



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

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AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

August 4, 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
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES, TRINITY APPLE VALLEY**

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

Trinity Apple Valley Group Home is a forty-four bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 7-15 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Trinity Apple Valley Group Home was providing services for twenty-five Los Angeles County Probation children, one child under joint supervision of DCFS and Probation, three Orange County Probation children, four Riverside County Probation children, five San Bernardino County Probation children, four Tulare County Probation children, one Sacramento County Probation child, and one Santa Clara County Probation child.

Trinity Apple Valley Group Home is located in San Bernardino County.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues, and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection, and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with

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children are 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 Agency is providing the services as outlined in its Program Statement. However, the Group Home has deficient areas that need to be addressed.

Trinity Apple Valley Group Home needs to develop and update Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the children and their placement workers; develop comprehensive NSPs that include long and short term goals; allow children to participate in the planning of activities; obtain and maintain current court authorizations for children on psychotropic medications; provide children with adequate quality and quantities of meals and snacks; maintain documentation to support that children are receiving a \$50 monthly clothing allowance; allow children to select their own clothing on a regular basis; provide each child with sufficient clothes to meet DCFS clothing standards for quantity.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. 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:dl

http://auditor.co.la.ca.us/group_home.asp

Attachments

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
Paul Higa, Chief Probation Officer
Linda Peck, Administrator, Trinity Children and Family Services
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

**Trinity Children and Family Services
Trinity Apple Valley
10755 Apple Valley Road
Apple Valley, CA 92308
Phone (760) 247-9840
License No.: 366401747
Rate Classification Level: 12**

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Trinity Apple Valley Group Home is located in a developing area of Apple Valley. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean, and adequately landscaped.

The interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly, and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting, and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

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

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size for interviews: Five

Comments:

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. Children are assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are current. However, the treatment team does not include the placement worker in the development and implementation of the NSPs, and does not include input from the child. NSPs are not comprehensive, and do not include long and short term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services as identified in their NSPs.

Recommendations

1. Trinity Children and Family Services management:

- a. **Include placement workers in the development and implementation of the NSPs.**
- b. **Develop NSPs with input from the children.**
- b. **Create NSPs that are comprehensive and have detailed, measurable, and achievable long and short term goals.**

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size for interviews: Five

Comments:

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs, and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help, and survival skills.

Children are provided with opportunities 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 interviews

Sample size for interviews: Five

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities, and leisure time. Two children report they are not given opportunities to participate in planning activities.

Children are allowed to participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendation

- 2. Trinity Children and Family Services management ensure all children are given opportunities to participate in the planning of activities.**

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

One child has a current court authorization for psychotropic medication. However, the other five children do not have current authorizations on file for the psychotropic medication they are receiving. Documentation confirms that children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Children are informed about their psychotropic medication, and are aware of their right to refuse medication.

Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

Recommendation

- 3. Trinity Children and Family Services management maintain current court authorizations for all children receiving psychotropic medication.**

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment –Interviews with children

Sample size for interviews: Five

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Home’s policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home, and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff, and report that staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to have private visitors, to make and receive personal telephone calls, and to send and receive unopened correspondence and mail. Children are able to attend religious services of their choice.

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

Children report dissatisfaction with the quality and quantity of meals and snacks; reporting that the food does not taste good, is not always cooked properly; and that there is not always enough food for seconds.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental, and psychiatric care.

Recommendation

- 4. Trinity Children and Family Services management provide children with adequate quality and quantities of meals and snacks.**

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size for interviews: Five

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing and items of necessity to the children. However, the Group Home does not consistently supply children with the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance. Three children report they are not given opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality. However, the

clothing for two children does not meet quantity standards. One child is in need of underwear, and the other child is in need of an additional sweater/sweatshirt.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum base allowance. Children are permitted to spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items.

