COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 525
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-2706
PHONE: (213) 974-8301 FAX: (213) 626-5427

J. TYLER McCAULEY
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

WENDY L. WATANABE
CHIEF DEPUTY

July 5, 2007

TO: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke
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 (Group Home or Agency) operated by Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services, Incorporated. 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 each six-bed facilities, which provide care for boys ages 12-18 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. Eagle Rock and Van Nuys Group Homes are each six bed facilities, which 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 three Probation children and one Riverside County child. Orange County and South Bay Group Homes were each providing services for four Probation children. Valley Group Home was providing services for five Probation children. Eagle Rock and Van Nuys Group Homes were each providing services for six Probation children.

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

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.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

Summary of Findings

Valley Group Home is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement.

Altadena, Eagle Rock, Orange County, South Bay and Van Nuys Group Homes need to address many deficient areas. The following are examples of deficiencies that need to be addressed by each Group Home:

Altadena Group Home needs to clean or replace the sofa and pillows in the den and clean the walls and complete the unfinished patch repairs throughout the facility. The Group Home also needs to make repairs in the kitchen and in bedroom three and clean the upstairs bathroom shower. Additionally, the Group Home needs to provide all children with opportunities to participate in planning activities and selecting their own clothes.

Eagle Rock Group Home needs to cut the grass in the back yard and secure the lock on the side gate. The Group Home also needs to make repairs in the living room and dining room area, and clean the ceiling, the kitchen cabinets, and the upstairs bathroom. Additionally, the Group Home needs to complete initial assessments for all children within thirty days of placement, and allow all children to have private telephone calls, receive unopened mail and to spend their allowances as they choose.

Orange County Group Home needs to repair the fence in the back yard, clean the carpet throughout the facility, clean the sink in the master bathroom, and replace the bed coverings in bedroom two. The Group Home also needs to provide appropriate supervision at all times, ensure that all staff treat children with fairness, respect, and

dignity, and encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

South Bay Group Home needs to clean the bathtubs and wall tiles and repair the bathroom caulk.

Van Nuys Group Home needs to clean the kitchen cabinets and counter tops and clean the walls in bedroom one. The Group Home also needs to provide all children with sufficient quality and quantities of clothes.

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. However, since the time of the review, the Agency closed the Orange County Group Home. Therefore, a corrective action plan for this home was not completed. Additionally, since Valley Group Home does not have any deficiencies noted, a corrective action plan for this home is not necessary at this time. 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:ec

Attachments

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Executive Officer
Patricia S. Ploehn, Director, DCFS
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer
Silvio John Orlando, Executive Director, Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services, Inc.
Public Information Office
Audit Committee

Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services
Altadena Group Home
126 Palm Avenue
Altadena, California 91001
Phone: 626-794-1020
License Number: 19204710
Rate Classification Level: 12

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Altadena Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped.

Generally, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, the walls throughout the facility are dirty and the living room, den and upstairs hallway have unfinished patch repairs. Additionally, the sofa and pillows in the den are stained and dirty, there is a hole in the ceiling of the kitchen pantry and the pantry door is dirty, and there is soap scum and mildew around the shower area in the upstairs bathroom.

Overall, the 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. However, there are damaged ceiling tiles and the closet door has unfinished patch repairs in bedroom three. 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

1. **Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services management:**

   a. **Clean the walls throughout the facility.**

b. Complete and paint unfinished patch repairs throughout the facility as needed.

c. Clean or replace the sofa and pillows in the den.

d. Repair the hole in the kitchen pantry

e. Clean or paint the pantry door.

f. Clean the upstairs shower.

g. Replace the ceiling tiles in bedroom three.

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

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 treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive, and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

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: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. However, children are not provided with sufficient opportunities to participate in planning activities.

Children participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest. The Group Home also provides transportation to and from the activities.

Recommendation

2. **Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services Group Home management provide children with sufficient opportunities to participate in planning activities.**

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: Two

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 the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are able to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, and have private visitors. 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: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and the required $50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity. However, children are not provided with opportunities to select their own clothes.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

3. **Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services Group Home management provide children with opportunities to select their own clothes**

Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services
Eagle Rock Group Home
1635 Silver Oak Terrace
Los Angeles, California 90042
Phone: 323-256-1288
License Number: 191890971
Rate Classification Level: 12

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Eagle Rock Group Home is located in a residential community. Overall, the exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped. However, the grass is overgrown in one area of the yard and the lock on the side gate is not secure.

Generally, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, the hardwood floors and baseboards are damaged and worn in the living room and dining room area. The ceiling in the upstairs hallway and the kitchen cabinets are dirty. The tub and grout around the wall tiles in the upstairs bathroom have mildew and soap scum.

