

Sonoma County Juvenile Justice Commission Facility Inspection Report

Facility Name:	R House -- Middle Rincon House
Address:	On file.
Phone	On file.
Contact Person	Sabrina Coyle-Johnson, Clinical Director

J.J.C. Inspector(s)	Patrick Veeninga & Hank Mattimore
Date of Inspection	November 14, 2013
Date of Last Inspection	New House
C.C.L. Contact	Pauline Muntzer
Date of Last C.C.L. Inspection	N/A

**S= Satisfactory or exceeds N.I. = Needs Improvement/corrective action*

INSPECTED	S	N.I.	Comments
Grounds			
Building Exterior			
Living Room			[PLEASE SEE ATTACHED REPORT]
Kitchen			
Bedrooms			
Bathrooms			
Fire Safety -Extinguishers -Smoke Alarms -Evac. Plan ?			
Food			
Health Services			
Medications			
Recreation (on site)			
Outings (off site)			
Education/ Classrooms			
Mail/Phone			

JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION OF SONOMA COUNTY

JJC Inspection of "R House"
on November 14, 2013

Commissioners: Hank Mattimore/Patrick Veeninga
Accompanied by Sabrina Coyle-Johnson, Clinical Director

BACKGROUND

According to the pre-inspection report, R house is a level 12 facility serving youth 14-18 years old with a substance abuse or mental health diagnosis. Average length of stay is 90 days. The average number of run-aways is twelve annually. The vast majority of the residents come from out of county. On our visit, only one person was a Sonoma County resident. Many are from the Oakland/San Francisco area. Average monthly cost per resident is \$8,529. The facility accepts both 601 and 602 status youth and accepts all but applicants considered suicidal severely psychotic or fire-setting risks.

THE INSPECTION

We arrived at "R House" at 3 PM and were greeted by the Clinical Director, Sabrina Coyle-Johnson. She explained that R House provides treatment to 14-18 year old youth with a mental health or substance abuse diagnosis. The four residences each serve up to six residents, two houses for males and two for females.

While the program has space for 24 residents (12 male, 12 female) our purpose today was to inspect one of the girls' houses. The other three houses had been inspected previously this year.

The house for girls we inspected was clean and comfortable. However, we noted that the couch was broken and cushions lined the floor. We were assured that it was to be repaired or replaced soon.

In the kitchen we noticed that plastic dishes were being used. We were told that this was to keep them from breaking on counter tops.

The three rooms housing the girls were spacious and were adorned with personal photos and art work. The six girls used the one full bath for showers; three took morning showers and three at night. There is also a half-bath downstairs.

Medications were locked and accessible only to staff. The same is true of knives. However we were unable to inspect the locked drawers, as no key was available.

Morning and evening meals during the week are prepared by staff on site. Noon meals are taken at the main school building. Male and female residents are kept separate from one another, Phone calls to family are allowed twice a week but a staff person is present during their phone conversations. Sunday visits are allowed with family members assuming the girls have been faithful to the program. Home visits are allowed only occasionally depending on the behavior of the individual residents.

Classes at the school are scheduled from 8 AM to 3 PM., followed by mandatory participation in either AA or NA programs, some of which are conducted on the campus and some of them off-site. Other classes are offered in the areas of anger management, sex education and conflict resolution. Group therapy sessions are also held weekly. There are two to three counselors on staff who provide individual counseling for the residents. Every effort is made for each girl to have at least one personal counseling session weekly. Family counseling sessions are held twice monthly.

Saturday is a free day and after completing assigned household tasks, the girls often go with staff on outings to places like Cal Skate or a movie. Other than on Saturday, there appears to be little opportunity for physical exercise except they are allowed to go to a gym on Wednesdays.

YOUTH INTERVIEWS

We interviewed two residents, a girl who had been at R House for approximately two months and another girl who had been residing there for four months. Even though we interviewed them separately, their impressions of life at R House and their suggestions were surprisingly similar.

Both felt that they were definitely being helped and had learned a lot about themselves and their addictions. Both felt positive about the support they were receiving from "most of" the staff. But they were concerned about turnover of staff. One said, "Just as I was starting to feel comfortable with one of the staff, she left."

We asked them about the education they were receiving. One felt it to be adequate. "I don't think I

have lost any ground." The other was a tad more positive and said she welcomed "the extra help I receive from the teacher."

One girl was frustrated that the two counselors were too busy and it was difficult to have individual counseling session once a week.

Both girls complained that the AA and NA meeting they attended off-site and were not as appropriate for them since the sessions were attended mostly by middle-aged people who did not relate to their own generational issues.

The girls were also dissatisfied with the phone call regulations. They are limited to calls with family members and all calls take place in the presence of a staff person.

They had two major complaints:

1. The food is poor, poorly prepared and full of carbs and processed foods. They told us the food was prepared by the person on the night shift and then heated up for their consumption the next day. One of the girls said that several on the program were putting on weight as a result of their unhealthy diet. Further, residents were not asked for their input into what foods they might prefer.

2. The schedule needs to be more flexible, allowing them to have at least a little more free time to do things like personal journaling or just more down time. They felt that their schedule was over-structured.

Despite their reservations, both residents were not unhappy with their program and felt that they were making real progress. One girl summed up her experience so far as being a good one. "We have good staff and most of them are both competent and comforting. We are glad to have the chance to be here and work on ourselves."

POST INSPECTION SUMMARY

We met briefly with the clinical director after the youth interviews and shared their observations with her. She told us she was aware of the shortcomings in both the quality of the food and the lack of good preparation and were working to do a better job with it. She agreed that the schedule was perhaps too tight and didn't leave enough space for personal time. She also bemoaned the fact that there has been a lot of

staff turnover in the past year. The agency is in the process of hiring a new Executive Director in the near future and she was hopeful that a new administration might be in a position to tackle some of the issues that the girls had raised.

We completed the inspection with words of commendation for the program that R House has in place. With the reservations cited above we feel that the program is being well run and the residents feel safe and well cared for.

We strongly recommend that immediate corrective action be taken to correct the food preparation policy.

Respectfully submitted:

Hank Mattimore

Patrick Veeninga