COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
PROBATION DEPARTMENT

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DONALD H. BLEVINS
Chief Probation Officer

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July 15, 2011

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Donald H. Blevins
Chief Probation Officer

SUBJECT: **OPTIMIST YOUTH HOMES AND FAMILY SERVICES CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW**

We have completed a review of Optimist Youth Homes and Family Services (OYHFS) Group Homes, operated by OPTIMIST BOYS' HOME AND RANCH, INC. The Group Home contracts with the Los Angeles County Probation Department.

Optimist Group Homes consists of a 99-bed facility for the Main Campus and four (4) six-bed facilities, which provides care for boys and girls ages 12-18 years who exhibit behavioral, social, emotional, and psychological difficulties. In addition, Optimist Group Homes provides specialized treatment services for children with sex offenses and sexual identity issues. At the time of the monitoring review, Optimist Group Home was providing services for 79 Probation youths. Main Campus consists of 99 beds and provides care for boys. Eagle Rock and Van Nuys are six (6) bed Group Homes and provide care for girls. San Fernando Valley and South Bay are also six (6) beds Group Homes and provide care for boys.

Optimist Main Campus and Eagle Rock Group Home are located in the First District of Los Angeles County. Optimist San Fernando and Van Nuys Group Homes are located in the Third District of Los Angeles County. Optimist South Bay Group Home is located in the Second District of Los Angeles County.

SCOPE OF REVIEW

The purpose of our review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. In addition, 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. In addition, a review of the most current Auditor Controller Fiscal Review was not conducted as one has not been done to date.

SUMMARY

It should be noted that Optimist Group Homes have recently undergone a monitor review by the San Bernardino and Orange County Probation Departments on December 1, 2010, prior to our review. San Bernardino County Probation Monitor reported that there were no deficiencies cited during their review. Orange County Probation Monitor reported that there were very minimal deficiencies involving missing documents from several Personnel Files at the time of review, but was resolved when the documents were immediately produced for verification.

Based on youth interviews and the contents of the Needs and Service Plans (NSPs) reviewed, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. However, there are several deficiencies in the "Notable Findings" section that requires a corrective action plan. There are also a few deficiencies regarding the Group Home's physical facilities which require immediate attention, such as repairing a broken dresser track and replacing five (5) rusty and loose shower head flange covers.

The following are the notable findings of our review:

NOTABLE FINDINGS

- Electrical outlet plate cover missing in the Independent Living Program (ILP) dorm at the Main Campus.
- No GCIF electrical outlets in the bedroom and upstairs bathrooms at the South Bay house.
- Electrical outlet is not securely mounted flushed against the electrical box at the South Bay house.

EXIT CONFERENCE

In attendance:

Maria Rita Bhattachan, Director of Quality Improvement
Alex Tellez, Quality Improvement Supervisor
Leng Lim, Los Angeles County Probation Department Monitor

Highlights:

The Exit Conference was conducted on March 14, 2011. The deficiencies were addressed at the time of the exit conference. The representatives present were in agreement with the findings of the review. Quality Assurance Director Bhattachan understood the importance of compliance with the Master Agreement Contract for Group Home Foster Care Services and agreed to make all necessary corrections in the areas of compliance, and repairs or replacements. A written Corrective Action Plan was submitted on March 17, 2011, and has been approved. A follow-up visit was conducted on March 18, 2011 to ensure that all deficiencies have been corrected. The results for the follow-up visit can be found on the final page of the "Compliance Monitoring Review" section.

If you need any additional information or have any questions or concerns, please contact Director, Lisa Campbell-Motton, Placement Permanency and Quality Assurance at (323) 240-2435.

DHB:REB:LCM:ed

Attachments

c: William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer
Sachi A. Hamai, Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Brence Culp, Chief Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Wendy Watanabe, Auditor-Controller
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
Jean Chen, Community Care Licensing
Maria Rita Bhattachan, Optimist Group Home
Jacqueline A. White, Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Chief Deputies
Justice Deputies

OPTIMIST GROUP HOMES and FAMILY SERVICES
PROGRAM CONTRACT COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW

Boys Home & Ranch Day Treatment Center
6957 N. Figueroa Street
Los Angeles, CA 90042
License Number: 191801986
Rate Classification Level: 12

San Fernando Valley Group Home (Boys)
14820 Wolfskill Street
Mission Hills, CA 91345
License Number: 191201124
Rate Classification Level: 12