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

1. **Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services Group Home management:**

    a. **Cut and maintain all grass areas in the yard.**

b. **Secure the lock on the side gate.**

c. **Repair the hardwood floors and baseboards in the living room and dining room area.**

d. **Clean the ceiling in the upstairs hallway.**

e. **Clean the kitchen cabinets.**

f. **Clean the tub and grout in the bathroom.**

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. One child was assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement. However, the other child's assessment was not completed in a timely manner.

The treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive, and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

Recommendations

2. **Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services Group Home management:**

   a. **Complete initial assessments within thirty days of placement for all children.**

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

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: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. However, children are not provided with sufficient opportunities to participate in planning activities.

Children 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

3. **Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services Group Home management provide children with sufficient opportunities to participate in planning activities.**

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: Two

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 the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Most children report that they are able to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, and have private visitors. However, one child reports that she is not allowed to have private phone conversations without the presence of a staff and is not allowed to receive unopened 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.

Recommendation

4. **Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services management allow all children to have private telephone conversations and to receive unopened mail in accordance with their case plan.**

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

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

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. However, children do not spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendation

5. **Optimist Youth Group Home and Family Services management allow children to spend their allowances as they choose.**

Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services
Orange County Group Home - CLOSED
2255 West Crestwood Lane
Anaheim, California 92804-6425
Phone: 714-772-3751
License Number: 300602307
Rate Classification Level: 12

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Orange County Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped. However, the fence in the backyard has cracked and missing bricks.

Generally, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, the carpet throughout the facility is dirty and worn and the master bathroom sink is damaged.

Overall, 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. However, the bed coverings in bedroom two are worn. 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

1. **Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services Group Home management:**
   a. **Repair the fence in the back yard.**
   b. **Clean the carpet throughout the facility.**
   c. **Repair the sink in the master bathroom.**

d. Replace the bed coverings in bedroom two.

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

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 treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive, and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

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: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. However, children are not provided with sufficient opportunities to participate in planning activities.

Children 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. **Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services Group Home management provide children with sufficient opportunities to participate in planning activities.**

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: Two

Comments:

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home. Overall, children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff and report that most of the staff treats them with respect and dignity. However, one child reports that one of the staff is unfair and talks down to him in a loud voice. The Group Home does not always provide children with the required number of staff for supervision, as there is sometimes only one staff present.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are able to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, and have private visitors. 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

3. **Optimist Youth Home and Family Services Group Home management:**

   a. **Ensure that all staff treat each child with fairness, respect and dignity, and monitor staff's interactions with children.**

   b. **Maintain the required number of staff for supervision at all times.**

VII. Clothing and Allowance

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and the required $50 monthly clothing allowance to children. However, children are not provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. However, children are not encouraged or assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendations

4. **Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services Group Home management:**

   a. **Provide children with opportunities to select their own clothes.**

   b. **Encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.**

Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services
South Bay Group Home
20209 Tillman Avenue
Carson, California 90746
Phone: 310-537-6028
License Number: 19160430
Rate Classification Level: 12

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

South Bay Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped.

Overall, the interior of the Group Home is well maintained. The common quarters are neat. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, the tub is dirty and the caulk around the sink and counter top is worn in bathroom one. In bathroom two, the tub and grout around the wall tiles are dirty.

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

1. **Optimist Youth Home and Family Services Group Home management:**

   a. **Clean the tub in bathroom one.**

   b. **Repair the caulk in bathroom one.**

c. Clean the tub and tile grout in bathroom two

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

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 treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive, and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

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: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides 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:

According to the Agency's management, there are currently no children taking psychotropic medications. This information is appropriately documented.

Children are aware of their right to refuse medication.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. Personal Rights

Method of assessment – Interviews with children

Sample size: Two

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 the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are able to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, and have private visitors. 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: Two

Comments:

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

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services
Valley Group Home
14820 Wolfskill Street
Mission Hills, California 91345
Phone: 818-365-2388
License Number: 191201124
Rate Classification Level: 12

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Valley Group Home is located in a residential community. 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: Two

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 treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive, and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

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: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities.

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

The Group Home provides 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: Two

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 the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are able to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, and have private visitors. 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: Two

Comments:

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

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. Children spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services
Van Nuys Group Home
7130 Burnet Avenue
Van Nuys, California 91405
Phone: 818-994-9872
License Number: 197600766
Rate Classification Level: 12

I. Facility and Environment

Method of assessment – Observation

Comments:

Van Nuys Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean and adequately landscaped.

Generally, 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. However, the kitchen cabinets and counter tops are dirty and worn.

