



Orange County
**JUVENILE
JUSTICE
COMMISSION**

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

2014 JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION MEMBERS



Susan Mays, Chair

Patricia Boortz, Vice Chair

COMMISSIONERS

Benjamin P. de Mayo

Jane Foley

Cheryl Hart

Judy Johnson

Susan Leibel

Stephen N. Livingston

Max Madrid

Rick Martinez

Eula Nelson

John D. Nguyen

Connor Traut

Judy Zorrilla



Seated from left to right:

Commissioners Judy Johnson, Susan Mays, Patricia Boortz, and Eula Nelson

Middle row from left to right:

Office Specialist Arasha Alcaraz, Commissioners John Nguyen, Jane Foley, Judy Zorrilla, Susan Leibel, and Benjamin de Mayo

Back row from left to right:

Commissioners Stephen N. Livingston, Connor Traut, Rick Martinez, Cheryl Hart, Max Madrid, and Administrative Officer Beverly MacLaren

The Juvenile Justice Commission would like to thank each of the Commissioners for their dedication, many hours of service, compassion, and commitment to improving the lives of children and their families in Orange County.



BEVERLY MACLAREN
Administrative Officer

Superior Court of California

County of Orange

Juvenile Justice Commission

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December 31, 2014

Dear Reader:

The 2014 Annual Report of the Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission covers the past year's efforts and accomplishments of the Commission. The Commission is responsible for inquiring into the administration of juvenile court law in accordance with Section 229 of the California Welfare and Institutions Code. The Commission consists of 14 talented and dedicated volunteers appointed for four year terms by the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court with the concurrence of the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court. The Commissioners possess a broad spectrum of experience in law, education, social welfare, and probation. In addition to attendance at two regularly scheduled meetings each month, the Commissioners serve on subcommittees and as liaisons to various government and community-based organizations.

The commission separated into two groups; one focusing on law enforcement agencies and the other, on group homes. The law enforcement agency group performed the annual inspections of police and Sheriff's facilities, while the group home committee inspected a wide variety of group homes which included short-term shelters, mother and child, sibling, and transitional homes for older youth. Both groups also inspected the Probation Department's custody institutions and the Orangewood Children and Family Center, for compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The Commission continues to be impressed with the care and high level of program intervention these institutions offer our minors.

The Commission members share our partners' concerns regarding the impact of continuing budget cuts and staff reductions on these programs. Several Commissioners continued to advise the Health Care Agency in the development and operation of the mental health treatment and prevention funded by Proposition 63. Areas of focus for the Commission were gang prevention and awareness, education, the placement of dependent children with relatives and non-related extended family members, the closure of a number of group homes, and truancy prevention.

Central to the mission of the Commission is the cooperation of, and collaboration with the many public and private agencies that work with the children in the juvenile justice system, who send representatives to regularly attend our monthly meetings. The Commission would like to express its appreciation for this assistance from the Juvenile Court, Social Services Agency, Probation Department, District Attorney, Public Defender, County Counsel, Health Care Agency, Orange County Department of Education, Orange County Sheriff's Department, State Community Care Licensing, Victim Witness Program, and Court Appointed Special

Advocates. Additionally, guest speakers provided informative and insightful information. They were Judge Maria Hernandez, Senator Lou Correa, Jean-Paul Buchanan, Director of the Office of Senator Darrell Steinberg, Dr. Marc Lerner, Department of Education, Mary Hale, Marcy Garfias, and Jason Austin, Children and Youth Services, Commissioner Gary Bischoff, Judge Julian Bailey, and Blanca Escobedo, Juvenile Court, Roylyn Burton, Paula Kitchen, and Ann Bloxom, Social Service Agency, Rick Martin and Betsy De Garmoe, ACCESS, Sherri Cummings, California Community Care Licensing, and Ronnetta Johnson and Lita Mercado, CSP Victim Assistance Program.

Finally, I would like to thank my fellow Commissioners for their dedication and hours of work this past year. I would especially like to thank our Administrative Officer, Beverly MacLaren, for her wonderful, hardworking, and insightful job done with diligence and a sense of humor. It has been an honor to have served as the chairperson of such a talented and sincere group of people.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Susan Mays". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan Mays
Chair

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) is a statutorily mandated group of private citizens who perform a variety of advocacy and regulatory functions on behalf of the youth involved in the juvenile justice system. The JJC is empowered by the California Welfare and Institutions Code (WIC) Sections 225 – 231 to “inquire into the administration of juvenile court law.” The JJC develops an action plan and is proactive in meeting its responsibilities throughout the year.

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission is to inquire into the administration of juvenile court law in this county and to ensure that the highest standards of care and services are maintained for the youth within the juvenile justice system.

Functions and Responsibilities

The JJC conducts inspections of law enforcement agency facilities temporarily housing minors; county operated juvenile facilities including Joplin Youth Center, Juvenile Hall, Youth Guidance Center, Youth Leadership Academy, Orangewood Children and Family Center, and group homes where wards and dependent children of the Juvenile Court are placed. The Commission reviews and monitors the educational, medical, and mental health programs within these facilities. The JJC also monitors adoption and foster care programs, independent living programs, and proceedings of the Juvenile Court.

The Commissioners participate as liaisons at various meetings held by county agencies and community-based organizations. These liaison activities provide an opportunity to offer input as to the special needs of wards and dependent children of the Juvenile Court, to keep informed on current county agency and community-based organization activities, to network with existing and newly formed organizations, to monitor budget cuts and their impact on programs, and to be advised of collaborative efforts made by these groups for the benefit of the youth within the system.

The Commission investigates citizen complaints regarding allegations of unlawful or inappropriate treatment of children and inquires into the administration of juvenile court law to ensure the highest standards are maintained for the youth in the juvenile justice system. The results of these studies, reviews, and inquiries are presented to the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court. The JJC also conducts special investigations at the request of the Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court.

The Commission can hold public hearings and request the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court to issue subpoenas to require attendance, testimony of witnesses, and the submission of documents and other evidence.

Appointment of Commissioners

The Commissioners are appointed by the Presiding Judge of the Superior Court with the concurrence of the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court to serve a four-year term. The recruitment of new Commissioners is an ongoing process and an active applicant list is maintained. The Commission is comprised of not less than 7 and no more than 15 citizens. Two of the positions are designated for youth members between the ages of 14 and 21. The Commission has actively recruited for the youth Commissioner positions. This year, Commissioner Connor Traut was appointed to fill one of the two youth member position vacancies. The JJC continues to encourage applications from the residents of Orange County.

Budget

The approved budget for Fiscal Year 2013/2014 was \$167,713. Budget expenditure categories for Fiscal Year 2013/2014 remained at relatively the same levels as in previous years. Staffing continues to be approximately 93% of the total budget expenditures. Commissioner attendance at the JJC meetings was 89.41% in 2014. The legally mandated meeting reimbursement continues to be \$25 per meeting, not to exceed two meetings per month. The Commissioners travel hundreds of miles at their own expense and contribute hundreds of hours of their personal time to perform their duties throughout the year.

The Juvenile Justice Commissioners volunteered a total of 2,792 hours performing Commission related activities this year.

