



J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**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

November 16, 2004

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

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT – LITTLE PEOPLE’S WORLD, INC., HARRIS AVENUE AND KALSMAN AVENUE GROUP HOMES**

We have completed a review of Harris Avenue and Kalsman Avenue Group Homes (Group Home or Agency) operated by Little People’s World, Inc. The Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Harris Avenue Group Home is a 10-bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 6-12 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Harris Avenue Group Home was providing services for eight Los Angeles County DCFS children and one San Bernardino County DCFS child. Harris Avenue Group Home is located in the Second District.

Kalsman Avenue Group Home is a six-bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 6-12 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Kalsman Avenue Group Home was providing services for six Los Angeles County DCFS children. Kalsman Avenue 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, facility inspections, and interviews with two children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review.

“To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service”

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.

Summary of Findings

Generally, the Agencies were providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. However, we noted a few areas where improvements were needed.

Harris Avenue

Harris Avenue needs to ensure that the court authorizations for psychotropic medication are accurate, thorough, and current; and provide residents with the opportunity to increase their weekly allowances according to the Agency's behavioral system.

Kalsman Avenue

Kalsman Avenue needs to ensure that the court authorizations for psychotropic medication are accurate, thorough, and current; develop Needs and Services Plans with goals that are specific and measurable; develop comprehensive quarterly reports that focus on the goals of the Needs and Services Plans; and provide residents with the opportunity to increase their weekly allowances according to the Agency's behavioral system.

Attached are detailed reports 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:jh

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
Richard Shumsky, Chief Probation Officer
C.S.J. Kidogo, Executive Director, Little People's World, Inc.
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**Little People's World, Inc.
Harris Avenue Group Home
727 South Harris Avenue
Compton, CA 90221
(310) 762-2957
License No.: 191670240
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The Harris Avenue Group Home (Group Home or Agency) is located in a residential community in the city of Compton. The Group Home is clean, spacious, and comfortable. The Group Home is well maintained, nicely landscaped, 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 well 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:

The residents meet the Agency's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement, and received initial diagnostic assessments after being admitted into the program as required.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current, realistic, measurable, and time specific. There was appropriate documentation to support the placement worker's participation in the development and update of the NSPs.

The quarterly reports for residents are current, comprehensive, and appropriately focus on the goals of the NSPs.

The residents are provided with psychological testing, and 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

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

One resident attends school. The record of this resident contains a current report card. The other resident was recently placed at the facility and efforts to enroll the child are documented. The residents do not require Individualized Education Plans. The residents are provided with educational stimulation and the Agency is supportive of residents' academic progress.

Development of daily living skills is part of the Agency's program. The residents are expected to maintain their personal hygiene. They are involved in the cleaning of their rooms and general clean up around the house. The residents are under 12 years old

and therefore, emancipation and vocational training is not part of the program.

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 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. The 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 seven case files.

Comments:

Documentation confirms that the seven children who were prescribed psychotropic medication, are routinely seen and assessed by the prescribing psychiatrist. Medication-distribution logs are accurate and in order.

The psychotropic authorizations for three of the residents require improvement. Specifically:

- The authorization for one resident's medication expired prior to the psychiatrist's submission of a new authorization request.

- An authorized medication was dispensed to one resident without properly completing the procedure necessary for dispensing medication prior to the filing dates.
- New medication was introduced to one of the residents and should have been noted as (N) "new" on the authorization request. However, the authorization incorrectly indicated that the medication was (C) "continued."

Recommendation

1. **Little People's World Group Home management ensure that court authorizations for psychotropic medications are accurate, thorough, and current.**

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 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. They are permitted to contact their social 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 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: 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.

Allowance logs indicate, and the children confirm, that they receive a weekly allowance well over the required minimum amount. The residents are permitted to spend their allowances as they choose. While allowances are routinely provided, the residents do not have the opportunity to increase these allowances as required by the Agency's behavioral system.

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

Residents are provided with an opportunity to maintain photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

- 2. Little People's World Group Home management provide residents with the opportunity to increase their weekly allowances as required by the Agency's behavioral system.**

**Little People's World, Inc.
Kalsman Avenue Group Home
704 North Kalsman Avenue
Compton, CA 90220
(310) 764-1546
License No.: 191600851
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The Kalsman Avenue Group Home (Group Home or Agency) is located in a residential community in the city of Compton. The Group Home is clean, spacious, and comfortable. The Group Home is well maintained, nicely landscaped, 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 well 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:

The residents meet the Agency's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. The residents received initial diagnostic assessments after being admitted into the program.

While the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current, they do not cite specific and measurable goals. In addition, the quarterly reports are not comprehensive because they also do not address measurable goals.

The residents and their placement workers participate in the development and update of the NSPs.

Residents are receiving individual and group therapy.

Recommendations

- 1. Little People's World Group Home management:**
 - a. Develop Needs and Services Plans that are specific and include measurable goals.**
 - b. Develop comprehensive quarterly reports that address the goals stated in the residents' Needs and Services Plans.**

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents are attending local public schools. Both residents are receiving special education services and have current Individualized Education Plans. The residents' records contain current report cards. The residents are provided with daily educational stimulation away from school and the Agency is supportive of the residents' academic progress.

Development of daily living skills is part of the Agency's program. The residents are expected to maintain their personal hygiene. They are involved in the cleaning of their rooms and general clean up around the house. The residents are under age twelve and therefore, emancipation and vocational training are not part of the program.

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 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. The 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 six case files

Comments:

Documentation confirms that the children who were prescribed psychotropic medications are routinely seen and assessed by the prescribing psychiatrist. Medication distribution logs are accurate and in order.

However, a new medication was dispensed to one resident and the procedure necessary for dispensing medication prior to the filing dates was not completed correctly. The authorization incorrectly noted the medication as (C) "continued," however, the medication should have been noted as (N) "new".

Recommendation

- 2. Little People's World Group Home management ensure that court authorizations for psychotropic medications are accurate, thorough, and current.**

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 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. They are permitted to contact their social 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 holidays.

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

The residents have a general knowledge of their psychotropic medications and the reason for the prescription. They are aware of the fact that the medication has an effect on their behavior and feelings. However, they are unclear with regard to their right to refuse medication. Residents assume that if they refuse medication, they would receive consequences.

The facility administrator stated that the residents are permitted to refuse medication. The administrator explained that the facility's practice is to include the resident in a conference if refusal of medication becomes a regular occurrence. The resident, facility administrator, and psychiatrist are brought together to discuss ongoing treatment and whether it will include additional prescriptions for psychotropic medication. While these

are appropriate procedures, Agency management needs to clarify that residents can refuse medication without receiving consequences.

Recommendation

- 3. Little People's World Group Home management clarify with residents that they can refuse medication without receiving consequences.**

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.

Allowance logs indicate and the children confirm that they received a weekly allowance well over the required minimum amount. The residents are permitted to spend their allowances as they choose. However, the residents did not have the opportunity to increase their allowances as required by the Agencies behavioral system.

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

Residents are provided with an opportunity to maintain photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

- 4. Little People's World Group Home management provide residents with the opportunity to increase their weekly allowances as required by the Agency's behavioral system.**