Children are encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendations

5. Trinity Children and Family Services management:

- a. Maintain documentation to support that children are receiving the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance.**
- b. Provide all children with regular opportunities to select their own clothing.**
- c. Provide each child with sufficient clothes to meet DCFS clothing standards for quantity.**



Empowering Children for Life

TRINITY APPLE VALLEY

June 27, 2005

Dept. of Auditor-Controller, Kenneth Hahn Hall of Admin.
500 W. Temple St. Room 515-A
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Attention: Carla Carr, Group Home Ombudsman

Dear Ms. Carr,

Enclosed is the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) for each of the recommendations included in your final draft dated May 18, 2005. Your letter indicated that the deadline was 30 business days from that date, which would be June 30, 2005 (excluding May 30th which was a national holiday).

Each section of the report states when the action will be taken, if not already done. I have also included the staff and titles of those responsible for implementation, in addition to those responsible for on-going monitoring for quality assurance purposes.

Please feel free to contact me by phone or letter if you need any additional information. I can be reached directly at the telephone and fax numbers listed at the lower right hand corner of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Linda B. Peck".

Linda B. Peck, MA
Campus Director

CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

II. Program Services

Recommendations

- 1. (a) Develop and update NPSs with input from the children and collaboration with the placement workers and (b) Create Needs and Services Plans**

Our Clinical Coordinator has met with all four Team Supervisors to discuss which sections of the Needs and Services Plan (NSP) fall under their responsibilities, so that they can develop measurable and achievable short and long-term goals, with input from the residents. The Team Supervisors will also be responsible for contacting the placement workers, in person or by phone, for collaboration on the NSP.

Immediately following the L.A. Co. audit, the Clinical Coordinator contacted our on-site Probation Officer from L.A.Co. and invited her to attend future weekly Treatment Team Meetings so that she could provide input, including recommendations. The same invitation was subsequently extended to her current replacement, DPO Sheryl Thompson. We are also sending letters to the DPOs of the residents who are not assigned to Ms. Thompson.

All of our contracted Therapists have been instructed to create measurable goals that indicate exactly what the residents must do in order to achieve them and to clearly differentiate between short-and long-term goals. In addition, the residents are encouraged to give their input in the development of their goals; parents/guardians are asked to do the same in regard to family therapy goals. The therapist are expected to document this in their case notes. In meetings with all therapist, the Clinical Coordinator will devote time to discussing issues pertaining to the NSP. She will also expect the Dean of Students at our non-public school to tailor behavioral goals for each individual student.

Elizabeth Tamoush, Clinical Coordinator, has already implemented these corrective actions and the Campus Director, Linda Peck, who is her immediate supervisor, is responsible for on-going monitoring.

IV. Recreation and Activities

Recommendations

- 2. Management provide the children a clear method for input into the planning of activities and assurance that their recommendations are considered.**

The Recreation Dept. has created a new form, "Resident Suggestion Form" (see attached copy). It is being made available to all residents in each of their unit areas as one way of giving written input into planning of activities, both on and off grounds. The areas highlighted are scheduling, Arts and Crafts, Outings and any other areas of the Recreation Program. The residents are constantly reminded that their requests may not be granted if they conflict with program expectations, are beyond what our budget allows or pose a threat to their safety or that of others. The activities must have a therapeutic value and provide personal enrichment, while also taking into consideration the chronological ages and emotional maturity of our population.

Other opportunities available for resident input, which are already firmly established in our program, are the monthly meetings of the Resident Council and our Grievance Forms. The Council is made up of residents from each of the four units who are encouraged to bring up concerns and suggestions for improving the program. Those items relating to the Recreation Program are directed to the Supervisor for consideration and included in the minutes. The minutes are reviewed by the Program Coordinator who supervises the Recreation Supervisor. If suggestions are turned down, the reason is given in a written response to the Campus Director and discussed at the next meeting. Grievance Forms are also available in all units. Residents are told about them during their orientation. They are encouraged to fill them out whenever they wish, then personally put them in a locked box in the dining hall to be later read and processed by the Program Director and the Campus Director. Recreation matters would then be passed on to the Recreation Dept. All Grievance Forms are filed in the residents' main files and a copy is also filed by the month written in our Central Grievance binder.