Van Nuys Group Home (Girls)
7130 Burnet Avenue
Van Nuys, CA 91405
License Number: 197600766
Rate Classification Level: 12

Eagle Rock Group Home (Girls)
1635 Silver Oak Terrace
Los Angeles, CA 90041
License Number: 191890971
Rate Classification Level: 12

South Bay Group Home (Boys)
20209 Tillman Avenues
Carson, CA 90745
License Number: 191604301
Rate Classification Level: 12

LICENSURE/CONTRACT COMPLIANCE

Based on our review of documents from the provider, Optimist Group Homes (Main, Eagle Rock, San Fernando Valley, Van Nuys, and South Bay), fully complied with all nine (9) elements in the area of Licensure/Contract Compliance: Timely Notification for Child's Relocation, Stabilization to Prevent Removal of Child, Special Incident Reports (SIRs), Compliance with Licensed Capacity, Disaster Drills Conducted, Disaster Drill Logs Maintenance and Runaway Procedures. The Group Home notifies all required agencies in a timely manner when a child is relocated. The Group Home takes all necessary steps to stabilize a child to prevent removal and provides the children with all their transportation needs. The Group Home completes and documents all SIRs in a timely manner, complies with licensing capacity, conducts disaster drills, maintains a disaster drill log and allowance logs, and follows runaway procedures accordingly.

Recommendations:

None

PROGRAM SERVICES

Based on our review of documents and interviews with 15 Probation placed children, Optimist Group Homes fully complied with all seven (7) elements in the area of Program Services. There were four (4) youths interviewed at the Main Campus, three (3) youths at the Eagle Rock site, three (3) youths at the South Bay site, three (3) youths at the San Fernando Valley site, and two (2) youths at the Van Nuys site, The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) found in the child's file were carefully reviewed. Of the 15 NSPs reviewed, each revealed that the treatment team develops and implements the NSPs with input from the child, the Probation caseworkers gave authorization to implement the NSPs

and the NSPs are current, comprehensive and include short and long term goals that are child specific. All NSPs included the required signatures.

The Group Home was in compliance with Probation Officer's contact, as verified through child interviews. The children all met the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement and are assessed for needed services within 30 days of placement. Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services. All 15 children interviewed stated that they receive weekly therapy sessions that includes individual, group and family sessions. The children interviewed stated that they were part of their NSP process, they understood their goals and had a part in developing them and received a copy.

Recommendations:

None

FACILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Based on our walk through inspection of Optimist Group Homes and interviews with 15 Probation placed children, Optimist Group Homes was not in compliance with one (1) of the six (6) elements in the area of Facility and Environment.

Optimist Group Homes are located in residential communities. The South Bay, Van Nuys, and San Fernando Valley Group Homes are newer developed construction while the Eagle Rock Group Home is a vintage Victorian style house. The Eagle Rock Group Home has recently undergone a complete kitchen renovation with updated appliances, fixtures, and countertops; however, the kitchen renovation did not retain its "period correct" vintage character and now has a more modern up-to-date look. The front exterior at all sites were well maintained and properly landscaped, with trimmed bushes, mowed lawns and the paint appeared clean.

Overall, the interiors of the Group Homes are well maintained. The common quarters are also neat and clean, there is adequate furniture and lighting, and the Group Home provides a home-like environment. The living and dining rooms are bright and airy. The window treatments and blinds appeared clean and free from dust. However, the interior common areas of the Group Homes are in need of repairs or replacements in the following deficient areas:

Main Campus, Gym:

- Repair entrance door guard metal trim that is bent.

Main Campus, Dorm A:

- Replace rusty shower head flange cover in Room #7.

Main Campus, Dorm B:

- Repair three (3) loose shower head flange covers in the community bathroom.

Main Campus, Dorm D:

- Replace three (3) rusty shower head flange covers in the community bathroom.

South Bay Group Home, Upstairs Bathroom:

- Replace existing electrical outlet with a GCIF electrical outlet as required by the current building codes.

The children's bedrooms are in unsatisfactory condition and need improvements in the deficient areas listed below.

Main Campus, ILP Dorm:

- Replace missing electrical outlet cover in the master bedroom.

San Fernando Group Home, Bedroom #1:

- Repair broken drawer tracks on child's dresser.

