

Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall

Background

Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall, located at 3650 Graham Hill Road, was built in 1968. There have been several modifications to the facility since its construction. Ten rooms were added in 1971, bringing the capacity to its current level of 42 beds. When the Grand Jury visited on October 18, 2002, the facility was undergoing a renovation project that has now been completed. This renovation included:

- construction of a new medical unit (with a separate examination room, restroom, mental health area and work stations for nursing staff)
- the addition of an emergency call system for staff nurses
- paving from the facility courtyard to a new building walkway
- the addition of more durable hardware on several doors in the facility
- electrical and plumbing upgrades in existing bathrooms
- shower room renovations
- the replacement and addition of hot and cold water pipes
- the expansion of security fencing
- structural modifications and replacement of the roof and downspouts

The Juvenile Hall site also houses Juvenile Court and some of the Probation Departments' offices. The Chief Probation Officer, the Juvenile Hall Division Director and Assistant Division Director, along with a member of the Juvenile Justice/Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) Commission, were available to answer questions on the day of the Grand Jury visitation. The JJDP Commission is made up of 15 members consisting of five commissioners-at-large and ten commissioners appointed by the Board of Supervisors (with each of the five Supervisors making two appointments). The JJDP meets monthly to discuss concerns and the administration of Juvenile Hall.

Findings

1. This facility houses juveniles between the ages of 12 to 18 and is divided into two units: the "A" unit houses older, more sophisticated offenders who have committed more serious crimes, and the "B" unit houses the younger and less sophisticated detainees. ("Sophistication" is a term used in the detention industry to describe an offender's familiarity with and adeptness in crime and detention.)
2. There are loose, crumbling and missing floor and ceiling tiles throughout the facility.
3. The detainees' rooms are small and contain a sink and drinking fountain. Recently, the doors to some of the rooms were replaced and modified to swing out into the hall rather than into the rooms, freeing up living area and increasing safety.

4. Staff reported the lack of security cameras in the intake area can compromise safety and security when admitting combative minors.
5. There are electronic doors when entering the facility and when entering the courtyard but other areas do not have electronic doors. Staff reported that electronic doors throughout the facility would improve response time in an emergency and would prevent keys from being stolen.
6. According to staff, Juvenile Hall does not have adequate heating and there is no air conditioning.
7. The facility contains classrooms, computers and a library. Some of the programs offered are yoga, acupuncture, victim awareness, anger management, job readiness, Planned Parenthood discussions, Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous.
8. Indoor and outdoor recreation facilities are available. The outdoor facility is not covered or protected from the environment and the indoor facilities (day rooms) are limited in size. A lack of secure perimeter fencing does not allow more sophisticated "A" unit detainees to access some of the outside recreation area because of the risk of escape.
9. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education operates an education program at the facility (Hartman School) with a WASC (Western Association of Schools and Colleges) accredited program. Hartman High allows students to continue working towards their high school diploma while at the facility or earn their General Education Diploma (GED). The facility holds a graduation ceremony for those who complete the GED program, making this achievement a well-deserved special event.
10. Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall has children's mental health services 80 hours per week and drug and alcohol specialist services 40 hours per week.
11. Santa Cruz County Juvenile Hall has been designated a model site for the Annie E. Casey Foundation Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative (JDAI). The objectives of JDAI are:
 - To reduce the number of children unnecessarily or inappropriately detained
 - To minimize the number of youth who fail to appear in court or reoffend pending adjudication
 - To redirect public funds toward successful reform strategies
 - To improve conditions of confinement.

As a model site for the Annie E. Casey Foundation Initiative, Juvenile Hall receives grant money and support, including access to a data analyst to track trends.

Conclusions

1. The facility appears well-managed with staff who desire to improve, as best they can, the lives of the youth they serve.

2. The sharp, broken and loose floor tiles can be used as weapons.
3. Safety is an issue in detainees' rooms because when doors swing in they can be barricaded from the inside. Space is also lost in rooms when doors swing in.
4. Electronic doors throughout the facility would improve safety and security.
5. Security cameras in the intake area would improve safety and security for staff and detainees.
6. Walls of the detainees' rooms are made of cement blocks which amplify and retain extreme temperatures for extended periods of time, sometimes making sleeping difficult.
7. A gymnasium would allow for adequate physical activity during inclement weather.
8. Santa Cruz can be proud that it is a model site of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiative.

Recommendations

1. The Board of Supervisors should allocate funds to immediately replace floor coverings throughout the facility. Funding to replace ceiling tiles should also be identified.
2. The Board of Supervisors should find funds for the following at Juvenile Hall:
 - installation of additional video cameras, especially in intake area
 - installation of electronic doors throughout facility and upgrade control center
 - installation of HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) throughout the facility
 - modification of perimeter fencing to allow the more sophisticated detainees access to outdoor recreation areas
 - construction of an indoor recreation facility
 - modification of the remaining doors on detainees' rooms to swing out

Responses Required

| Entity | Findings | Recommendations | Respond Within |
|--|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| County Board of Supervisors of Santa Cruz County | 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 | 1, 2 | 60 Days (Sept. 2, 2003) |
| Santa Cruz County Chief Probation Officer | 2, 4, 5, 6, 8 | 1, 2 | 90 Days (Sept. 30, 2003) |