Staff

Ms. Beverly MacLaren has served in the role of Commission administrator, advisor, budget cost center manager, facilitator, and liaison. Her responsibilities include oversight and production of the Annual Report; conducting and coordination of annual county institutions, law enforcement agencies, and group home inspections; school tours; staffing investigations; participating in child fatality reviews; attending meetings on behalf of the Commissioners; overseeing the preparation and review of the Commission meeting agendas and minutes; compiling special reports; answering inquiries from citizens, organizations, and county departments; drafting written communications; assisting with the training of new commissioners and staff; and acting as the liaison to the Juvenile Court, Health Care Agency, Social Services Agency, Orange County Department of Education, Probation Department, and other county departments and community based organizations.

The Juvenile Justice Commission Operations Unit no longer has permanent clerical support due to budget constraints. The Administrative Officer utilizes temporary help in a limited capacity to support the Juvenile Justice Commission.

II. MANDATED FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION

Inspections of Orange County Law Enforcement Agencies

Pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 209, the Juvenile Justice Commission annually inspects law enforcement agency facilities with respect to the handling of juveniles. Minors should not be detained in excess of six hours pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code Section 207.1. The total number of minors held in excess of six hours and minors detained in 2013 and 2014 are noted in the following table. These statistics have been provided by the law enforcement agencies.

LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY	2014 INSPECTION DATE	TOTAL NUMBER OF MINORS HELD IN EXCESS OF SIX HOURS		TOTAL NUMBER OF MINORS DETAINED	
		2013	2014	2013	2014
Anaheim	9/29/14	0	0	390	313
Brea	6/25/14	0	1	11	15
Buena Park	10/2/14	0	0	99	202
Costa Mesa	6/26/14	0	0	148	94
Cypress	9/24/14	0	0	23	20
Fountain Valley	10/6/14	0	0	43	44
Fullerton	6/17/14	0	0	147	137
Garden Grove	9/24/14	0	0	626	510
Huntington Beach	10/15/14	0	0	118	98
Irvine	6/18/14	0	1	74	65
La Habra	6/17/14	0	0	223	104
La Palma	10/2/14	0	0	21	11
Laguna Beach	6/26/14	3	0	104	137
Los Alamitos	9/24/14	1	0	7	2
Newport Beach	6/26/14	0	0	164	99
Orange	7/16/14	0	0	26	41
Placentia	6/25/14	0	0	119	118
Santa Ana	7/2/14	0	0	229	215
Santa Ana Unified School District	10/15/14	0	0	35	33
Seal Beach	10/6/14	0	0	6	8
Tustin	7/16/14	0	0	132	120
Westminster	6/17/14	0	0	139	100
Cal State Fullerton University	10/8/14	0	0	3	4
Totals		4	2	2887	2490

Inspections of Orange County Sheriff's Department Facilities

The statistics provided by the Sheriff's Department are dissimilar from other Orange County law enforcement agencies because they do not operate as a "station centric" agency. The policy of the Sheriff's Department is to detain the majority of minors in the field until they are released to a responsible adult, with only a limited number of minors brought into a Sheriff's facility.

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT FACILITY	2014 INSPECTION DATE	TOTAL NUMBER OF MINORS HELD IN EXCESS OF SIX HOURS		TOTAL NUMBER OF MINORS DETAINED	
		2013	2014	2013	2014
Dana Point	10/8/14	0	0	1	1
North Operations – Santa Ana	7/2/14	0	0	0	0
San Clemente	10/8/14	0	2	24	41
San Juan Capistrano	10/8/14	0	0	5	7
South Operations – Aliso Viejo	10/8/14	0	0	0	6
Stanton Police Services – Stanton	9/29/14	0	0	12	4
Yorba Linda	6/25/14	0	0	0	1
Totals		0	2	42	60

Inspections of County-Administered Juvenile Institutions

Joplin Youth Center

Unannounced Inspection: April 23, 2014



Description of Facility

The Joplin Youth Center (JYC) is a dormitory style facility for teenage boys ages 13-16. The average age is 15 years old. Operated by the Probation Department, the facility is located in a rustic setting on 336 acres in the foothills of the Santa Ana Mountains. Typically, the boys at the JYC have 30 to 90 days remaining on their Juvenile Court commitments. The average length of stay is 40 days. The capacity of the facility is 64 boys. On the day of the inspection, there were 50 boys housed at JYC.

Rehabilitation is stressed along with academics at this facility. The JYC has a formal substance abuse treatment program designed to help adolescents address their substance use, as well as understand some of the family and social factors that contribute to their use. The program teaches youth the skills needed to resist substance use.

On-Site Observation

Although the facility is over 50 years old, it appears to be kept in very good condition. The only exceptions were the grass areas which were mostly dirt and some landscaping which needed to be replaced. The dormitory, bathrooms, classrooms, kitchen, and library all appeared to be clean and well maintained. The kitchen and dining room are especially inviting. The boys who apply and qualify to participate in the Culinary Arts Program take pride in their work area. This program, introduced over 24 years ago, continues to be very popular as a way for the boys to achieve high school credits as well as a sense of accomplishment. Meals are nutritious and the menu is posted.

The boys wear county issued clothing with color-coded shirts indicating the level they have achieved for their behavior and length of stay. Green shirts are worn during the orientation phase, which lasts for the first 30 days. Red shirts indicate intermediate level. Burgundy shirts are usually worn after 60 days in the program. Blue shirts indicate participation of 90 days in the program. Black shirts are the highest level that can be achieved. Attendant privileges associated with black shirts include leadership roles, furloughs, movie nights, store incentives, and additional access to the weight room. Boys who are placed on a restricted status due to behavioral issues are issued yellow shirts and may not be eligible to participate in special activities.

Visitation with approved family members is every Sunday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. There is an attractive picnic area where the boys can interact with their families, weather permitting. If parents are unable to travel to JYC, the boys can be transported to Juvenile Hall for visits.

Programs

There are 52 full-time and part-time staff members at JYC. They oversee daily operations and instruct minors in topics such as gang violence intervention, anger management, and parenting skills. Over 20 programs are offered to engage the boys in life-changing patterns of behavior and to teach new skills. A

full-time psychologist, assisted by mental health professionals, implement the programs utilized by the Probation Department including: FEAR (Face Everything and Recover); ACP (Accountability Commitment Program); M.O.V.E (Mobility Opportunities via Education) apprenticeship; T4C (Thinking for a Change). The Decision Points program was introduced this year to accommodate the boys who will be at the facility for shorter periods of time. This program is four weeks long and has proven to be very successful. Some of the extra credit courses offered at JYC include: vehicle maintenance, career development, landscaping and building maintenance; culinary arts; and woodshop.

The boys attend the on-site school from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The school still lacks a full-time principal, but has a site liaison, as well as five teachers, one resource specialist, one part-time special education teacher, three part-time para-educators, and volunteer aides. JYC also has a part-time librarian who has implemented a very successful Accelerated Reader Program and a part-time counselor with the Safe Schools Program to coordinate the substance abuse classes. The boys also engage in physical education classes and/or circuit training every day. Additional access to the weight room is an earned privilege. The computer lab is still not operational.

The director has the authority to return a boy back to Juvenile Hall if he is doing something to impede the operation of the camp. Offenses include the destruction of property, refusal to participate in a program, unit disruption, and/or fights. Last year, there were five runaways and the Sheriff and other appropriate authorities were notified immediately.

There is no full-time nurse on staff. If an injury or illness occurs when the nurse is not at JYC, a staff member contacts the Medical Unit at Juvenile Hall to determine if the boy needs to be transported to Juvenile Hall for treatment. A request for a full-time nurse has been made many times over the years.