South Bay Group Home, Bedroom #1:

- Replace existing electrical outlet with a GCIF electrical outlet as required by the current building codes.

South Bay Group Home, Bedroom #2:

- Repair electrical outlet that is not securely mounted flushed against the electrical box.

The rooms are clean, 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, the beds all have a full complement of linens, and the children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home does maintain age-appropriate and accessible recreational equipment, such as, board games, a television, a computer, and a DVD player. Multiple books and resource materials are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non-perishable foods. There are fresh fruits and vegetables as well as snacks. The refrigerators on all sites were fully stocked with meats, vegetables, milk, and juices.

Recommendations:

1. Optimist Group Homes shall ensure that all aforementioned deficiencies cited will be corrected and repaired/replaced in a timely fashion in order to ensure the safety, security and well being of all children placed at the Group Homes.

2. For the interior, the Group Home needs to replace and repair all the electrical outlet deficiencies, repair damaged furniture and trim, and replace the shower head flange covers.

EDUCATIONAL AND EMANCIPATION SERVICES

Based on our review of documents and interviews with 15 Probation placed children, Optimist Group Home fully complied with all four (4) elements in the area of Education and Emancipation Services.

The children are attending school, are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs and are progressing satisfactorily in their respective schools. Of the 15 children's files reviewed, four (4) had an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) and documents are maintained in their files. Current report cards were maintained in all of the children's files reviewed.

The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help and survival skills such as personal grooming, washing their own clothes and dishes, and performing daily household chores. Children are also provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate. At the time of this review, one (1) child was receiving Independent Living Services. Optimist's Main Campus has an extensive emancipation program that consists of three (3) apartment units with a total of 12 beds allocated for the independent living program located on the campus. Children in this program live in an apartment type setting, where they are required to learn to be self-sufficient, budget their money, do their own laundry and grocery shopping, and preparing their own meals.

Recommendations:

None

RECREATION AND ACTIVITIES

Based on our review of documents and interviews with 15 Probation placed children, Optimist Group Homes fully complied with all three (3) elements in the area of Recreation and Activities.

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities and leisure time. The on-grounds activities include basketball, volleyball, swimming, and softball. There are also multifunctional games and weight rooms available for the children to partake. The children are provided with opportunities to actively participate in planning activities of their choice. The Group Home provides several off-ground recreational, social, and educational activities for the residents to participate in, such as outings to the beaches, parks, amusement parks, movie theatres, various sporting events, libraries, festivals, museums and etc. This was also confirmed by child interviews in that children stated that they participated in the recreational, social, and educational activities provided by the Group Home. The children also participate in extra-curricular, enrichment and social activities in which they have an interest. The Group Home provides all transportation to and from these activities.

Recommendations:

None

CHILDREN'S HEALTH RELATED-SERVICES, (INCLUDING PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION)

Based on our review of documents and interviews with 15 Probation placed children, Optimist Group Homes fully complied with all nine (9) elements in the area of Children's Health Related Services, Including Psychotropic Medication.

Of the 15 children interviewed, seven (7) of the 15 children have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication(s). Documentation based on the psychotropic medication review tool confirms that the child is routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist. All seven (7) children consistently stated that they know their right to refuse medication(s) at any time. The seven (7) children interviewed all reported that their prescribed medications have improved their daily living and that they are sleeping better at night. The seven (7) children confirmed that they see a psychiatrist every month and that it is explained to them what they are taking and why.

Medication distribution logs are properly maintained and children are aware of their right to refuse medication. All children interviewed stated that they are satisfied with the medical treatment they receive and go to the doctor and dentist as needed. A review of the documents and interviews with the children confirmed that they all saw a doctor and a dentist within their first 30 days of placement.

Recommendations:

None

PERSONAL RIGHTS

Based on our review of documents and interviews with 15 Probation placed children, Optimist Group Homes fully complied with all 11 elements in the area of Personal Rights.

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures upon being placed. 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 overall, the facility staff treat them with respect and dignity. Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are allowed to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, have private visitors, and attend religious services of their choice. Children reported satisfaction with the selection and amount of meals and snacks provided in the home. Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report that they are aware that they can reject or receive voluntary medical, dental, and psychiatric care. Children stated that they are all informed about psychotropic medication and their right to refuse them.

Recommendations:

None

CLOTHING AND ALLOWANCE

Based on our review of documents and interviews with 15 Probation placed children, Optimist Group Homes fully complied with all eight (8) elements in the area of Clothing and Allowance.

