unit had common areas including “team” meeting rooms, and bathroom facilities. The team rooms had couches, chairs, bulletin boards, TVs, and VCRs. Each unit had board games and the school had a computer lab and books for the residents’ use.

Each bedroom housed three residents. Some of the bedrooms were plain although each resident was able to personalize their bulletin board area and personal storage box with pictures and personal property.

The interiors of the living units were generally neat and clean. However, there were some areas that needed repair.

**Vikings Unit**

In the team room, the upholstery on two of the sofas was worn and the other upholstered furniture needed cleaning.

In room 220, the chair needed cleaning, the wall paneling was marked and scratched, the ceiling and walls needed touchup painting, and the carpet was worn. In room 222, several of the dresser drawers were broken.

### **Dolphins Unit**

In the team room, upholstery on the two sofas was torn. In room 134, plaster around the doorframe needed repair, the wood paneling in the sleeping area was stained, and the bathroom had poor lighting.

In room 137, the bathroom fan was not working and, in room 138, the sofa and chair were broken.

### **Colts Unit**

The bathroom vent in room 116 was missing parts and the fan did not work. In room 118, there was a buildup of mildew around the shower/tub, the collar around the showerhead was missing, and the ceiling needed painting.

### **Bears Unit**

In room 120, the bathroom walls and ceiling needed painting. In room 122, the wall paneling was scratched and marked and, in room 123, the air vents in the bedroom and bathroom were bent.

### **49'ers Unit**

In room 213, the ceiling vent needed repair, curtains were worn and falling apart, a dresser drawer was broken, and the cabinets needed resurfacing. In the bathroom, the floor was old and worn and the ceiling needed painting.

In room 214, the curtains were torn in the bedroom, the bathroom ceiling needed painting, and the floor was old and worn. In room 215, the dresser drawers needed repair and the bathroom fan did not work.

In room 216, the bed frames and paneled walls were marked and scratched. The bathroom ceiling needed painting, and the floor was old and worn. In room 217, the carpet needed replacing, lighting was dim, and the sofa torn.

### **Packers Unit**

In room 212, the bathtub was missing a faucet spout.

### **Chargers Unit**

In room 101, the sofa was worn and torn. In room 102, the walls and wooden storage unit needed repair, and the bathroom floor was old and worn.

In room 103, the bathroom exhaust fan was not working and plaster was coming off the walls. In room 104, the curtains had holes and the bathtub was missing a faucet spout.

### **Jets Unit**

In room 110, the plaster around the entrance door needed repair. The bathroom had an odor, the plaster on the walls needed repair, and grout around the tub needed replacing.

In room 112, the curtain rods needed repair and the wood paneling was stained and scratched. In room 113, the walls and wooden storage unit needed repair and, in room 114, the wood paneling was scratched and marked. The bathroom had an odor and the floor was old and worn.

### **Rams Unit**

In room 201, the curtain rods were broken and the lighting was insufficient. In room 202, the carpet was worn and stained and the doorknob on the entry door needed repair. In the bathroom, the floor was deteriorating, patchwork behind the door was unfinished, and the wooden strip on the cabinet was chipped.

In room 203, the curtains were missing, lighting was insufficient, and both the entry and cabinet door needed repair. In room 205, the wood paneling was stained and scratched and the cabinet needed to be repaired.

### **Kitchen**

The meals were prepared daily in the main kitchen and served in the adjacent dining area. There was a sufficient supply of frozen food, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit. However, the kitchen and dining areas required some repairs. The windows needed cleaning, trashcans needed lids, the wall in the serving area needed patch work, and there was a build up of spilled food under the food-serving cart. In addition, there was debris outside the kitchen.

### **Recreational Areas**

Trinity-Whitewater's recreational areas had a large variety of recreational equipment. However, the gym had several broken windows near the ceiling, lighting in the weight room was inadequate, the weight benches were torn, and the exit door handle was broken.

In the bathroom of the main gym, the floor tile at the entrance needed repair and there was graffiti writing on the bathroom walls.

In the swimming pool area, several of the windows were heavily scratched. Outside the gym area, debris was scattered.

