



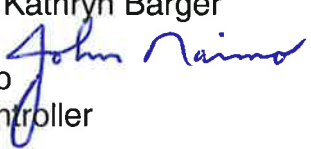
JOHN NAIMO  
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

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

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION  
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 525  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-3873  
PHONE: (213) 974-8301 FAX: (213) 626-5427

May 9, 2017

TO: Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, Chairman  
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis  
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl  
Supervisor Janice Hahn  
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

FROM: John Naimo   
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **CHILDREN'S GROUP HOME OMBUDSMAN SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT –  
JULY 1 THROUGH DECEMBER 31, 2016**

This memorandum is to provide you with information about the Auditor-Controller's Children's Group Home Ombudsman (Ombudsman) Program for the period of July 1 through December 31, 2016.

**Background**

The Ombudsman serves as an advocate for children placed in group homes (GH) by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), and provides a confidential and informal process to resolve issues raised by children residing in GHs. The Ombudsman responds to requests for assistance (requests), which are generally received through a toll-free hotline, e-mail, and during periodic site visits. The Ombudsman hotline number and e-mail address are included on posters which are required to be displayed in every County-contracted GH. In addition, Ombudsman staff conducts routine site visits encouraging children to call the hotline if they need assistance in resolving GH problems.

Upon receiving a request, the Ombudsman interviews the requester to understand the situation and to determine an appropriate response and/or course of action. The Ombudsman may also contact other parties, including DCFS personnel, GH providers, or others as needed to gather additional information, and also to facilitate a reasonable solution that is within the children's rights and established regulations.

### **Summary of Requests for Assistance**

During this six-month reporting period, we received a total of 142 requests, consisting of 117 hotline calls and 25 direct requests during site visits. For comparison, the Ombudsman received 139 requests and 120 requests in each of the prior two six-month reporting periods, respectively. Attachment I details the types of requests received by the Ombudsman. Overall, 92 (65%) of the 142 requests (14 Personal Rights and 78 "General") were handled within the Ombudsman's purview. Attachment II identifies the GHs involved with the 92 requests. The remaining 50 requests involved individuals seeking general information (40 requests pertaining to GHs and ten requests that were non-GH related). In such cases, the Ombudsman provided an answer or directed the requester to the appropriate party.

Assistance requests are categorized based on the initial allegation as described by the youth/caller. During this reporting period, there were no calls relating to safety concerns. The Ombudsman's goal is to be accessible and to assist all callers and youth during visits, and accordingly, all requests for assistance are presumed to be factual until proven otherwise through follow-up.

To ensure that requests were properly addressed and resolved, we completed various communications and referrals to the DCFS Ombudsman, Children's Social Workers (CSW), Child Protection Hotline, Out-of-Home Care Management Division, Contract Administration Division, and the Public Inquiry Unit. In addition, the Ombudsman regularly communicated and coordinated with the Probation Department (Probation) Ombudsman, Probation GH Monitoring and Investigations Unit, State Community Care Licensing, GH staff/management, and occasionally other counties to ensure the requester's issues were fully addressed and that proper agencies were notified.

We noted that one agency accounted for 17 (18%) of the 92 requests, which we received from a small number of youth, including nine requests from one youth who was very proactive and devoted to her education, school activities, job, and college application process and wanted to ensure all her needs were met. Visits and communication with the GH and contact with CSWs occurred to ensure that the needs of the youth who made requests continued to be met. Visits to, and communication with, youth at this agency will continue as needed.

The following are examples of requests received and resolved within the purview of the Ombudsman during this reporting period:

- During an outreach visit, a few youth expressed their concerns about their assigned chores and schedule. They stated they have to do the same chores twice a day, once in the morning before school, and then again in the afternoon/evening when they return home. We examined the posted chore schedule and it appeared to be extensive cleaning before school. We discussed this with the Residential Director,

and she agreed the chore schedule should be modified, and the morning schedule should be focused on getting ready for school, eating breakfast, and straightening up their rooms. Therefore, all of the other chores should be done after they arrive home from school or any other appointments. The Ombudsman did a follow-up visit at the GH and the youth were very happy as they stated the morning chores were reduced to only cleaning their rooms before they leave for school. The posted chore schedule reflected the change as well.

