



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

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September 19, 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 – OPTIMIST
YOUTH HOMES AND FAMILY SERVICES, ALTADENA, EAGLE ROCK,
ORANGE COUNTY, SOUTH BAY, VALLEY, AND VAN NUYS GROUP
HOMES**

We have completed a review of Altadena, Eagle Rock, Orange County, South Bay, Valley and Van Nuys Group Homes operated by Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services. Each Group Home contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Altadena, Orange County, South Bay, and Valley Group Homes are six-bed facilities, and each provide care for boys ages 12-18 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. Eagle Rock and Van Nuys Group Homes are six bed facilities, and both provide care for girls ages 12-18 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the monitoring visit, Altadena Group Home was providing services for four Los Angeles County Probation children. Eagle Rock Group Home was providing services for six Los Angeles County Probation children. Orange County Group Home was providing services for two Los Angeles County Probation children and three Orange County Probation children. South Bay Group Home was providing services for five Los Angeles County DCFS children. Valley Group Home was providing services for four Los Angeles County Probation children and one Alameda County Probation child.

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"

Van Nuys Group Home was providing services for three Los Angeles County Probation children and one Alameda County Probation child.

Eagle Rock Group Home is located in the First District. South Bay Group Home is located in the Second District. Valley and Van Nuys Group Homes are located in the Third District. Altadena Group Home is located in the Fifth District. Orange County Group Home is located in Orange County.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as 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 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

The Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

Review of Report

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. 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
http://auditor.co.la.ca.us/group_home.asp

Attachment

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
Paul Higa, Chief Probation Officer
Silvio J. Orlando, Executive Director, Optimist Youth Homes & Family Services
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services

Optimist Boys Altadena
126 East Palm Street
Altadena, CA 91001
Phone: (626) 794-1020
License: 191204710
Rate Classification Level: 12

Optimist Girls Eagle Rock
1635 Silver Oak Terrace
Los Angeles, California 90041
Phone: (323) 256-1288
License: 191890971
Rate Classification Level: 12

Optimist Boys Orange County
2255 Crestwood Lane
Anaheim, CA 92804
Phone: (714) 772-3751
License: 300602307
Rate Classification Level: 12

Optimist Boys South Bay
20209 Tillman Ave.
Carson, California 90745
Phone: (310) 537-6028
License: 191604301
Rate Classification Level: 12

Optimist Boys Valley
14820 Wolfskill Street
Mission Hills, CA 91345
Phone: (818) 365-2388
License: 191201124
Rate Classification Level: 12

Optimist Girls Van Nuys
7130 Burnet Avenue
Van Nuys, CA 91405
Phone: (818) 994-9872
License: 197600766
Rate Classification Level: 12

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Optimist Group Homes are located in residential communities. The exterior of the Group Homes are well maintained. The front and back yards are clean, and adequately landscaped.

The interior of the Group Homes are well maintained. The common quarters are neat and clean. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Homes. The Group Homes provide 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 Homes maintain age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, TVs, and DVD players. Books and resource materials, including computers with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Homes maintain 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: Two per Group Home

Comments:

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

The treatment teams develop and implement the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive, and 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

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size for interviews: Two per Group Home

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 Homes' programs include 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: Two per Group Home

Comments:

The Group Homes provide children with sufficient recreational activities, and leisure time. Children are 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 Homes provide transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

V. Psychotropic Medication

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents

Comments:

Children have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. 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.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment –Interviews with children

Sample size for interviews: Two per Group Home

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Homes’ policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Homes, 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 satisfaction with meals and snacks.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental, and psychiatric care.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size for interviews: Two per Group Home

Comments:

The Group Homes provide appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are given opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

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

The Group Homes provide children with adequate personal care items.

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

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.