

## Sonoma County Juvenile Justice Commission Group Home Inspection Report

Facility Name:	Valley of the Moon Children's Home
Address:	On File
Phone	On File
Contact Person	Leslie Winters, Section Manager

J.J.C. Inspector(s)	Robert Faux Jane Person
Date of Inspection	May 9, 2016
Date of Last Inspection	April 15, 2015
C.C.L. Contact	Pauline Muntzer
Date of Last C.C.L. Inspection	April 2016

*\*O = Outstanding \*S= Satisfactory or exceeds \*N.I. = Needs Improvement/corrective*

### *Action*

INSPECTED	O	S	N.I.	Comments
Grounds	X			Well maintained with excellent outdoor playground areas
Building Exterior	X			Modern building in excellent condition with no deterioration. There are two sections, one for administrative functions (locked access) and one for residential housing (unlocked units.) There are separate boys and girls' wings in the latter, each with a central living room and adjacent hallways with bathrooms and individual (possibly shared) bedrooms. The building also contains medical and dental exam rooms, a reception area for kids being placed there, interview rooms for intake, and multiple storage rooms that were fully stocked.
Living Room		X		Spacious, clean areas for both boys' and girls' wings.
Kitchen		X		Well-equipped, clean, cafeteria-style commercial kitchen.
Bedrooms		X		Clean, two beds, appropriately furnished. Same sex siblings can share, or non-related child, if deemed appropriate. Older children are expected to maintain neatness of bedroom.
Bathrooms		X		Two on each bedroom hallway; clean, shower curtain for privacy, separate room bathing tub for disabled and very young children.
Fire Safety --Extinguishers			X	Extinguishers recently checked and in place, except that one for Bamboo Room play area seemed hard to locate, so should be made more readily available to staff.
Fire Safety --Smoke Alarms		X		Smoke alarms in every open areas and hallways throughout facility.
Fire Safety --Evacuation Plan		X		Plan posted at every door to exterior; no locked doors to exterior in residential areas.

Food		X		Menu varies from week to week with chefs given OK to create dishes. Weekly menus are posted, but there is no set rotating of menu, allowing for more variation. Boys and girls eat at separate sittings. Dining area furnishing adequate for use. Staff eat there, too, with children. Fruit bowls are placed through living areas for snacks.
Emergency Supplies	X			Very well stocked, especially with stuffed animals for kids experiencing anxiety or in crisis. Special “Blue Bags” filled with helpful items for kids transitioning out.
Health Services	X			Two very well equipped dental rooms with on-site dentist at least once during the week; a second dentist to be added to expand service to all foster children. Full medical exams for each child within 2-3 days after arrival, plus dental screening within 1-2 weeks. Behavioral Health Clinician on staff, linked to Child Psychiatrist for psychotropic meds, as needed.
Medications		X		De-licing and immunization protocols are in place for all children. PA and RN monitor meds and regular medical care on site. Children with existing medical services are taken to regular doctors.
Recreation (on site)	X			“Bamboo Room” is full of play stuff for very young; 2 outdoor climbing areas in separate, age appropriate settings; lots of games in each indoor living area; staff always on site supervising children.
Outings (off site)				Not covered per se. There is visitation with parents on site, and, any specific supervision is done by county social worker.
Education & Classrooms				No schooling done on site; kids go to regular schools and are picked up by school bus and dropped off at end of school day. Pre-school children get playtime in the Bamboo Room and naptime, with cribs for youngest in special rooms off to the side.
Mail/Phone		X		Mail in and out done on regular basis; children have access to public phones and portable phones kept by staff; children may use their own cell phones.
Discipline		X		Restrictions based on Boys Town Psycho-Educational Model with point card system and target goals
Library		X		Lots of games and books—though it seemed mostly for younger children

**ADDITIONAL NOTES**

The fire extinguisher for Bamboo Room play area seemed hard to locate, so should be made more readily available to staff.