- A 17-year old youth called and said he was interested in training to be certified as a scuba diver and needed his CSW's approval right away in order for the GH to sign him up for the upcoming class. He was unable to contact his CSW right away; therefore, he decided to call the Ombudsman's Office for assistance. The Ombudsman learned that the CSW was out of the office for a week, so we reached out to the youth's Supervising CSW (SCSW) to request immediate authorization on the youth's behalf. The SCSW was very excited for the youth and, by the next day, the authorization was signed and sent to the GH. The youth took classes for four consecutive days, from 6:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and received his scuba diving certification.

### **Outreach**

One of the Ombudsman's responsibilities is to visit GHs, and provide DCFS children and GH staff with information about the Ombudsman function. Before each site visit, recent audit, monitoring, and quality assurance reports about the GH are reviewed, and visits are prioritized and scheduled based on concerns reported by residents, information from recent reports, and/or concerns raised by the Sybil Brand Commission, Commission for Children and Families, and DCFS Special Audit Committee. In addition, requests received from GH residents may trigger additional announced and/or unannounced visits.

During this reporting period, the Ombudsman conducted outreach to 70 GH sites (operated by 34 agencies). Nine visits, covering 23 group home sites, were conducted with the Probation Ombudsman because some GHs have both DCFS and Probation-placed youth. The joint outreach visits increase awareness and clarity about the resources available to GH residents. In addition, six non-contracted GH sites were included in our visits, which DCFS management explained are used for hard-to-place youth or when other placement options have been exhausted.

In total, including non-contracted GHs and visits with the Probation Ombudsman, we met with 346 children, gave verbal presentations, and provided them with brochures. During these visits, GH residents also had the opportunity to ask questions and request assistance if needed. Attachment III identifies the GH site visits completed during this reporting period.

### **Conclusion**

We will continue to conduct visits to contracted and non-contracted GHs during the next reporting period, and coordinate with the Probation Ombudsman where GHs have both DCFS and Probation-placed youth. We will also continue to ensure that lines of communication remain open with youth residing in GHs so they receive assistance when needed.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please call me or your staff may contact Michelle Day, Children's Group Home Ombudsman, at (213) 253-0117 or via e-mail at [mday@auditor.lacounty.gov](mailto:mday@auditor.lacounty.gov).

JN:AB:PH:RGC:GH:md

### Attachments (3)

c: Sachi A. Hamai, Chief Executive Officer  
Brandon T. Nichols, Acting Director, DCFS  
Honorable Michael Nash, Executive Director, Office of Child Protection  
Terri L. McDonald, Chief Probation Officer  
Audit Committee  
Children's Deputies  
Commission for Children and Families  
Contracts Administration Division, DCFS  
Out-of-Home Care Management Division, DCFS  
Placement Permanency and Quality Assurance, Probation  
Jessica Gama, Probation Ombudsman  
Public Information Office  
Sybil Brand Commission

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY CHILDREN'S GROUP HOME OMBUDSMAN  
REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE RECEIVED\*  
BY TYPE**

July 1 through December 31, 2016

<b>1. Safety</b>		<b>0</b>
None this reporting period		
<b>2. Personal Rights</b>		<b>14</b>
Monetary Allowance (Weekly/Discretionary Clothing)	4	
Clothing Needs	3	
Family Contact	2	
Dietary Needs	2	
Health/Medical, Dental Care	2	
School Enrollment	1	
<b>3. General</b>		<b>78</b>
Group Home Policies/Rules	16	
Children's Social Worker Contact	11	
Residential Conflict(s) with Peers	11	
Residential Conflict(s) with Staff	9	
School-Related Needs	9	
Condition of Residence and Amenities	6	
Independent Living Transition	6	
Placement Change Status	6	
Children's Social Worker Concern(s)	4	
<b>4. All Types Above - Total</b>		<b>92</b>
<b>5. Information Only</b>		<b>50</b>
GH Related	40	
Non-GH Related	10	
<b>6. Total Requests Received by Ombudsman</b>		<b>142</b>

*\*Requests are categorized based on the initial allegation as described by the youth/caller.*

