

Juvenile Hall

Background

Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall, located at 3650 Graham Hill Road, was built in 1968. Juvenile Hall was established pursuant to Article 14, Section 850 of the State Welfare and Institutions Code which requires the Board of Supervisors to provide and maintain a suitable place for the detention of juvenile wards. Juvenile Hall provides temporary, secure custody of juveniles between the ages of 12 and 18 who are referred by law enforcement agencies, the Probation Department, and Juvenile Court. The youth are held there to await due process through the juvenile court. The law requires that reasonable efforts be made to keep a juvenile at home and in his or her community, rather than in detention. The youth are only kept in juvenile hall if public and personal safety issues rise to the level where home release is not feasible, or there is a strong likelihood that the juvenile will not make his or her court appearance.

Nine members of the Grand Jury visited Juvenile Hall on September 19, 2007.

Findings

General

1. One of only four facilities in the nation to be so recognized, Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall is a model site for the Annie E. Casey Foundation Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI). JDAI objectives are:
 - To reach consensus among all juvenile justice agencies about the purpose of secure detention and to eliminate its inappropriate or unnecessary use
 - To reduce the number of alleged delinquents failing to appear in court or committing new offenses
 - To use limited juvenile justice resources in a more efficient manner by developing responsible alternatives to secure confinement rather than adding new detention beds
 - To improve conditions and alleviate overcrowding in secure detention facilities
2. Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall has been recognized by the Justice Policy Institute in Washington, D.C., for its successful reduction in the number of minors detained through implementation of reforms inspired by the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative.

Facilities

3. The rated capacity of Juvenile Hall is 42. The facility experienced its highest daily count of 61 detainees in January 1997. As a result, the Probation Department developed a continuum of alternatives to detention designed to maintain the population of the Juvenile Hall below the rated capacity without impacting public safety. Although primary funding for these support programs comes from the County of Santa Cruz, the Probation Department has secured State mental health and private foundation grants.

4. The average daily occupancy for 2006-2007 was 25 with an annual admission of 894. On the day of the inspection, there were 19 males and one female. However, the staff reported there are usually 20-25 percent females and 75-80 percent males. About 55 percent of youth are listed as non-White. Typically, all occupants are between the ages of 12 and 18, but rare exceptions occur, when someone younger than 12 or older than 18 may be housed at Juvenile Hall. The average age of juveniles housed is 16. Older youth can be held at Juvenile Hall if their offenses occurred prior to age 18.
5. The facility passed inspection by the State of California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation on July 9, 2007. The inspection process was conducted by the fire marshal, health department, building inspector, superintendent of schools, the juvenile court and the Juvenile Justice Commission. The medical, mental health, nutrition and environmental health inspections revealed no deficiencies. The fire marshal's report rated the facility as having "a reasonable level of fire and life safety."
6. Juveniles are housed in two units connected by a common hallway. The "A" unit houses older, more sophisticated offenders who have committed more serious crimes, while the "B" unit houses girls and the younger, less sophisticated male detainees.
7. Juveniles are housed in small private rooms. Each room has a toilet, sink, drinking fountain and bed.
8. Some doors to the rooms were previously modified to swing out into the hall rather than into the rooms, which increased living space and safety for the staff. The rooms were in good repair, considering the age of the facility.

Response from the County: AGREES.

9. Shower rooms were recently upgraded to provide separation and privacy.
10. The dayroom areas were clean and orderly.
11. Due to the age of the facility, continual maintenance is required. County maintenance provides support in repairing toilets, showers, and kitchen equipment. County building facilities personnel conduct weekly inspections of the facility. Juvenile Hall has previously upgraded both unit bathrooms, the plumbing in individual rooms, and a new medical/health wing has been completed. Security screens in the sleeping rooms have been replaced. Floor and ceiling tiles were replaced in 2006-2007 and a phased-in upgrade to the security system is also underway.
12. The facility has a video monitoring system. However, during the Grand Jury inspection, several cameras and the intercom system were not working. In addition, some of the security systems are out of date. A phased upgrade to the security system is underway. Phase I includes the installation of wiring, and other infrastructure for working cameras, video recording devices, intercom, control panels, video monitors, music system, door locking system (for facility entrance and exit). Phase II includes the installation of the security components. County General Services Department has assured Juvenile Hall this work will be underway by January 2008 and completed by June 2008.

13. The kitchen and dining areas were clean and appeared adequate. The County is working with the Criminal Justice Research Foundation in anticipation of potential State funds to renovate the kitchen area.
14. Juvenile Hall needs a new heating and air conditioning system, retrofitting of the remaining doors for the juveniles' rooms and an upgraded loading door for the food service pantry. The cost for these projects is estimated to be \$867,700.

Response from the County: AGREES.