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity and the required $50 monthly clothing allowance as required by the Master Agreement Contract for Group Home Foster Care Services. Children have the option to receive their clothing allowances on a monthly basis or accumulate their monthly clothing allowances on a quarterly basis for bigger purchases. The children interviewed stated that they sign an allowance log for their monthly clothing allowance when they receive it, in addition to signing a waiver if they choose to forgo spending their allowance and save it for a bigger clothing purchase the following month. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes and the clothing provided is of good quality and of sufficient quantity. The Group Home conducts shopping outings every month at appropriate clothing stores. The Group Home keeps the receipts to verify how the children's clothing allowance is spent. These receipts were provided for review for each of the 15 children interviewed. The children reported that they are satisfied with their choice of shopping venues and confirmed that they receive their clothing allowance on a monthly basis.

The Group Home provides children with the required minimum weekly allowance of $7 and the children spend their allowances as they choose. All children interviewed stated that they spend their allowance weekly on items such as snacks, sodas, foods, and CDs.

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

Recommendations:

None

PERSONNEL RECORDS

Based on our review of documents in the employee's files, Optimist Group Homes fully complied with all 12 elements in the area of Personnel Records.

A review of 25 employee records was completed. Five (5) employee files were reviewed at each site: Main Campus, Eagle Rock site, South Bay site, San Fernando site, and Van Nuys site. All training and background checks were completed and current. All staff in the sample had current driver's licenses, First Aid/CPR training, 20 hours of On-Going training, de-escalation and restraint training. All files reviewed had the required educational documentation, criminal and child abuse clearances for their employees prior to being hired.

Recommendations:

None

AUDITOR CONTROLLER FISCAL REVIEW

As of the date of this review, there has not been a Fiscal Review completed by the Auditor Controller's Office.

Recommendations:

N/A

FOLLOW-UP VISIT

On March 18, 2011, a follow-up visit was conducted at Optimist's Main Campus, San Fernando and South Bay Group Homes, to verify that all recommendations had been completed.

- A complete follow-up walk through inspection of the interior at the Main Campus, San Fernando and South Bay Group Homes was conducted, and all recommendations have been repaired or replaced. The bent Gym entrance door guard trim was repaired and fastened back in placed. The rusty and loose shower head flange covers were replaced with new ones. The existing electrical outlets were replaced with new GCIF electrical outlets. The missing electrical outlet cover was replaced. The loose electrical outlet was repaired and properly secured to the electrical box. The dresser drawer track was repaired and the drawer now opens easily.

OPTIMIST GROUP HOME PROGRAM CONTRACT
COMPLIANCE MONITORING REVIEW- SUMMARY

	Contract Compliance Monitoring Review	Findings: March/2011
I	**Licensure/Contract Requirements** (9 Elements) 1. Timely Notification for Child's Relocation 2. Stabilization to Prevent Removal of Child 3. Transportation 4. SIRs 5. Compliance with Licensed Capacity 6. Disaster Drills Conducted 7. Disaster Drill Logs Maintenance 8. Runaway Procedures 9. Allowance Logs	(Full Compliance) ALL
II	**Program Services** (7 Elements) 1. Child Population Consistent with Program Statement 2. Probation Caseworker Authorization to Implement NSPs 3. Children's Participation in the Development of NSPs 4. NSPs Implemented and Discussed with Staff/Parents 5. Therapeutic Services Received 6. Recommendation Assessments/Evaluations Implemented 7. Probation Caseworkers Monthly Contact Verified	(Full Compliance) ALL
III	**Facility and Environment** (6 Elements) 1. Exterior Well Maintained 2. Common Areas Maintained 3. Children's Bedrooms/Interior Maintained 4. Sufficient Recreational Equipment 5. Sufficient Educational Resources 6. Adequate Perishable and Non Perishable Food	1. Full Compliance 2. Full Compliance 3. Needs Improvement 4. Full Compliance 5. Full Compliance 6. Full Compliance
IV	**Educational and Emancipation Services** (4 Elements) 1. Emancipation/Vocational Programs Provided 2. ILP and Emancipation Planning 3. Current IEPs Maintained 4. Current Report Cards Maintained	(Full Compliance) ALL