The goal of the JYC program is to help these young men avoid future law violations, gain self-worth, and continue their education in order to become productive citizens.

Action Requested by the Commission

A Corrective Action Notification (CAN) letter was sent on May 20, 2014. The Probation Department sent a response on June 2, 2014 stating the items needing repair had been addressed. The Orange County Department of Education sent a response on June 9, 2014 addressing issues raised in the CAN letter. The Commission acknowledges the repeated requests for a full-time nurse, as well as a full-time administrator. A request was made this year for a full-time Probation Officer to be assigned to JYC to facilitate a more successful transition to return the minor to his community. The Commission continues to request that the computer lab be made operational so that computer based learning can be provided. The Commission will continue to monitor the status of the computer lab, nursing staff, and administrator.

The dedication of the woodshop teacher, Culinary Arts coordinator, and the librarian continue to impress the Commission. Their commitment to the advancement, maturity, and independence of the Joplin Youth Center boys is evident and should be commended.

Orange County Juvenile Hall

Unannounced Inspection: July 1, 2014



Description of Facility

Juvenile Hall is a maximum security facility with a 434 bed capacity operated by the Probation Department. On the day of the inspection, the population was 242 which included 210 males and 32 females. Units B, R, S, and Y are currently closed.

Staff

There are sworn and non-sworn staff members working at Juvenile Hall. It is reported that currently there is little need for bilingual staff. The staff has access to interpreters when needed. During sleeping hours, the staff to minor ratio is 1:15; during daytime hours, the staffing ratio is 1:7.

Description of the Units

Unit A is a high security unit that houses youth who have been classified as Extreme Security Risks (XSR) and have been charged with serious and/or violent felonies. These youth have been remanded to the adult court for processing of their cases. Some other minors housed in Unit A have been identified as needing protective custody from the general population.

Unit C houses youth who are over 18 but are still under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court. These youth are housed at Juvenile Hall because the Juvenile Court has ordered them detained or to serve their commitment at a juvenile facility. The unit has its own secure recreation area and classroom. These youth are not to have sight or sound contact with minors at Juvenile Hall.

Unit G is a general unit.

Unit H is the “pre-camp” unit. The minors have received their commitments and are waiting to be transferred to one of the camp facilities. Additionally there may be minors who have been returned from a camp and are waiting to be transferred back to a camp.

Unit I is a 16-bed unit that specializes in working with youth who have significant emotional or psychiatric needs. Suicidal youth or minors with medical conditions requiring one-to-one observation are usually housed in this unit. They have an in-unit school with a teacher who works with the minors individually. These youth are not integrated with the general Juvenile Hall population.

Unit J houses pre-adjudicated (non-committed) juvenile sex offenders. The maximum population is 18 minors. These minors have a no roommate (NR) status. They attend school in a separate classroom and are segregated from the general population.

Unit K houses adjudicated male juvenile sex offenders. They are segregated from the general population and have their own school classrooms. They are placed into groups by the nature of their offenses and participate in weekly group counseling. The unit staff also provides individual casework counseling to address each minor’s social and behavioral needs.

Unit M is the receiving unit for girls. The girls complete the intake process here and receive medical care if necessary.

Unit O is the unit for girls. The average length of stay is 30 days. These girls are waiting for court adjudication or have received a commitment and are waiting to be transported to the Youth Guidance Center.

Unit Q provides long term (180 days or more) treatment programming for males who would previously have gone to a state facility such as the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). There is a 60 bed capacity. PRIDE (Progressive Rehabilitation in a Diverse Environment) is the four phased treatment program used. Wards are promoted to the next phase after they reach the required benchmarks for their goals and case management treatment plan. Privileges and rewards increase according to the phase level. The program provides interaction with staff. The boys are taught financial awareness, community responsibility, job skill development, restorative justice concepts, and character building.

Unit T houses males who have been classified as Extreme Security Risks (XSR). These individuals have been remanded to adult court because of the severity of the offenses. Their stay in Juvenile Hall can be lengthy because adjudication of these cases takes a significant amount of time. At age 18, they are usually transferred to the Orange County Jail. They attend school outside of the unit, but are separated from the general population. College packet learning is offered for those who have graduated from high school.

Unit Z is the intake unit for males. Typically, the following activities occur in an intake unit:

- Completion of a physical examination by the Medical Unit
- Mental health evaluation and, if needed, possible referral to the Clinical Evaluation and Guidance Unit (CEGU)
- Institutional orientation and viewing of a 12-minute orientation video
- Completion of a religious preference form
- School enrollment
- Initial visit with parent/ guardian
- Detention Hearing

Education

The Otto A. Fischer School is operated by the Orange County Department of Education and is located at Juvenile Hall. There is a full-time principal and vice principal and a staff of 32 teachers. Title I tutors are available as needed. There are 24 classrooms and most students rotate between classes during the school day. The average classroom has 19 students. Separate classrooms are designated for Extreme Security Risk youth. The students have one period of physical education daily. The opportunity to participate in institutional sports teams such as baseball, basketball, and football is available.

Students are given the opportunity to complete requirements for a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate. Several graduation ceremonies are conducted each year for those who have completed graduation or GED requirements.

The Juvenile Hall library provides a library cart that is circulated among the units and recreational reading is encouraged.

Meals

The food is prepared in a central kitchen with menus posted weekly in each unit. The menus are approved by a dietician with special attention to portion size, calories, and nutritional content. Minors are allowed 25 to 30 minutes for each mealtime.

Clothing

All clothing is issued by Juvenile Hall and laundered daily. If appropriate, youth are allowed to wear their own shoes. Slippers are provided for use in the rooms.

Programs

The following are among the programs offered at Juvenile Hall:

Baby Elmo is a parenting program offered for girls. The program focuses on modeling behaviors for parent/child interactions.

Girls Inc. provides a multitude of female-specific programs and activities for girls serving commitments.

Pups and Wards Program (PAW) pairs shelter dogs with minors serving commitments in the PRIDE program. The minors receive four weeks of classroom training on canine development, behavior, and training from a certified dog trainer. The goal is to teach vocational and life skills to the wards and to socialize shelter dogs to help them become adopted.

Religious Ministries provides church services, Bible study, and one-on-one visits.

Thinking for a Change (T4C) is an integrated, cognitive behavioral change program that includes cognitive restructuring, social skills development, and development of problem solving skills. The program is recognized as an evidence-based practice proven through research to reduce recidivism.

Volunteers in Probation (VIP) and Juvenile Hall staff conduct many programs throughout the institution including Alcoholics Anonymous, arts and crafts, current events, decision making, physical fitness, and sportsmanship.

Action Requested by the Commission

A Corrective Action Notification was sent on July 25, 2014 requesting that certain repairs and maintenance be conducted. On August 29, 2014, the Probation Department sent a response outlining the actions being taken to address these issues. The Commission took no further action concerning the items contained in the Corrective Action Notification.

The Commission again commends the Unit I teacher and the coordinator for the PAW program for their creativity and dedication.

Orangewood Children and Family Center

Unannounced Inspection: June 4, 2014



Description of Facility

The Orangewood Children and Family Center (OCFC) is located in the city of Orange and provides emergency shelter for children. The spacious campus includes several hacienda style cottages, the William Lyon School, park-like grounds, athletic fields, and a medical unit. The campus also houses the Child Abuse Services Team (CAST), the Supervised Family Visitation Center, and the First Step Assessment Center.