The Recreation Supervisor, Luisa Abeyta, has already implemented these corrective actions, and Peter Burns, Program Coordinator, who is her immediate supervisor, is responsible for on-going monitoring. The Campus Director will also oversee this area

V Psychotropic Medication

Recommendations

3. Management obtain and maintain current court authorizations in a timely manner

Currently the Supervising Officer of the Day is responsible for submitting and obtaining the written psychotropic medication authorizations from the court. Every L.A. County resident prescribed psychotropic medication has had his authorization form submitted to the Los Angeles Juvenile Court (attention Psychotropic Medication desk) for review and disposition. We are finding that it takes anywhere from one to two months to get the forms returned with the court's signature. Additionally, we always try to obtain written parental consent whenever possible. All forms are kept in the residents' medical files in the O.D.'s office.

In order to assure that all court authorizations are obtained as required and in a timely manner, both the Clinical Coordinator and the Program Coordinator will be given weekly written updates by the Supervising O.D., David Yglesias, on the status of these authorizations. He will also be meeting with the Clinical Coordinator on a bi-weekly basis to coordinate the current status of all psychotropic medications being dispensed at the facility.

Mr. Yglesias already has this corrective action in place. The Program Coordinator, who is his immediate supervisor, is directly responsible for on-going monitoring of this area to make certain that court authorizations are being obtained or, being closely tracked by Mr. Yglesias whenever there is a delay in getting them back from the court. The Clinical Coordinator and the Campus Director will also be periodically checking the status of all authorizations on new medications or changes since prescribed.

VI Personal Rights

Recommendations

- 4. Management improve their food service and preparation. Also, encourage input from the children as to food selections, and provide on-going incorporation of suggestions into the process.**

In an effort to improve the quality of our food service and preparation, Trinity's Director of Food Service has arranged to have our Supervising Cook receive special food service training once a month at the Trinity facility in Yucaipa, starting in July 2005. Wilma, the Supervising Cook at that facility, has been with Trinity for years and has been extremely successful at preparing meals that appeal to residents and staff alike. Our cooks are also encouraged to call Wilma whenever they need advice or specific recipes for fixing dishes included on the menu. The cooks know that the Director of Food Services and the Consulting Nutritionist are also available to approve a possible substitute for any menu item that the majority of the residents clearly dislike.

In order to get on-going input from the residents on the types of foods they like and dislike and their preference in the preparation and presentation of the meals, the Supervising Cook or Lead Cook will be attending our monthly Resident Council meetings. The residents are encouraged to voice their opinions in all areas, including the meals served at the facility. However, everyone is expected to express likes and dislikes in a constructive manner. If given free choice as to what meals are to be served, we have no doubt most of the residents would choose to eat hamburgers and pizza for every meal. Therefore, the discussions concerning food will focus upon the need for balanced, nutritious meals, not just foods that taste good. They are also encouraged to utilize our written grievance process for complaints or suggestions about food choice, preparation and service.

Denise Mlawsky, the Supervising Cook, is responsible for cooperating in all changes already implemented to improve food preparation and service. Her special training at Trinity-Yucaipa will begin as of July 1, 2005. She and the Director of Food Services for TCFS have already attended a Resident Council meeting this month and will do so every month thereafter.

Effective 7-1-05, all of the kitchen staff will be under the immediate supervision of the Campus Director instead of the Support Services at the TCFS Mission Office. Therefore, Ms. Mlawsky will be directly supervised by the Campus Director regarding all of the food preparation and service areas, with continued input and consultation from the Director of Food

Services, Jay Duman, as needed. The Campus Director will process all oral and written complaints, and will personally check on the quality and quantity of food served at the facility. She will continue to work closely with Mr. Duman to make any improvements needed.

VII. Clothing and Allowances

Recommendations

5. (a) Monitor documentation to support the children are receiving a \$50 monthly clothing allowance.