## Youth Interviews

TOPICS	O	S	N.I.	Comments
Evaluation of Program		X		Better program than at Juvenile Hall because more flexible for older youth.
Program Understood			X	He is getting "Living Independently" program for special education children at school, which he has had before, and feels he is just repeating old stuff; he would like something new.
Levels (Privileges)		X		He is aware of the system and believes that it is fair.
Grievances		X		He would like special shampoo "Tresame" as others don't work for him.
Discipline		X		Not a problem
Staff Evaluation		X		OK, gets along with them.
Health Services		X		OK, no medical problems.
Counseling/Therapy		X		This he receives at school, but doesn't think it does much.
Chores & Allowance		X		Graduated scale of allowance per week from which he receives \$5 per week; keeping bedroom clean and neat is only chore.
Laundry		X		Handled by staff
Clothes		X		Clean clothes always, nothing special.
Food			X	He feels that Juvenile Hall food was better, more teen oriented menu and proportions.
Snacks		X		Mostly fruit in bowls, such as apples and oranges, but the nectarines are too small and tasteless—a fruit he really enjoys.
School		X		He attends Casa Grande High School, Petaluma, in the special education program; picked up by regular school bus daily.
Library			X	Books are mostly for younger children; he would like fantasy novels and science fiction added to selection.
Activities & Entertainment		X		He plays video games and reads most of the time; doesn't use the climbing apparatus; is free to go for walks. He likes art, but it wasn't clear how much art activity is available on site. He dropped art at school because he didn't like the teacher.
Money		X		He gets \$5 a week and that's ok.

### ADDITIONAL NOTES & SUGGESTIONS BY YOUTH

# of Youth Interviewed:      \_\_\_1\_\_\_

He had spent some time at Juvenile Hall before being transferred to VOM. He is there with his twin brother, and he would prefer to remain there rather than being returned to his parents. He does not want visits with them. This boy was a bit guarded in his replies to questions, in part it seemed, because of possible developmental issues; however, he was quite friendly and articulate in his responses to direct questions. He did not volunteer a great deal except that he really wants the particular shampoo "Tresame". We conveyed his request for the shampoo to the Director of the

facility and she said that they would get that for him.

## Inspection Summary

This is a well-designed, spacious, modern facility that is in excellent condition. The administrative staff is concerned for the welfare of the children, attentive to their needs and forward thinking in anticipating situations, which might need special attention. The real challenge is that under AB 403 they are no longer going to be a “shelter” with some extended stays, but must convert to a “10 day” processing facility for placing children into specific foster care. They are working with Sonoma County staff on this transition, but foresee that it will take longer than provided for under AB 403. The County will give them some leeway as is deemed appropriate. What this will mean in the staffing and operation of this facility in the future remains to be seen, but there are ongoing meetings with stakeholders to assess this.

Administrators indicated that more coordination between their residential staff and mental health services would be helpful. This would let them be sure who is in need of such services, who is receiving them and how those services could facilitate the care given by the staff to the children in question. It seemed as if there was not clarity as to which children were being served in this way.

One special concern is the need for a truly bilingual staffing capacity. This is especially needed to communicate with many of the parents whose children are being placed there. An increase in the VOM budget by the County to address this need would seem warranted.

Some of the operation of this facility is supported by the Valley of the Moon Children’s Foundation, focused on meeting ordinary needs of children separated from their families. One outstanding aspect of this is the “Blue Bag” program noted above, These duffle bags are filled with new clothes, a stuffed animal, a volunteer made quilt and any special item deemed appropriate. The bags are differentiated by sex and age.

Next Inspection Recommended: \_\_\_\_\_ or   X   Annual

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Inspection**  
Inspection Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mary Cone, Chairperson

cc: Honorable Judge of the Sonoma County Superior Court  
Commissioner of the Juvenile Court  
Probation Department, Chief of Probation  
Sonoma County Family Youth & Children's Services  
State of California, Community Care Licensing  
Facility Inspected

Revised 7/31/14