On-Site Observations

The emergency shelter facility is licensed to accommodate up to 216 children between the ages of 0 to 17 years old. However, due to a lowered population of children in emergency care, some of the cottages have been repurposed to house other programs or offices. With the cottages currently in use, the maximum number of children is 137. On the date of the inspection, there were a total of 82 children, (47 girls and 35 boys) residing at the facility.

During the last few years, the Social Services Agency (SSA) has discouraged the placement of babies and toddlers at OCFC, therefore most of the children placed there are over six years old. Efforts are made to house siblings together and extensive supervision is provided to children with special, emotional, medical, or physical needs. Every effort is made to move children to a stable long-term placement as quickly as possible. Since 2011, OCFC has been considered by SSA to be a “place of last resort” for children needing temporary emergency shelter. The staff continues to provide for the specialized needs of these children.

At the time of the inspection there were 149 staff members providing 24-hour supervision for the children. This includes staffing for the First Step Assessment Center and the Family Visitation Center. The staff includes group counselors, social workers, and cottage supervisors. The staff to child ratio is 1:5 for the older children and 1:3 for the younger children. Many of the staff are bilingual.

The staff during the night shift, holidays, and when requested, provides coverage for the Child Abuse Registry (CAR) and Adult Protective Services (APS) after-hours response line and the Connect-a-Counselor Program. Transportation to Clinical Evaluation and Guidance Unit (CEGU) appointments, transitional services, and schools, as well as monitoring visits, providing child care, and trainings for Spanish-speaking foster parents are some of the other services provided by the staff.

Programs

OCFC, with the help of staff and volunteer community organizations, offers a wide variety of activities and programs to engage the children. The Orange County Children’s Therapeutic Arts Center provides drum therapy classes, guitar lessons, monthly concerts by professional musicians and other activities for the children to express themselves. The Catholic and Protestant Ministries provide on-site Bible study and Sunday services. Arrangements for services can be made for youth of other faiths. The Orangewood Active Therapeutic and Teaching Approach (OATTA) assists the youth in developing and strengthening targeted social skills.

Independent Living Program (ILP) skills development is provided to the adolescent boys and girls. The ILP team schedules a variety of activities including dances, poetry readings, and workshops. Saddleback Church's "Skillz4Life" program has mentors discuss with the youth how to prepare and plan for the future by continuing their education and obtaining employment. The Orangewood Children's Foundation "PALS Speaker Night" has former foster youth discuss with the children how they became successful adults.

The "Fit Club" offers the children additional opportunities to exercise while being supervised by a recreational director.

Most meals are served in the cafeteria, following the new Federal nutritional guidelines. Each cottage has its own kitchen. The children and staff can prepare snacks, treats, or special meals for their residents. A nutritionist works with the kitchen staff to provide, meals, snacks and cooking workshops for the youth.

The Health Care Agency provides a myriad of services through the Medical Unit, Clinical Evaluation and Guidance Unit (CEGU), Centralized Assessment Team (CAT), Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services, and Early Childhood System of Care.

The Care Planning program through the University of California, Irvine (UCI) conducts standardized assessments of OCFC youth and provides strategies and interventions to improve empathy development, emotional regulation, and pro-social behavior.

OCFC is licensed as a non-secure facility. There continues to be a problem with youth running away from the facility. Often, it is the same youth running away multiple times. The staff continues to work closely with the Runaway Prevention and Recovery Committee to develop strategies and solutions to address the runaway problems. The Committee is comprised of representatives from OCFC, HCA/CEGU, the Continuing Care Placement Unit (CCPU), SSA Group Home Liaison, SSA Emergency Response/Human Trafficking Liaison, the Orange County Sheriff's Department, Boys Court, and Girls Court personnel.

William Lyon School

On the day of the inspection, 57 children were enrolled at the William Lyon School on the OCFC campus, in five classrooms. A newly appointed principal is on grounds three to four days per week. The teaching staff included five teachers, two paraeducators, one special education teacher, one special education aide, a physical education teacher, and a Title I tutor. There is a full-time School Resource Technician (SRT) to process new enrollees and maintain records. Most children begin school the day after arrival and diagnostic testing is completed as soon as possible. The teaching staff has completed three Common Core trainings. The school is computer and internet ready to begin the Common Core program. A half-time librarian provides a very active library program for all students.

Action Requested by the Commission

The JJC continues to recommend that OCFC remain open and operate in its present configuration and be considered as a "place of first resort" for children needing temporary emergency shelter. Law enforcement agencies and social workers rely on the ability to bring children to this 24-hour facility that provides a safe and nurturing environment. The home-like setting, dedicated staff, and professionals from other fields, coupled with the educational, medical, and mental health programs being provided at this one location are very impressive. Additionally, many community groups and numerous volunteers donate clothing items, engage the youth, and participate in many on-site activities.

A Corrective Action Notification was sent on June 26, 2014 to address issues of repairs needed to the physical plant. On July 11, 2014, the Social Services Agency sent a response outlining the actions being taken to address the repairs. The Commission took no further action concerning the items contained in the Corrective Action Notification.

The JJC appreciates the efforts of the staff of OCFC for maintaining an exceptional facility for temporarily housing children in need, and for providing additional supervision for the many children whose behavior or physical condition requires extra care.

Youth Guidance Center

Unannounced Inspection: October 1, 2014



Description of Facility

The Youth Guidance Center (YGC) is operated by the Orange County Probation Department. It is a residential facility that provides substance abuse rehabilitation programs for wards ranging in age from 13 to 20 years. Each youth placed at YGC is there for a minimum of 90 days to complete the program. On the day of the inspection, the population was 72. The facility houses a total of eight units, six are assigned to boys, and two are reserved for girls. Eighty-six Probation staff monitor the supervision and care of the minors.

Programs

In addition to specialized counseling programs, all minors are required to attend the WASC accredited school on campus known as Rio Contiguo High School. This allows them to make up missing academic credits and work towards graduation. Some students complete all high school graduation requirements or gain a GED certificate during their commitment. The Orange County Department of Education provides the principal, six teachers, a librarian, a special education teacher, and several para-educators at Rio Contiguo. Two Regional Occupational Program (ROP) employees are also part of the staff. Eligible minors may attend off-site college courses, or take advantage of available correspondence and online televised courses for college credit.

Work experience is an integral part of life at YGC. Both boys and girls take part in the culinary arts program, assist with the laundry, perform basic housekeeping, building maintenance, carpentry, horticulture, and landscaping. The Youth Guidance Center, in collaboration with the North Orange County ROP, also offers an on-grounds "Career Training for Transition Course" for interested minors 16 years of age or older. The ROP classes are appropriate for students who want to explore career options, gain employability skills, earn high school credits, prepare for advanced education and training, learn new job skills and/or increase work experience, or earn advanced placement/credits at local community colleges.

The landscaped grounds are beautifully maintained by the minors under the supervision of dedicated staff. YGC staff and youth continue to enhance the outdoor theater and a tranquil Memory Garden.

The kitchen and food storage areas were well equipped. The dining areas were clean and pleasant. Saturday lunches consist of cold cuts, but all other meals throughout the week are served hot. The dormitories and sleeping areas are modest. The day rooms are furnished with plastic chairs centered for group sessions or TV viewing.

Parent visitation occurs in the gymnasium on Saturdays from 2:00 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. Brothers and sisters under 11 are allowed to visit with the parents. If a youth is a parent and wishes a visit from his/her child, permission for special visits is required.