Overall, children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are orderly and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. However, the walls are dirty in bedroom one. 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

1. **Optimist Youth Home and Family Services Group Home management:**

   a. **Clean the kitchen cabinets and counter tops.**

   b. **Clean the walls in bedroom one.**

II. Program Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

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 treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current, comprehensive, and include short and long term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

III. Educational and Emancipation Services

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews

Sample size: Two

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: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities. Children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides 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: Two

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 the staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are able to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and

receive unopened mail, and have private visitors. 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: Two

Comments:

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and the required $50 monthly clothing allowance to children. One child is provided with clothing that is of good quality and of sufficient quantity. However, the other child needs pants, shirts, shoes, and undergarments.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance. However, children are not allowed to spend their allowances as they choose.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items. Children are also encouraged and assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

Recommendations

2. **Optimist Youth Group Home and Family Services management:**

   a. **Provide all children with clothes that are of good quality and sufficient quantity.**

   b. **Allow children to spend their allowances as they choose.**

OPTIMIST
Youth Homes & Family Services
Serving Youth Since 1906

June 11, 2007

Silvio John Orlando, ACSW
Executive Director

Douglas E. Buttrick
Chief Financial Officer

County of LA, Department of Auditor-Controller
Children's Group Home Ombudsman
500 West Temple Street, Room 515-A
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2766

Dear Auditor-Controller,

Affiliations

ACCREDITED Council on Accreditation for Children and Family Services

Accredited by California Alliance of Child and Family Services

A·C·H·S·A Association of Community Human Service Agencies

Optimist International

I would like to thank the staff from the Auditor Controller's Office for their thorough review of the Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services off site community based group homes.

We would like to submit the following remarks as our Corrective Action Plan as we have had the opportunity to speak with the Children's Group Home Ombudsman's office prior to this submission.

Altadena Group Home:

Facility and Environment:

1.a. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management clean the walls throughout the facility, we arranged for the following: The walls throughout the facility were cleaned or painted as necessary during the month of November.

1.b. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management paint the living room, den, upstairs hallway, and walls and closet door in bedroom three, we arranged for the following: The walls and closets throughout the facility were painted as needed during the month of November.

1.c. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management clean or replace the sofa and pillows in the den, we replaced the sofa end of October.

1.d. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management repair the hole in the kitchen pantry, we arranged for the following: The hole in the kitchen pantry was repaired at the end of October.

FROM :OI FAX NO. :3233445124 Jun. 11 2007 01:24PM P2

1.e. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management clean or paint the pantry door, we arranged for the following: The pantry door was painted during the month of November.

1.f. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management clean the upstairs shower, we arranged for the following: The upstairs shower was deep cleaned by a contractor end of October.

1.g. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management replace the ceiling tiles in bedroom three, we arranged for the following: The ceiling tiles in bedroom three will be replaced before May 31, 2007.

To ensure that the home is well maintained at all times, we implemented the following right after the audit: Group home staff have to do a deep cleaning every month on top of the regular daily cleaning. The group home coordinator is responsible for making sure that this is done. Q improvement staff will come out to the home on a quarterly basis and unexpected in-between to monitor the proper maintenance of the house.

Recreation and Activities:

2. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS provide children with sufficient opportunities to participate in planning of recreational activities we will do the following:
The agency had already incorporated residents of the group home into the overall resident council at the time of the audit. This council, amongst other things, is involved in activity planning. The program director will ensure that such is continued through additional staff training. Our agency wide quality improvement program will monitor the council's activities to ensure that we are in compliance.

Clothing and Allowances:

3. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS allow children to select their own clothing, we will allow children to select their own clothing with the exception of gang related clothing and colors due to the fact that we serve only youngsters referred through Probation, and it would be unsafe for us to allow complete freedom in clothing selection that might involve gang attire. We will however encourage residents to select other than grey, white, or black as their colors of choice, while at the same time restricting them from certain gang colors. The group home coordinator will do staff training before the end of May, and our quality improvement staff will monitor compliance in the future.

FROM :01 FAX NO. :3233445124 Jun. 11 2007 01:24PM P3

Eagle Rock Group Home

Facility and Environment:

1.a. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management cut and maintain all grass areas in the yard, we arranged for the following: In November a gardener was hired to ensure that grass areas are cut once a month and maintained ongoing.

1.b. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management secure the lock on the side gate, we arranged for the following: The lock on the side gate was repaired end of October.

1.c. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management repair and paint the hardwood floor and the baseboards, we arranged for the following: Hardwood floor and base boards were repaired and painted as needed during the month of November.

1.d. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management clean the ceiling in the upstairs hallway, we arranged for the following: The ceiling in the upstairs hallway was cleaned end of October.