15. The outdoor space is well maintained, although there is inadequate recreational space to meet Title 15 requirements. Current standards call for 7500 square feet of recreational outdoor space, but only the uncovered courtyard area (5900 square feet) is useable. There is additional outdoor space that could help meet Title 15 standards, but it can't be used due to lack of security fencing. The additional space includes a grassy area, a basketball hoop and volleyball court.

Response from the County: AGREES.

Operations

16. The average length of stay in Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall in 2006 was 8.7 days.
17. Juveniles brought to Juvenile Hall undergo a risk assessment screening to determine if they pose a threat to the public and if they can be released to house arrest. The assessment involves scoring of nine critical areas: (1) seriousness of the offense, (2) current arrest on warrant, (3) legal status, (4) risk of re-offense, (5) risk of new offense, (6) mitigating factors, (7) aggravating factors, (8) victim/witness factors and (9) substance use. After this screening, juveniles undergo medical and mental health assessments.
18. Upon intake, juveniles are given an orientation to the rules of the facility and the consequences of a violation. Rules are posted on bulletin boards.
19. Juveniles who are sentenced and not recommended for home detention are sent out of the county to facilities operated by the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) to serve their sentences. There are no DJJ facilities in Santa Cruz County.
20. Medical services are provided to all juvenile residents through the County Health Services Agency. Staffing consists of 56 hours per week of registered nursing services and eight hours of nurse practitioner services. The Mental Health Division of the Health Services Agency provides crisis intervention, individual counseling and assessment services for all residents of Juvenile Hall. Approximately 95 percent of the residents receive mental health services while in custody. A substance abuse specialist performs drug and alcohol abuse assessments and develops treatment recommendations for Juvenile Hall residents.
21. There is currently no automated external defibrillator (AED) onsite, but one is on order through the Health Services Agency, and the cost will be shared with the Probation Department. It will be installed at the Institutional Supervisor's work station for use by both Juvenile Hall and the Probation Department. The nurse will train all Juvenile Hall staff in the use of the AED. Training may take some time due to scheduling needs; however, there will be a trained staff working on each shift.

Untrained staff will not be permitted to use the device. Maintenance of the device will be the responsibility of the nurse.

22. The Hartman School operates year-round onsite. The County Office of Education provides one full-time teacher, one bilingual senior instructional aide and a part-time resource specialist. Juveniles are enrolled within one day of admission to Juvenile Hall. Juveniles receive the same amount of instructional time as required in public schools. The Hartman School staff works with the Probation and Juvenile Hall staffs to manage students in a successful and positive educational environment. The classrooms appeared well stocked with instructional materials and computers.
23. At Juvenile Hall, weekly meetings are provided by Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, and various religious groups visit regularly. Barrios Unidos provides individual and group counseling and sponsors many special events. Volunteers also provide weekly poetry writing workshops, yoga and meditation instruction. Friday Night Live offers a structured life skills curriculum teaching youth to make healthy life choices.
24. Juvenile Hall management and staff believe that support programs for the youth are important to help reduce recidivism. Management has hired bilingual staff and conducted employee racial sensitivity training. The staff has secured placements for the juvenile offenders in the community in a way that is sensitive to racial issues.
25. The Santa Cruz County Probation Department has taken steps to address the disproportionate minority representation in Juvenile Hall by examining its systems to ensure policies and practices are not contributing to disproportionate confinement of youth of color.
26. In partnership with county mental health and community-based providers, the County has developed a network of services delivered in the community and at day treatment sites. This approach encourages the family to take the lead in developing a plan to have youth be successful in their own homes. The result of this emphasis is that the County has one of the lowest out-of-home placement rates in the state.
27. The number of probation officers dedicated to Juvenile Hall varies according to the population. On the day of the Grand Jury inspection, there were five probation officers on site, two for each unit with one additional crossover officer. The Corrections Standards Authority concluded in its inspection that there were an adequate number of personnel to carry out the facility program and meet established standards and regulations. During hours that minors are awake, one probation officer is on duty for each 10 minors in detention. During hours that minors are asleep, one probation officer is on duty for each 15 minors in detention. At least one probation officer on duty is the same gender as minor(s) who are housed in the facility. There is always one senior institutional supervisor on duty who is responsible for all operations and activities.
28. During sleeping hours, juveniles are locked in their rooms. Each cell has a night light, and a staff member walks the halls making safety checks every 15 minutes.
29. Interns from Cabrillo College, San Jose State University, and the University of California Santa Cruz assist staff with programs and provide individual attention to the detainees. Training is an ongoing process because it takes a minimum of five weeks and there is high turnover.