YGC utilizes three programs designed to serve male and female wards in a secure and structured environment: Aggression Replacement Training (ART), Sobriety Through Education Program (STEP), and

Addiction, Substance Abuse, Education, and Recognition Treatment (ASERT). ART consists of three main components: skill streaming, anger control training, and moral reasoning. The wards are taught to understand and replace aggression and antisocial behavior with positive alternatives. For the girls, the primary program is STEP. For boys, the primary program is ASERT.

All wards attend Al-Anon, and follow the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-Step Recovery program.

YGC staff work closely with minors who have been released from the program to ensure their smooth transition into the community and help them maintain their sobriety.

Action Requested by the Commission

A Corrective Action Notification was sent on October 20, 2014 to address issues of repairs needed to the physical plant. On October 29, 2014, the Probation Department sent a response outlining the actions being taken to address the repairs. The Commission took no further action concerning the items contained in the Corrective Action Notification.

The JJC would like to commend the staff involved in the creation, supervision, and installation of the outdoor theater and Memory Garden.

Youth Leadership Academy

Unannounced Inspection: October 15, 2014



Description of Facility

The Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) first opened in 2006 and is operated by the Probation Department. It was built with two units intended to house 120 youths. Both units are currently in use with an average population of 40 each. On the day of the inspection, there were 70 males in residence. The first unit is called “YLA Pride” housing youth of any age with commitments of 100 or more days. The second unit is called “YLA Leadership” housing youth ages 17 to 20 years old regardless of commitment time. The facility is located adjacent to Juvenile Hall and shares some operations such as the food services, school classrooms, playing fields, and medical services. The facility has its own laundry, an intake/release center, a dayroom/dining room, a control center, and multi-purpose areas.

Youth are assigned to YLA by probation staff, or sometimes at the request of their parents. The average length of commitment is 30-40 days. Although many of the programs offered take six or more weeks to complete, the residents are introduced to the basics of these programs and encouraged to continue to practice the principles after their release. The population consists of males who have noted problems with aggression, anti-social behavior, and gang issues. They are often drug and alcohol dependent.

Staff

YLA has 30 probation staff, three supervisors, and one director. Most of the staff is bilingual in Spanish. The ratio of staff to youth is 1:8 during waking hours and 1:18 during sleeping hours.

Programs

YLA shares medical, dental, and mental health services with Juvenile Hall which are provided by the Orange County Health Care Agency. Playing fields for physical activity are shared with Juvenile Hall. Soccer and football teams are available for those who wish to participate and teams challenge residents of Juvenile Hall, Youth Guidance Center, and Joplin Youth Center.

The youth receive an orientation upon arrival. They begin as Level 1 and must complete an assignment before moving to the next level. There are four levels. Each level increase carries additional privileges. The fourth level allows for activities outside of the facility such as home visitations, job searches, and/or application for California identification documents. Programs within the institution include individual, group, and family counseling. Providence Community Services provides drug and alcohol education, assessments, individual and group treatment, and sober activities. Religious activities provided by the Protestant and Catholic Detention Ministries include: Bible study, one-on-one visits with volunteers, and religious retreats for interested youth.

Food Service

Food is prepared in a centralized kitchen at Juvenile Hall and transported by cart to the YLA facility by youth who have earned the privilege of working in this area.

Education

All residents attend Otto A. Fischer School located at Juvenile Hall which is operated by the Orange County Department of Education. Four separate classrooms and individual teachers are designated for YLA residents. The educational program is designed to provide the credits needed to complete the requirements for a high school diploma or a GED certificate. This past year there were seven volunteer tutors and one paid Title I tutor. Youth who have graduated can enroll in college level online courses, or get instruction in career opportunities, and are coached on how to obtain employment.

On the day of the inspection, the Commissioners had the opportunity to interview two minors about their experiences while at the YLA to better understand the day-to-day operations and processes.

Action Requested by the Commission

No Corrective Action was requested by the Commission.

III. COLLATERAL FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Child Death Review Committee

The committee was formed to examine reports by the Orange County Social Services Agency (SSA) containing case background information about children who died while in the juvenile justice system. The committee's purpose is to review the causes of death, including potential system failures, and to determine methods to avoid deaths in the future. The Committee reviewed two such cases this year.

The first case was discussed at a Child Death Review meeting held on March 5, 2014. The death was that of a dependent teenager who had run away from a group home on September 10, 2013. She died on September 16, 2013 as the result of a drug overdose. She had been in the company of an unrelated adult male, who was arrested in relation to her death. The SSA procedures to notify law enforcement when a child runs away from a placement were reviewed.

The second case was discussed at a Child Death Review meeting held September 3, 2014. The death was that of a three-year-old former Orange County dependent/adopted boy who was residing in San Diego. The case was investigated by the San Diego Police Department and the San Diego County Child Protective Services.

The Orange County Probation Department was contacted by the Commission regarding deaths of children under its jurisdiction. The Commission was advised that seven wards died in 2014: four from gang-related shootings, one from drug overdose, and two were pedestrians who were struck by vehicles. Those deaths are reviewed by the Coroner's Office with the Probation Department. The Juvenile Justice Commission has requested to be present during meetings for future cases.

Education Committee

The Education Committee continued working with the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) throughout the year in an attempt to understand the Alternative, Community, and Correctional Education Schools and Services (ACCESS) programs by visiting eight different school sites. All of the ACCESS programs are accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). The OCDE provides an academic experience for students under the jurisdiction of the Courts, and for other students who are unable to attend school in their local school districts. Approximately 12,500 students are served by OCDE at numerous school sites throughout Orange County. The student population is unique as some students are incarcerated, others are on probation, and some students are referred by their local school district for a variety of reasons. ACCESS also provides grades K-12 day school programs for homeless students. A special school program is offered for students who are deeply involved in sports or the arts and entertainment industry, and choose to study in a non-traditional environment while earning the credits necessary for graduation.

At the Commission's invitation, Nina Boyd, Associate Superintendent for Alternative Education, and Tony Gibson, Director of Educational Programs and Services, attended a meeting to respond to questions regarding the direction of ACCESS, accreditation, site locations, student assignment, student transcript records, budget, equipment, security, and maintenance of school sites.

Throughout the year, Commission members attended graduation ceremonies at Juvenile Hall, Youth Guidance Center, Youth Leadership Academy, and Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy (SYCA). The ceremonies are a rewarding experience for proud family members who are invited to come and witness their child receive a high school diploma or GED certificate. At the graduation ceremonies, the Commission awards a certificate to each of the students to recognize their accomplishment. At most of the graduations, the graduating students give a short talk expressing their appreciation for the guidance and encouragement given by teachers and staff.

The Commissioners toured the Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy (SYCA) and attended graduation ceremonies. The SYCA is a community high school, run by the California National Guard in partnership with the OCDE. The SYCA houses 200 students between the ages of 16-19. The SYCA provides intervention for California youth who are high school dropouts, behind in credits, or at risk of failing high school. The academy program is a 5 ½ month long residential “military style” program structured to promote an academic environment where students can earn up to 60 high school credits while developing skills in leadership, cooperation, academics, and improve their self-esteem. The program accepts students who have requested admission for the purpose of working toward a high school diploma or GED certificate before entering the military, the job market, or continuing on to community college.

The Education Committee appreciates the inspirational guidance and life changing skills that Sunburst Youth Challenge Academy provides for at risk youth.