LOS ANGELES COUNTY CHILDREN'S GROUP HOME OMBUDSMAN  
REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE RECEIVED\*  
BY GROUP HOME

July 1 through December 31, 2016

Group Home Agency	Total Number of Beds	Number of Sites	Supervisorial District(s) / County	Number of Requests	Types of Requests*
Rosemary Children's Services	39	5	5	17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Residential Conflict(s) with Staff (5)</li> <li>•School-Related Needs (5)</li> <li>•Condition of Residence and Amenities (2)</li> <li>•Group Home Policies/Rules (2)</li> <li>•Residential Conflict(s) with Peers (2)</li> <li>•Dietary Needs</li> </ul>
David and Margaret Youth and Family Services	30	1	5	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CSW Contact (2)</li> <li>•Group Home Policies/Rules (2)</li> <li>•Condition of Residence and Amenities</li> <li>•Family Contact</li> <li>•Placement Change Status</li> <li>•Residential Conflict(s) with Peers</li> <li>•Residential Conflict(s) with Staff</li> </ul>
St. Anne's Maternity Home	32 (plus 18 beds for children under age 3)	1	1	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Group Home Rules/Policies (2)</li> <li>•CSW Concern(s)</li> <li>•Health/Medical, Dental Care</li> <li>•School Enrollment</li> </ul>
Heritage Group Home, Inc.	30	5	1, 4, 5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Allowance</li> <li>•CSW Contact</li> <li>•Group Home Policies/Rules</li> <li>•Placement Change Status</li> <li>•School-Related Needs</li> </ul>
Eggleston Youth Centers	48	8	1, 5 San Bernardino County	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Condition of Residence and Amenities (3)</li> <li>•Dietary Needs</li> <li>•Group Home Policies/Rules</li> </ul>
Hillsides Home for Children	62	3	5	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Residential Conflict(s) with Peers (3)</li> <li>•Residential Conflict(s) with Staff</li> </ul>
Penny Lane Centers	105	11	3, 5	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Group Home Policies/Rules (2)</li> <li>•Residential Conflict(s) with Peers</li> <li>•School-Related Needs</li> </ul>
Childhelp USA	102	4	Orange County Riverside County	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CSW Contact (2)</li> <li>•Residential Conflict(s) with Peers</li> <li>•School-Related Needs</li> </ul>
Maryvale	72	1	1	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Clothing Needs</li> <li>•CSW Concern(s)</li> <li>•Group Home Policies/Rules</li> </ul>
Deliann-Lucile dba Delilu Achievement Home	8	1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Group Home Policies/Rules (2)</li> <li>•Health/Medical, Dental Care</li> </ul>
The Dream Catcher Foundation	18	3	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Independent Living Transition (3)</li> </ul>
Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services	24	1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Allowance</li> <li>•Clothing Needs</li> <li>•Group Home Policies/Rules</li> </ul>
McKinley Children's Center	28	1	5	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CSW Concern(s)</li> <li>•Independent Living Transition</li> <li>•Residential Conflict(s) with Staff</li> </ul>
Fleming & Barnes Inc. dba Dimondale Adolescent Care Facility	30	5	2, 4, 5	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Allowance</li> <li>•CSW Contact</li> <li>•Residential Conflict(s) with Staff</li> </ul>
Dangerfield Institute of Urban Problems	18	3	2	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CSW Contact</li> <li>•Group Home Policies/Rules</li> </ul>
Dream Home Care, Inc.	18	3	4	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•CSW Contact</li> <li>•Residential Conflict(s) with Peers</li> </ul>