30. About half of the 24 full time permanent staff is bilingual, including administrative, kitchen and housekeeping staff.
31. Parents are charged a daily fee of \$24 while their children are housed in Juvenile Hall. The fees are collected by County Collections. When families are not able to pay, they are encouraged to contact County Collections to arrange a payment schedule to match their needs. The response of County Collections is governed by their internal policies.
32. As of the date of Grand Jury's visit on September 19, 2007, there had been 14 incidents of juveniles fighting and one incident of assault on a staff person at Juvenile Hall during the year. This represents an increase in fights over prior years. In 2004, 10 fights were reported and six fights were reported in 2005. In 2006, there were 10 fights and 15 assaults. There had been no serious injuries to either detainees or staff.
33. In May of 2007, Juvenile Hall staff received critical incident response training to improve its ability to diffuse volatile situations before they erupt into violent encounters.
34. Juvenile Court is located onsite with one Superior Court Judge assigned to preside over all cases.

Conclusions

1. Juvenile Hall is well managed and operated by a professional and caring staff.
2. The Juvenile Hall program strives to provide detained juveniles with a safe and secure environment, free of fear, trauma, intimidation or abuse, and in the least restrictive environment consistent with public safety.
3. The facility is well maintained despite its age.
4. The Santa Cruz County Probation Department emphasizes keeping children with their families and in their communities.
5. A covered outside area would provide a better place for physical activity during poor weather conditions.
6. Fencing around the upper field would allow the detainees to use the spacious grassy area, a basketball hoop and volleyball net and have access to a general open air feeling not found in the rest of the facility.
7. Video monitoring is inadequate and should be upgraded to ensure safety and security. This is being implemented.
8. Intercom systems would provide better security and safety; installation of intercoms is being implemented.
9. Modifying some of the doors to the rooms so they swing out into the hall rather than into the rooms not only freed up living space but also removed the possibility that the occupant could bar the door, assuring safety for the staff.
10. Juvenile Hall staff strives to provide a safe and humane environment. It recognizes and respects the dignity of the youths in detention.
11. The Probation Department continues to work with the community to enhance and develop alternatives to detention.

Recommendations

1. The Grand Jury strongly recommends the Board of Supervisors and the Probation Department locate the necessary funding to install fencing required for the juveniles to use the ball field, basketball and volleyball courts and grassy area to increase exercise opportunities and meet Title 15 outside space requirements.

Response from the County: HAS NOT BEEN IMPLEMENTED, BUT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE FUTURE.

2. The Board of Supervisors should ensure that the plans to upgrade the heating and ventilation system at Juvenile Hall are implemented as soon as possible.

Response from the County: WILL BE IMPLEMENTED.

The HVAC upgrade is included as Phase 2 in the Security System Assessment and Preliminary Cost Estimate. Phase 1, which includes a security and communication system upgrade is currently underway. Once complete, the project will need to be put out to bid and funds for Phase 2 will need to be appropriated

3. To increase safety, the remaining doors to the sleeping rooms should be modified so they open out.

Response from the County: REQUIRES FURTHER ANALYSIS.

This item is included in Phase 2 of the Security System Assessment and Preliminary Cost Estimate. The Probation Department has been working with General Services and contractors to prioritize the recommended upgrade projects

Commendations

1. The Grand Jury commends the Probation Department and Juvenile Hall staff for their professionalism and dedication to the young people they serve, their families and the community.
2. The Grand Jury commends the Juvenile Hall staff and the Probation Department for securing outside funds and grants for diversion programs and other support programs for the youth and their families.

Responses Required

Respondent	Findings	Recommendations	Respond Within / Respond By
County of Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors	8, 14, 15	1, 2, 3	60 days September 1, 2008
County of Santa Cruz Probation Department	8, 14, 15	1, 3	90 days October 1, 2008

Sources

Documents/Articles/Policies and Procedures

State of California-Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation-Corrections Standards Authority 2006-2008 Biennial Inspection Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 209.

Juvenile Halls, Special Purpose Juvenile Halls and Camps-Corrections Standards Authority-Procedures.

Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative, Santa Cruz County California, August 1 & 2, 2007.

Santa Cruz County Probation Department-Continuum of Juvenile Services, July, 2007.

Interviews with Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office Personnel

Juvenile Justice Crime Prevention Act-Annual Report, March 2007.

Santa Cruz County Proposed Budget 2007-2008, Probation, Juvenile Hall Index Code 572000.

Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury Report, 2006-2007.

Santa Cruz County Civil Grand Jury Report, 2005-2006.

State of California, California Code of Regulations, Title 15. Crime Prevention and Corrections,

http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Regulations/Adult_Operations/docs/Title15-2007.pdf

Health and Safety Code (HSC) Section 13146.1.

Health Department (HSC) Section 101045.

Newspaper Articles

Santa Cruz Sentinel

"County's Juvenile Delinquent Program Gets National Kudos", September 26, 2007.

"Fewer Kids Committing Crime, Admissions Drop at Juvenile Hall, Report Shows," November 26, 2006.

Web Sites

<http://sccounty01.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/prb/org/juvenilehall.asp>

<http://sccounty01.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/prb/org/juvenileservices.asp>