Law Enforcement Agency Committee

The Juvenile Justice Commission is mandated to inspect every Orange County police department and Sheriff's facility that holds minors in a secure detention or non-secure custody setting. Commissioners and the Administrative Officer participated in these inspections in which a total of 30 facilities were inspected. A minimum of two JJC Commissioners and/or the Administrative Officer attended each law enforcement agency inspection. The collective objective is to inspect for compliance, to better understand how each law enforcement agency serves juveniles in their community, and to learn and share what resources and programs are available.

Each law enforcement agency conducts its own specialized training and operates unique programs specific to their organization and community needs. They also utilize community resources available and often shares these resources with other law enforcement agencies. This year, each law enforcement agency in Orange County was asked to submit to the JJC additional information about community based juvenile programs they offer. Some of the programs are highlighted below:

Shared/Available Programs:

Gang Reduction Intervention Program (GRIP) - established in 2008, it identifies children who are at risk of falling into the gang lifestyle. Since its inception, the program has expanded and many more Orange County law enforcement agencies have chosen to participate in this unique program, with strong results.

CSP, Inc. (Community Service Programs) Juvenile Division Programs - provides early intervention for delinquent and at-risk juveniles who have come into contact with police, probation, or school personnel.

Shortstop (Orange County Bar Foundation) - targets first time juvenile offenders who are referred to this intervention program by the assigned detective in lieu of criminal prosecution for their violations.

TEXT-A-TIP - utilizes a Google Voice account for middle and high school students to text information regarding bullying, drugs, friends with suicidal thoughts, or any other matter that is not an immediate emergency.

Pepperdine Resource, Youth Diversion, and Education (PRYDE) - provides intervention, prevention, and counseling to at-risk youth and their families.

Orange County Sheriff's Department Presentations - the Sheriff's Department proactively engages to raise public awareness about various timely topics to juveniles and adults alike. Programs include current drug and social trends, bullying, internet, and others issues of concern.

Project Today (CA Youth Services) - targets first-time drug and alcohol offenders with presentations done at the schools.

Explorer Program (Learning for Life) – is designed to orient youth on future careers in law enforcement. The program encourages personal responsibility and creates a good working relationship with youth and law enforcement. The majority of Orange County law enforcement agencies operate a Law Enforcement Explorer Program.

Police Department Specific Programs:

Anaheim Police- Cops for Kids (C4K) Program

This program is an after-school program for local children who receive personal after-school assistance with homework in a safe environment while offering mentorship to youth in order to encourage personal responsibility and strong citizenship.

Garden Grove Police – Family Justice Center

Working in partnership with the Boys & Girls Club, the Family Justice Center provides a one-stop resource center for prevention and intervention programs.

Santa Ana Police- Junior Children of Pride Program

Working along with the Parent Academy and Teen Academy, this program targets low income, high-density areas, with a focus on family, households, and community residents to increase understanding and mutual respect.

Many other programs are developed in partnerships with local neighborhood associations, non-profit organizations, educational boards, colleges, universities, and other private entities.

Legislation Committee

The Legislation Committee monitored and reviewed legislation in the California Assembly and Senate pertaining to juvenile justice issues.

Bills Reviewed by the Legislation Committee which go into effect on January 1, 2015 are:

- AB 230, Maienschein. Youth Athletic Programs: Background Checks
- AB 388, Chesbro. Juveniles
- AB 1014, Skinner. Gun Violence Restraining Orders
- AB 1089, Ian Calderon. Foster Care
- AB 1276, Bloom. Youth Offenders: Security Placement
- AB 1585, Alejo. Human Trafficking
- AB 1591, Achadjian. Firearms: Prohibited Persons: Notification
- AB 1610, Bonta. Material Witnesses: Human Trafficking

- AB 1618, Chesbro. Juveniles: Case File Inspection
- AB 1623, Atkins. Family Justice Centers
- AB 1658, Jones-Sawyer. Foster Care: Consumer Credit Reports
- AB 1672, Holden. Pupil Attendance: Truancy
- AB 1701, Patterson. Family Law: Adoption
- AB 1733, Quirk-Silva. Public Records: Fee Waiver
- AB 1761, Hall. Dependent Children: Placement
- AB 1775, Melendez. Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act: Sexual Abuse
- AB 1790, Dickinson. Foster Children: Mental Health Services
- AB 1791, Maienschein. Prostitution: Minors
- AB 1798, Committee on Public Safety. Deadly Weapons
- AB 1806, Bloom. Pupil Services: Homeless Children or Youth
- AB 1819, Hall. Family Day Care Home: Smoking Prohibition
- AB 1843, Jones. Child Custody Evaluations: Confidentiality
- AB 1978, Jones-Sawyer. Child Welfare Services
- AB 2035, Chesbro. Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Minors
- AB 2141, Hall. Pupil Attendance: Truancy: Referrals for Prosecution
- AB 2195, Achadjian. Juveniles: Truancy
- AB 2256, Garcia. Civil Procedure: Service and Fees: Sheriffs
- AB 2276, Bocanegra. Pupils: Transfers from Juvenile Court Schools: Confidentiality
- AB 2306, Chau. Constructive Invasion of Privacy: Liability
- AB 2370, Chau. Court Interpreters
- AB 2382, Bradford. CalWORKs: Eligibility: Truancy
- AB 2411, Bonta. Probation and Parole
- AB 2454, Quirk-Silva. Foster Youth: Nonminor Dependents
- AB 2607, Skinner. Juveniles: Detention
- AB 2668, Quirk-Silva. Foster Care: Nonminor Dependent Parents
- AB 2745, Committee on Judiciary. Courts
- SB 477, Steinberg. Foreign Labor Contractors: Registration
- SB 508, Hernandez. Medi-Cal: Eligibility
- SB 838, Beall. Juveniles: Sex Offenses
- SB 855, Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review. Human Services
- SB 859, Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review. Education Finance: Local Control Funding Formula
- SB 873, Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review. Human Services
- SB 910, Pavley. Domestic Violence: Restraining Orders
- SB 955, Mitchell. Interception of Electronic Communications
- SB 977, Liu. Juveniles
- SB 855, Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review. Human Services
- SB 859, Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review. Education Finance: Local Control Funding Formula
- SB 980, Lieu. Prisoners: DNA Testing
- SB 1023, Liu. Community Colleges: Foster Youth
- SB 1038, Leno. Juveniles: Dismissal of Petition
- SB 1050, Monning. Notaries Public: Verification of Identity: Notice
- SB 1054, Steinberg. Mentally Ill Offender Crime Reduction Grants
- SB 1089, Mitchell. Medi-Cal: Juvenile Inmates
- SB 1099, Steinberg. Dependent Children: Wards of the Juvenile Court: Sibling Visitation
- SB 1110, Jackson. Arraignment: Military and Veteran Status: Forms
- SB 1165, Mitchell. Pupil Instruction: Sexual Abuse and Sex Trafficking Prevention Education

- SB 1252, Torres. Public Social Services: Former Foster Youth: Transitional Housing
- SB 1296, Leno. Juveniles: Contemptuous Habitual Truants
- SB 1388, Lieu. Human Trafficking
- SB 1460, Committee on Human Services. Child Welfare

Mental Health Committee

The primary focus of the Mental Health Committee is its involvement with the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). As a voting member of the MHSA Steering Committee, the designated Juvenile Justice Commissioner attends the monthly meetings and reports back to the Commission and the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court on the status of the programs and services that are currently provided to Orange County clients. Programs that are considered for future funding under MHSA are also detailed and reviewed. The JJC engages specifically with those programs that assist juveniles, Transitional Age Youth (TAY), their families, and caregivers.