Trinity Children and Family Services has a centralized system utilized by all of their southern facilities. Much of the clothing is centrally purchased and then stored at our Mission Office area pending dispensing. Each facility, including Trinity Apple Valley, has a place to store and dispense clothing. Our Clothing Room is located in our multipurpose building, next to the dining hall. The person in charge of the storage, trying on, dispensing, and record keeping for clothing from Mission office is the Clothing Room Attendant (CRA).

Whenever a new resident is admitted to our program, he is asked to read and then sign and date our "Los Angeles Resident's Option" form (copy attached), which informs him of his option to shop in the community with his \$50 monthly allotment, and that he can accumulate up to \$100 (two months) before the money must be spent. The resident is also informed that the purchases must be acceptable to our dress code. This form is then kept in his case file.

The campus CRA is responsible for keeping records on how much is spent each month to replenish clothing; the records also include how much was spent with the Initial Clothing Order which is sent by the County for each child. In most cases, Trinity provides far beyond what the Initial clothing check and the monthly \$50 allotments could purchase in the community. Attached is a copy of a Trinity "Client Clothing Budget" form for Trinity-Apple Valley (only L.A. County clients showing). It covers amounts spent from last July through 6-16-05. As you can see, it doesn't always show exactly \$50 spent each month, but some months show amounts that far exceed that. In order to meet the L.A. County requirements for ensuring that (1) at least \$50 is being spent monthly for each replenishing clothing and that (2) the residents are being allowed to spend this amount in the community, when requested, we will utilize the following procedure:

1. All residents will be made aware that they have \$50 a month allotment for clothing to be purchased outside the facility. Arrangements will be made within the unit for them to go shopping after the first of each month.
2. As soon as any resident expresses a desire to spend his allotment it will be brought to the attention of the office manager who, in turn, will request a purchase order for either Target or JC Penney's in the amount of \$50 (or the balance over that amount) for that resident. Once the resident has gone shopping, a copy of the receipt will be placed in a "Clothing Allowance" file, which will be kept in the administrative office along with the resident's main file; a copy will be given to the CRA office.
3. The administration office is currently devising a form showing each resident's name and current monthly balance: the \$50 added each month and the amount spent that same month. We hope to have this recording system in use by 7-1-05. The resident's will receive a statement at the beginning of each month showing how much money is available to them. We will also keep a central record showing the clothing allotment balances for each resident, a copy of which will be forwarded to the unit supervisors. The residents will then be able to see exactly what they spent and their remaining balances. These records can also be made available at our facility for inspection by the auditor, as requested.

(b) Provide all residents the opportunity to routinely "shop" in the community for their clothing and expand on their variety of clothing choices.

The nearby Target and J.C. Penney Stores are used regularly by our facility and our residents have had no complaints regarding the quality of their merchandise. Each year we have gift certificates donated to our residents from Target and they look forward to shopping there. Since the allotments are available for spending on a monthly basis, arrangements will be made through our Recreation Dept. to schedule regular unit shopping trips as one of our off-grounds activities. As long as they adhere to our facility dress code, the residents will be, as always, allowed to choose their own clothing.

(c) Provide each child with sufficient clothes to meet DCFS' clothing standards for quantity.

To make certain that all staff are aware of the type of clothing and quantity that must be in the possession of each resident, per DCFS clothing standards, we will periodically review the list of those standards. Further, each unit will be required to conduct a weekly inventory of each resident's clothing to ensure that his clothing needs are being met. Clothing that is missing, torn, worn out or out-grown will be replaced.

In regard to implementation and monitoring, an accounting system for actually showing the monthly \$50 clothing system, the Campus Director will be working closely with the Office Manager to get it up and running and a part of our office records. We hope to accomplish this by 7-1-05. A copy of the format that we'll be using for the new accounting system can be forwarded to you at that time.

Effective 7-1-05, the Clothing Room Attendant, Marla Garnica, will also be under the immediate supervision of the Campus Director instead of Support Services at the TCFS Mission Office. The Program Director will be responsible to make certain that the unit supervisors keep the residents informed of their clothing allotment balances and that regular inventories of their clothing are being conducted. The Campus Director will also oversee this area to make certain that clothing records, purchasing and inventories are consistent with our corrective actions.