**On Site School**

The Vocational Education building had a worn sofa and broken cabinet stored in the hallway. The resident bathroom had a chipped toilet lid, lighting in all the classrooms was insufficient, and the classrooms were cluttered.

In classroom number three, the bookshelves had missing shelves, the walls needed painting, and the ceiling tiles were stained from water damage. In classroom number four, books, papers, and various items were stored on the floor because of insufficient storage space.

In classroom number five, ceiling tiles were badly stained from water damage, some tiles were missing, and an improperly hung poster board was falling down. The carpet in classroom number six was stained and the room smelled of mildew.

**Recommendations**

**1. Trinity-Whitewater management:**

- a. Repair/replace furniture and doors throughout the facility as needed.**
- b. Repair/replace the carpeting and flooring throughout the facility as needed.**
- c. Repair/replace/paint the walls, wood paneling, and ceiling throughout the facility as needed.**
- d. Replace the damaged curtains and rods in the identified bedrooms of the 49'ers, Chargers, Jets, Rams units.**
- e. Provide sufficient lighting throughout the facility.**
- f. Replace/repair air vents/exhaust fans in the residential units as needed.**
- g. Replace all damaged curtains and curtain rods in the residential units.**
- h. Remove mildew and replace grout around the tubs and showers in the residential bathrooms as needed.**
- i. Replace missing bathtub fixtures in the Packers and Chargers units.**

- j. Replace/clean the windows throughout the facility as needed.**
- k. Provide lids for trashcans in the dining and kitchen areas.**
- l. Clean around the food cart in the dining area.**
- m. Remove debris/broken furniture from the kitchen, gym, and school areas.**
- n. Replace benches on weight machines.**
- o. Provide adequate storage space in the classrooms.**
- p. Replace chipped toilet lid in the school bathroom.**
- q. Properly adhere poster boards to the classroom walls.**
- r. Eliminate the odor in room numbers 110 and 114 in the Jets Unit and, in classroom number six.**

## **II. PROGRAM SERVICES**

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

#### **Sample size for resident interviews: Eight**

#### **Comments:**

The residents met Trinity-Whitewater's population criteria as outlined in their program statement and they received an initial diagnostic assessment.

Seven of the residents' Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) were realistic, measurable, and time specific. One resident's case file did not have a current NSP.

The residents and their placement workers did not participate in the development and updating of the NSPs. This was discussed with management during the exit conference who had no comment.

Three of the residents did not require a Quarterly Report at the time of the review. Two of the residents' Quarterly Reports were comprehensive, timely, and focused on the goals in the NSPs. Two residents' Quarterly Reports had the exact same wording as the previous reports and one resident did not have a Quarterly Report on file.

The residents were receiving individual and group therapy.

## **Recommendations**

### **2. Trinity-Whitewater management:**

- a. Maintain current Needs and Services Plans for each resident.**
- b. Include the resident and the resident’s placement worker in the development and updating of the Needs and Services Plan.**
- c. Provide current, comprehensive Quarterly Reports specific to each resident.**

## **III. EDUCATIONAL AND EMANCIPATION SERVICES**

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

#### **Sample size for resident interviews: Eight**

#### **Comments:**

The eight residents were enrolled in Trinity-Whitewater’s non-public school and their records contained progress reports and/or semester grade cards. Five residents required and had current Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) on file. However, one resident required but did not have a current IEP. Three of the eight residents did not require IEPs.

Each resident felt that staff was supportive of their academic progress. However, three of the eight residents reported that they were not provided a sufficient amount of educational stimulation away from school on a daily basis such as tutoring. This was discussed with management who had no explanation other than to state that the on-site school was privately operated and that the group home had no authority over the educational services provided to the residents.

Development of daily living skills was part of Trinity-Whitewater’s program. The residents were involved in the maintenance of their living areas, bedrooms, and personal care.

Trinity-Whitewater had an Independent Living Program for age-appropriate residents who were offered the opportunity to participate in emancipation and vocational programs. The residents were able to spend their allowances as they wanted. One resident worked and was able to manage his money.