1.e. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management clean the kitchen cabinets, we arranged for the following: The kitchen cabinets were deep cleaned right after the audit. In addition, we are trying to get private funding for remodeling the entire kitchen. We are aware that it is old and worn.

1.f. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management clean the tub and grout in the bathroom, we arranged for the following: The bathtub was deep cleaned and re-grouted end of October.

To ensure that the home is well maintained at all times, we implemented the following right after the audit: Group home staff have to do a deep cleaning every month on top of the regular daily cleaning. The group home coordinator is responsible for making sure that this is done. Quality improvement staff will come out to the home on a quarterly basis and unexpected in-between to monitor the proper maintenance of the house.

Program Services:

2. In response to the recommendation that initial assessments are completed on time, as with our other programs, all of which are in compliance, OYHFS will ensure that initial assessments are completed within 30 days in the Eagle Rock Group Home through quarterly clerical audits and additional monitoring by our quality improvement staff.

FROM :01 FAX NO. :3233445124 Jun. 11 2007 01:24PM P4

Recreation and Activities:

3. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS provide children with sufficient opportunities to participate in planning of recreational activities we will do the following:
The agency had already incorporated residents of the group home into the overall resident council at the time of the audit. This council, amongst other things, is involved in activity planning. The program director will ensure that such is continued through additional staff training. Our agency wide quality improvement program will monitor the council's activities to ensure that we are in compliance.

Personal Rights:

4. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS allow residents to have private telephone conversations and receive unopened mail, staff in the Eagle Rock Group Home have been re-trained regarding OYHFS policy to allow privacy of telephone conversations and to receive unopened mail in accordance with the minor's case plan right after the audit. The program director will remind staff of this policy on a regular basis during staff supervision/ training and our quality improvement staff will monitor compliance.

Clothing and Allowances:

5. In response to the recommendation that residents be permitted to spend their allowances "as they choose", staff will be re-trained by the program director to allow this however will be reminded of section 3.18.4 of the contract, which stipulates that appropriateness and safety be taken into consideration. Our quality improvement staff will monitor compliance.

Orange County Group Home

As explained to the auditor controller's office, the ***house was closed at the time of the audit*** and we have converted this facility into a transitional living home for young ladies and have given up our group home license. As per agreement, ***no CAP is necessary.***

South Bay Group Home

Facility and Environment:

1.a. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management clean the tub in bathroom one, we arranged for cleaning the tub in bathroom one during the month of November.

1.b. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management repair the caulk in bathroom one, we arranged for re-caulking of the bathroom as needed.

FROM :01 FAX NO. :3233445124 Jun. 11 2007 01:24PM P5

1.c. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management clean the tub and tile grout in bathroom two, we arranged for cleaning the tub and tile grout in bathroom two.

To ensure that the home is well maintained at all times, we implemented the following right after the audit: Group home staff have to do a deep cleaning every month on top of the daily cleaning. The group home coordinator is responsible for making sure that this is done. Quality improvement staff will come out to the home on a quarterly basis and unexpected in-between to monitor the proper maintenance of the house.

Van Nuys Group Home

Facility and Environment:

1.a. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management clean the kitchen cabinets and counter tops, we arranged for refinishing of the kitchen cabinets and counter tops, which was done during the month of November.

1.b. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS management clean the walls in bedroom one, we arranged for cleaning and repainting as needed of bedroom one end of October.

To ensure that the home is well maintained at all times, we implemented the following right after the audit: Group home staff have to do a deep cleaning every month on top of the daily cleaning. The group home coordinator is responsible for making sure that this is done. Quality improvement staff will come out to the home on a quarterly basis and unexpected in-between to monitor the proper maintenance of the house.

Clothing and Allowances:

2.a. In response to the recommendation that OYHFS provide all children with clothing that is of good quality and sufficient quantity, we will ensure that all children will have good quality and enough clothing by doing monthly clothing inventories for each child. The group home coordinator will do staff training before the end of July to ensure that staff are scheduling the clothing inventories regularly, and our quality improvement staff will monitor compliance in the future.

2.b. In response to the recommendation that residents be permitted to spend their allowances "as they choose", staff will be re-trained by the program director to allow this however will be reminded of section 3.18.4 of the contract, which stipulates that appropriateness and safety be taken into consideration. Our quality improvement staff will monitor compliance.

FROM :OI FAX NO. :3233445124 Jun. 11 2007 01:25PM P6

OYHFS takes all compliance errors very seriously and takes fast action to correct any deficiencies. This is consistent with the OYHFS Quality Improvement Program initiated several years ago when the agency was nationally accredited by the Council on Accreditation (COA).

Respectfully submitted,

Silvio John Orlando, ACSW
Executive Director

FROM :OI FAX NO. :3233445124 Jun. 11 2007 01:25PM P7