Group Home Agency	Total Number of Beds	Number of Sites	Supervisory District(s) / County	Number of Requests	Types of Requests*
South Bay Bright Future	18	3	2, 4	2	• Allowance • CSW Contact
Turmont Home for Boys/Girls	12	2	2, 5	2	• CSW Concern(s) • Independent Living Transition
Children's Homes of Southern California	42	7	3, 5	2	• Independent Living Transition • Placement Change Status
Junior Blind of America	40	1	2	1	• Group Home Policies/Rules
Hamburger Home dba Aviva Family and Children's Services	36	1	3	1	• Placement Change Status
LifeCircles Unlimited	6	1	3	1	• CSW Contact
Los Angeles Youth Network	12	1	3	1	• Family Contact
Star View Children and Family Services Community Treatment Facility	40	1	4	1	• Placement Change Status
Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services	20	1	5	1	• Placement Change Status
Haynes Family of Programs	72	1	5	1	• CSW Contact
Murrell's Farm and Boys Home	18	3	5	1	• Residential Conflict(s) with Peers
Careprovider.Org Foundation	12	2	1, 5	1	• School-Related Needs
Florence Crittenton Services of Orange County	54 (plus 37 beds for children under age 5)	1	Orange County	1	• Residential Conflict(s) with Peers
West Covina Group Corporation	6	1	San Bernardino County	1	• Clothing Needs
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>92</b>	

\*Requests are categorized based on the initial allegation as described by the youth/caller.

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY CHILDREN'S GROUP HOME OMBUDSMAN  
GROUP HOME SITES VISITED FOR OUTREACH**

July 1 through December 31, 2016

Group Home Agency	NC	JO	Supervisorial District(s) / County	Number of Sites	Site Visit Location(s)
B & I Group Home			1	2	•Pomona (2)
Blissful Living Group Home, Inc.	X		San Bernardino County	1	•Upland
Candlelight Home	X		1	1	•West Covina
Careprovider.Org Foundation			1, 5	2	•Covina •West Covina
Casa Editha Foundation			5	1	•Pasadena
Childhelp USA			Orange County, Riverside County	4	•Costa Mesa (3) •Beaumont
Children's Homes of Southern California			3	5	•Van Nuys (2) •West Hills (2) •Reseda
Deliaann-Lucile dba Delilu Achievement Home			2	1	•Los Angeles
Diakonia, Inc.			San Bernardino County	3	•Rialto (3)
Dream Home Care, Inc.			4	3	•Long Beach (3)
Eggleston Youth Centers			1, 5 San Bernardino County	4	•Covina •Ontario •Pomona •Upland
Fields Comprehensive Youth Services		X	San Bernardino County	2	•Rancho Cucamonga •Upland
Fleming & Barnes, Inc.dba Dimondale Adolescent Care Facility	X		2, 5	2	•Gardena <sup>2</sup> •Lancaster
Garces Residential Care Services			1	1	•Claremont
Hamburger Home dba Aviva Family and Children's Services		X	3	1	•Los Angeles
Hathaway-Sycamores Child and Family Services		X	5	1	•Altadena
Haynes Family of Programs		X	5	1	•La Verne
Hillside Home for Children			5	1	•Pasadena
Inclusion Specialized Programs	X		1	1	•Walnut
LifeCircles Unlimited			3	1	•Pacoima
Mary's Shelter			Orange County	2	•Santa Ana (2)
McKinley Children's Center			5	1	•San Dimas



<b>Group Home Agency</b>	<b>NC</b>	<b>JO</b>	<b>Supervisorial District(s) / County</b>	<b>Number of Sites</b>	<b>Site Visit Location(s)</b>
Murrell's Farm and Boys Homes			5	3	•Lancaster (3)
Penny Lane Centers <sup>1</sup>		X	3, 5	11	•North Hills
Phoenix House of Los Angeles		X	3	1	•Lakeview Terrace
Robsag, Inc.	X		5	1	•Altadena
Rosemary Children's Services		X	5	2	•Pasadena •South Pasadena
San Gabriel Children's Center <sup>1</sup>		X	1	3	•Azusa
Shouridge Group Home <sup>2</sup>	X		3	1	•West Hills
St. Anne's Maternity Home		X	1	1	•Los Angeles
The Dream Catcher Foundation			2	3	•Los Angeles (3)
Turmont Home for Girls			5	1	•Lancaster
Vista Del Mar Child and Family Services			2	1	•Los Angeles
West Covina Group Corporation			San Bernardino County	1	•Chino
<b>Total</b>				<b>70</b>	

NC=Non-Contracted Group Home

JO=Joint Outreach Visit with the Probation Ombudsman

<sup>1</sup> All sites congregated at one facility for outreach visit.

<sup>2</sup> Group Home was not contracted at time of visit but has a contract in place now.