**Recommendations**

- 3. Trinity-Whitewater management:**
  - a. Ensure that each resident requiring an Individualized Education Plan receives one.**
  - b. Provide residents with sufficient educational stimulation away from school.**

**IV. RECREATION AND ACTIVITIES**

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

**Sample size for resident interviews: Eight**

**Comments:**

A monthly calendar of activities was developed and followed with input from the residents and staff. Residents made suggestions for activities and outings at Group Centered Leadership through the unit resident representative of Student Council, or by asking recreation and unit staff.

Residents were permitted and encouraged to participate in activities such as sports, classes, workshops, and had free time to use as they wished. Transportation was provided to and from activities as needed.

**Recommendations**

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

**V. PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents**

**There were 119 residents placed in Trinity-Whitewater at the time of the review. A review of case files was conducted for the 24 Los Angeles (LA) County residents on psychotropic medications.**

**Comments:**

Of the LA County residents receiving psychotropic medication, 11 had court authorizations that were current or had been submitted to the court for approval. Thirteen residents did not have current court authorizations on file.

Documentation confirmed that the residents were routinely seen by the psychiatrist for an evaluation of their medication.

Medication logs were properly maintained.

**Recommendation**

- 4. Trinity-Whitewater management maintain current court authorizations for all psychotropic medications.**

**VI. PERSONAL RIGHTS**

**Method of assessment – Resident interviews**

**Sample size for resident interviews: Eight**

**Comments:**

The residents were presented with the policies, rules, and regulations when arriving in placement. The residents stated that the rules were generally fair as were the consequences for not following them. They felt safe in the home, liked the staff, and were treated with respect. The residents indicated that a sufficient number of staff was always in the home when residents were present and rated the facility from “fair” to “very good.”

Resident chores included the maintenance of their own rooms and common areas. The daily upkeep and cleaning were rotated, which the residents did not feel was too demanding.

Residents were able to have telephone contact with their authorized representatives and stated that they had privacy during telephone calls and visits. Each resident indicated they had religious freedom and that they felt staff was culturally sensitive to each resident’s background and ethnicity.

The residents stated that they had enough food. However, the majority of the residents expressed dissatisfaction with the food, describing it as “poor” to “very poor.” Three residents described the food as “nasty” and “not cooked right.” This was discussed with management who stated that the residents were involved in menu planning and could voice their collective opinions during Council Meetings held monthly. Documentation was provided to confirm resident participation.

The residents stated that their health care needs were being met. Five of the residents stated they had not been informed about their medication and were unaware of their legal right to refuse medication without punitive action or threats.

Residents stated they had been threatened by staff with a violation of probation or disciplinary action against them if they refused medication. This was discussed with management who stated it was a violation of the court order if a resident refused to take their medication. However, management stated that threatening residents with disciplinary action would be addressed in staff training.

**Recommendation**

- 5. Trinity-Whitewater management ensure that all residents are informed of their medication and their right to refuse medication.**

**VII. CLOTHING AND ALLOWANCE**

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

**Sample size for resident interviews: Eight**

**Comments:**

Trinity-Whitewater provided appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. Clothing provided to the residents was of good quality and sufficient quantity. Although the residents went shopping in the community for their initial clothing purchases, subsequent purchases were made at the on-site facility store.

The residents stated that they were not informed about their clothing account balances and did not personally get to go to the on-site store to select their own clothing. They submitted an order form that generally described the item, i.e. colored t-shirt, sport shoes, dress shirt, etc., with a corresponding price. Items selected were deducted from the residents' monthly clothing orders. However, the Agency did not maintain a clothing allowance log that reflected the date, amount received, amount spent, and any ongoing balance for each resident as required by the Statement of Work.

The issue of residents not being allowed to shop in the community was discussed with management who stated that it was more convenient for the residents to shop on-grounds. However, the Agency's Program Statement states that residents will have the option to obtain clothing through the facility or by going to a store outside the facility.

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

Trinity-Whitewater provided the residents with a sufficient amount of appropriate personal care items and secure storage.

The residents had life books.

**Recommendations**

- 6. Trinity-Whitewater management:**
  - a. Properly maintain monthly clothing logs that confirm the monthly fifty dollar clothing allocation per resident.**
  - b. Allow residents the option of shopping for their clothing at a store(s) outside the facility.**