V	**Recreation and Activities** (3 Elements) 1. Participation in Recreational Activity Planning 2. Participation in Recreational Activities 3. Participation in Extra-Curricular, Enrichment and Social Activities.	(Full Compliance) ALL
VI	**Children's Health-Related Services (including Psychotropic Medications)** (9 Elements) 1. Current Court Authorization for Administration of Psychotropic Medication 2. Current Psychiatric Evaluation/Review 3. Medication Logs 4. Initial Medical Exams Conducted 5. Initial Medical Exams Timely 6. Follow-Up Medical Exams Timely 7. Initial Dental Exams 8. Initial Dental Exams Timely 9. Follow-Up Dental Exams Timely	(Full Compliance) ALL
VII	**Personal Rights** (11 Elements) 1. Children Informed of Home's Policies and Procedures 2. Children Feel Safe 3. Satisfaction with Meals and Snacks 4. Staff Treatment of Children with Respect and Dignity 5. Appropriate Rewards and Discipline System 6. Children Free to Received or Reject Voluntary Medical, Dental and Psychiatric Care 7. Children Allowed Private Visits, Calls and Correspondence. 8. Children Free to Attend Religious Services/Activities 9. Reasonable Chores 10. Children Informed about Psychotropic Medication 11. Children Aware of Right to Refuse Psychotropic Medication	(Full Compliance) ALL
VIII	**Children's Clothing and Allowance** (8 Elements) 1. $50.00 Clothing Allowance 2. Adequate Quantity Clothing Inventory 3. Adequate Quality Clothing Inventory 4. Involvement in Selection of Clothing 5. Provision of Personal Care Items 6. Minimum Monetary Allowances 7. Management of Allowance 8. Encouragement and Assistance with Life Book	(Full Compliance) ALL

IX	**Personal Records (including Staff Qualifications, Staffing Ratios, Criminal Clearances and Training)** (12 Elements) 1. Education/ Experience Requirement 2. Criminal Fingerprint Cards Timely Submitted 3. CAIs Timely Submitted 4. Signed Criminal Background Statement Timely 5. Employee Health Screening Timely 6. Valid Driver's Licenses 7. Signed Copies of GH Policies and Procedures 8. Initial Training Documentation 9. CPR Training Documentation 10. First Aid Training Documentation 11. On Going Training Documentation 12. Emergency Intervention Training Documentation	(Full Compliance) ALL

Today's Children Tomorrow's Promise

OPTIMIST
Youth Homes & Family Services

Silvio John Orlando, ACSW

Douglas E. Buttrick

County of Probation
Placement Administrative Services
Group Home Investigation Unit
Attn: Leng L. Lim, Deputy Probation Officer II
3965 South Vermont Avenue
Los Angeles, CA

March 17, 2011

Affiliations

ACCREDITED

A·C·H·S·A ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES

American Association of Children's Residential Centers

Optimist International

Dear DPO Lim:

Please find attached our corrective action plan in regards to your facility inspection 2/7/2011, 2/9/2011, and 2/11/2011.
If you have any further questions, feel free to call or email me.
Thank you.
Sincerely,

Maria Bhattachan, Director of Quality Improvement

Facility and Environment:

Main Campus:

Gym:
Finding: Gym entrance door guard bent outwards out of position.
CAP: The door guard was fix during the site visit on 2/7/2011.

Dorm A & C:
Findings: Three (3) rusty bathroom shower head flanges.
CAP: The flanges were replaced during the site visit on 2/7/2011.

Dorm B:
Finding: Three (3) loose bathroom shower head flanges in the community bathroom.
CAP: The flanges were fixed/ replaced during the site visit on 2/7/2011.

ILP House:
Findings: One electric outlet cover plate was missing.
CAP: The outlet cover was replaced during the site visit on 2/7/2011.

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Facility and Environment:

Group Homes:

San Fernando Group Home:

Finding: Bedroom #1: Dresser drawer does not open properly.
CAP: The drawer tracks were repaired during the site visit on 2/9/2011

South Bay Group Home:

Findings:
Bedroom #1: No GCIF electrical outlet by sink.
CAP: GCIF electrical outlet was installed on 2/11/2011.
Bedroom #3: Loose electrical outlet.
CAP: Electrical outlet was secured on 2/9/2011
Upstairs Hallway Bathroom: No GCIF electrical outlet by sink.
CAP: GCIF electrical outlet was installed on 2/11/2011.

Again, thank you for your visit!