In addition, the Mental Health Committee monitors a wide array of mental health issues that affect youth, including legislation, housing, employment, substance abuse, education, probation, and social services. Members of the Committee attend seminars, continuing education classes, court instructional sessions, and community outreach programs to remain involved and informed about emerging issues, trends, services, and treatments for juveniles who suffer from severe mental illness. The Committee also closely interacts with the many different community based agencies to facilitate collaboration and expedite services to the families or caregivers of the mentally ill youth. The Mental Health Committee concentrates on how untreated youth who have a mental illness and/or severe trauma impact their peers, family, and society.

Probation Committee

The focus of the Probation Committee this year was to participate in the inspection of Orange County probation institutions, and to provide continued dialogue and rapport between collaborative agencies that are involved with our youth.

The Probation Committee members, along with other Commissioners, inspected the following probation institutions: Joplin Youth Center, Juvenile Hall, Youth Guidance Center, and the Youth Leadership Academy. The quarterly reports prepared by the Probation Department regarding private placement facilities were reviewed. If there were concerns about a facility, the Commission members did follow-up tours and inspections. Attendance at monthly stakeholders' meetings assisted the committee in their review of the improvements, processes, and changes within the Probation system.

Probation committee members also attended meetings of the Phoenix House Community Advisory Committee. The Commission was updated on the nature of the program and the extracurricular activities that community organizations provided the residents. The Commission ceased involvement with Phoenix House when they closed their adolescent units.

Social Services/Group Homes Committee

In 2014, this committee recommended, and the Commission approved, an increase in inspections of group homes and facilities serving wards and dependent children of the Juvenile Court. Areas of inquiry, review, and evaluation included the physical facility, staffing, education, records, discipline, medical issues, treatment services, programs, auxiliaries or community involvement, and placement turnover. Commission inspection teams took photographs to document deficiencies of the physical facilities. The committee reviewed reports prepared by the Social Services Agency and reviewed Special Incident

Reports (SIRs) for group homes and foster family placements submitted by California Community Care Licensing (CCL) staff.

During eight group home inspections, inspection team members found that six group homes were not in compliance due to deficiencies of the physical plant. The inspection teams presented their findings and photographs to the entire Commission, which then voted to send Corrective Action Notification (CAN) letters to those group homes. Response letters were received from these six group homes confirming that all repairs requested by the Commission were made or were in the process of being made and that no further action by the Commission was necessary.

As was discussed in the JJC's last three Annual Reports, some group homes still have not hired cooks or cleaning staff to replace positions that had been eliminated in 2009 due to budget cuts. Although funds were reinstated and increased in 2010, it was observed during inspections in 2014 that the staff counselors and the older children are still doing the cooking and cleaning duties at these facilities. There are still no plans to hire new staff for those positions. The Commission continues to be concerned and respectfully requests these facilities use the increased funding they now receive to hire cooks and cleaning staff. This would allow their staff counselors to spend more quality time with the children in their care.

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) eliminated the clothing allowance to group home clients. This is unfortunate since many children need these funds to have an adequate school and work wardrobe. The Commission continues to recommend that children living in group homes be allowed to leave their unusable clothes at the group home and be given the necessary funds to replace these clothes. Current policy dictates that when children leave a group home, they must take the clothes they brought with them, even if those clothes no longer fit them.

Members of the committee continue to have concerns about the poorly landscaped yards at some group homes. It is recommended that group homes make their yards more enjoyable and useable for their clients.

According to the information provided to the Commission by the Orange County Social Services Agency, the total number of children in the system and in group homes has continued to drop in recent years. This is a reflection of the national trend of placing children in the least restrictive and most homelike setting. Children who may have been placed in group homes in the past are now being placed in the care of relatives, non-relative extended family members, or foster families. As a result of fewer placements, some local group homes for children have closed. There still remains a need in Orange County for more expedited placement options for children with special needs rather than keeping them for extended periods of time at Orangewood Children and Family Center or if they are wards, at Juvenile Hall.

Special Issues Committee

The Special Issues Committee is comprised of three Commissioners and the Administrative Officer. In 2014, the Special Issues Committee reviewed and revised the Juvenile Justice Commission Policies and Procedures Manual.

The Juvenile Justice Commission is fortunate to have several highly experienced Commissioners. A number of Commissioners will be completing their term limits and departing in the next year. In anticipation of new appointees, the Committee developed a guide to assist new Commissioners in the

training process. A review and revision of the interview questions for new JJC Commissioners was also completed.

The Committee also reviewed the Bylaws. The documents were submitted to each member of the Commission for review and approval. Once the Commission approved the Policies and Procedures and Bylaws, both documents were submitted to the Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court for review and final approval.

COMMISSION LIAISON ACTIVITIES

Child Abuse Services Team (CAST) Policy Board

The Policy Board of the Child Abuse Services Team (CAST) is made up of representatives from the Social Services Agency, District Attorney's Office, Health Care Agency, law enforcement, Orange County Child Abuse Prevention Center, and the Juvenile Justice Commission. CAST utilizes a multidisciplinary approach to investigate sexual and severe physical abuse of children in the County by bringing members of the above organizations together to ensure children are not further victimized by the system intended to protect them.

In May of 2014, CAST celebrated its 25th Anniversary with an event held at the Orangewood Children and Family Center and attended by over 100 people. Several speakers (including former clients and parents) spoke at this event about the dramatic positive differences CAST had made in their lives. Throughout the year, CAST representatives presented the new CAST training video during Roll Calls at several law enforcement agencies. The JJC, during its annual inspections of law enforcement agencies, was able to assist CAST in informing these agencies about the existence of new training video. CAST continued to deal with serious budget issues, primarily relating to the funding for the CAST medical director position. CAST also had to deal with transfers and vacancies in the CAST Coordinator position.

The Juvenile Justice Commission would like to commend the CAST staff and volunteers for a year of excellent service and dedication to the Orange County children and their families.

Child Welfare System Improvement Partnership

The Child Welfare Redesign Planning Council changed its name to the Child Welfare System Improvement Partnership to better describe its goals. The Child Welfare System Improvement Partnership meets monthly to find and maintain local resources that can support children and families in their own neighborhood.

The participants who attend the monthly meetings are: Faith in Motion, foster parent mentors, other county and community agencies, and members of the Juvenile Justice Commission. The meetings provided information on work group strategies and activities. Some topics discussed were teen placement, relative caregiver support, and foster parent mentors.

Foster Care Advisory Board (FCAB)

Representatives from the Social Services Agency, Health Care Agency, Cal Optima, OCDE Foster Youth Services, Saddleback College Foster and Kinship Education, TOPS Respite, Juvenile Justice Commission, foster parents, and many other community partners meet to discuss general issues and policies pertaining to all foster parents. Quality Parenting Initiative Workgroups have been incorporated into the FCAB to improve collaboration and resolve problems faced by families and foster parents.

Foster Family Agency (FFA) Forum

Juvenile Justice Commission members attended the Foster Family Agency Forum quarterly meetings. The meetings provide networking opportunities for the foster families and agency representatives.

Group Home Forum

The Group Home Forum, sponsored by the Social Services Agency is an informational and networking meeting for group home service providers. The Forum meets twice each year and updates participants on current legislation, regulations, treatment modalities, and trends among foster youth. The Forum also offers group home staff an opportunity to share issues, ideas, and best practices.

Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Steering Committee

Annually, a Juvenile Justice Commissioner is designated as a voting member of the MHSA Steering Committee. The JJC appointee and an alternate attend the monthly MHSA meetings and participate in the evaluation of proposed and approved MHSA projects.

Passed by California voters in 2004, Proposition 63, the MHSA, provides a tax-based fund for mental health programs that provide services to children, adults, and older adults who suffer from severe mental illness. The target population of MHSA is seriously mentally ill individuals who are currently unserved, under-served, homeless, or at risk of homelessness. As advocates for juveniles in Orange County, the JJC appointee focuses primarily on the programs that specifically assist youth (0-17 years), Transitional Age Youth (TAY) ages 18-25 years, their families and/or caregivers. There are five components in the MHSA: Community Services & Supports (CSS); Workforce Education and Training (WET); Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI); Capital Facilities and Technology Needs (CTFN); and Innovation (INN). This year, Round Two of the Innovation Program was approved which included five new programs that qualified for the specific criteria of increasing access to underserved groups.

The programs, services, treatments, and medical aid that are funded by MHSA are extensive. In order to understand and evaluate these comprehensive plans that incorporate so many objectives, it is necessary for the JJC appointee to closely observe and report on the meetings and the actions of the Committees. The JJC appointee engages in discussions with the mental health providers, agencies, and stakeholders to fairly analyze the efficacy and outcomes of the programs. Interface with the Orange County Health Care Agency which supervises the implementation of the programs is also required of the appointee. Ultimately, as a voting member of the Steering Committee, the JJC appointee participates in the determination of how the MHSA funds are allocated for current and proposed programs.

Orange County Children's Partnership

The Orange County Children's Partnership is a 22-member advisory board established by the Board of Supervisors to provide a unified voice that champions health, education, safety, and economic stability to effectively meet the needs of children and families in Orange County. Specific areas of focus include the Safe Sleep Coalition and the High School Completion project. The 20th Annual Report on the Conditions of Children in Orange County was published in 2014 presenting a retrospective on the trends and indicators affecting the well-being and development of children.

Quality Parenting Initiative Committee (QPI)

QPI merged with the Foster Care Advisory Board to accommodate the agencies, partners, and participants who attended the monthly meetings. Some of the Committee members and partners include Saddleback College, Orangewood Children's Foundation, CASA, members of the Juvenile Justice Commission, and other community agencies and organizations. The group focused on the challenges and obstacles encountered during the placement of teens. Finding foster and respite homes for this population is a challenge due to a shortage of such homes in Orange County. The Foster Parent Mentoring program focused on recruiting experienced licensed foster parents who are willing to support and mentor other foster or kinship parents.

Recruitment, Development & Support (RDS)

The Recruitment, Development & Support (RDS) meetings were included in the Child Welfare System Improvement Partnership meetings, but now meet separately to focus on training adoptive parents and relative caregivers.

SPECIAL REPORTS

Guest Speakers and Presentations

The Juvenile Justice Commission invited several guest speakers to give presentations on various topics of interest. The following is a summary of each of the presentations.

Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Maria Hernandez attended several Juvenile Justice Commission meetings throughout the year. She updated the Commission on the collaborative projects, issues of concern, and state of the Juvenile Court.

Senator Lou Correa, California Senate District 34, and representatives from his office attended several JJC meetings to keep the Commission apprised of legislative changes.

Jean-Paul Buchanan, Director, Office of California Senator Darrell Steinberg, reported on the efforts being made to fund mental health and substance abuse programs for youth in Orange County.

Dr. Marc Lerner, Medical Director, Orange County Department of Education, provided an overview of student mental health and the risk of violence. Most people with mental disorders are not violent and are more likely to become victims of violence than to be the perpetrators. Dr. Lerner explained the services delivered by the Health Care Agency Centralized Assessment Team (CAT). Information was also given regarding the Crisis Prevention Hotline. Dr. Lerner also recognized the importance of OC-Links and the 2-1-1 system in providing information to individuals about the services available to them.

Mary Hale, Director, Behavioral Health Services, and Marcy Garfias, Program Manager II, Children and Youth Services, explained the organizational structure of the Health Care Agency. The agency reorganized into three function areas: Children, Youth & Prevention Services; Adult & Older Adult Services; and Authority & Quality Improvement Services. As a result of the Katie A. lawsuit, foster care youth are eligible to receive access to mental health services including assessment and mental health treatment.

Jason Austin, Program Manager II, Children & Youth Services, provided an overview of the OC-Links program. Assistance through the referral line is provided to obtain the appropriate Behavioral Health Services (BHS) based on eligibility. OC-Links has provided information to police agencies, civic and non-profit organizations, and the public through social media, press releases, and posters.

Orange County Superior Court Commissioner Gary Bischoff conducted a brief training on the juvenile dependency court system and recent law changes. Commissioner Bischoff emphasized that the priority is the best interests of the child. Family reunification is the goal during the court proceedings.

Orange County Superior Court Judge Julian Bailey gave an overview of the Juvenile Drug Court (JDC) process and the drug and alcohol programs available to youth. Most youth who are in the JDC program are repeat offenders. JDC provides resources to assist the youth in changing their behaviors to support a sober lifestyle. Judge Bailey explained that developing a relationship and interacting with troubled youth encourages positive behavior.

Blanca Escobedo, Juvenile Court Deputy Manager, provided updates throughout the year on the activities of the local Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on Children in Foster Care and each of its standing committees. There has been discussion at the BRC on the topic of Trauma Informed Care with the focus

on providing training at all levels. Judge Hernandez has met with representatives from the A21 Campaign, an international group that focuses on preventative measures to stop human trafficking and to raise the self-esteem of foster youth. Tracy Wells, Federal Prosecutor, conducted training for members of the BRC on social media and its effects on foster youth.

Roylyn Burton, Community Program Specialist, and Paula Kitchen, Administrative Manager II, and Anne Bloxom, Deputy Director, Social Services Agency gave an overview of the Faith in Motion program. Originally the program was to recruit foster and adoptive families from within the faith based community. Specific programs have been developed for those who are not necessarily looking to become foster parents, but still want to provide support to foster children and their families.

Rick Martin, Director, ACCESS, and Betsy DeGarmoe, Manager, Foster Youth Services explained the process for a student to be referred to a particular ACCESS school and the services provided by the OCDE Foster Youth Services.

Sherri Cummings, Licensing Program Manager, California Community Care Licensing, provided an overview of the duties and responsibilities of the agency per the California Code of Regulations, Title 22. CCL utilizes the Key Indicator Tool (KIT) to determine compliance with state regulations by the group home staff. As part of their inspections, CCL interviews clients to ensure they are residing in the least restrictive environment possible.

Ronnetta Johnson, Director, and Lita Mercado, Program Manager, CSP Victim Assistance Program, addressed the topic of human trafficking. CSP and the Anaheim Police Department are the lead agencies for the Orange County Human Trafficking Task Force. The task force is federally and state funded and has been in operation for six years. A Child Abuse Registry (CAR) report must be filed for every child victim of human trafficking.

The Juvenile Justice Commission would like to thank each of the guest speakers for their time spent preparing written materials and for their very informative presentations.

WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODES, SECTION 225-231

225. In each county there shall be a juvenile justice commission consisting of not less than 7 and no more than 15 citizens. Two or more of the members shall be persons who are between 14 and 21 years of age, provided there are available persons between 14 and 21 years of age who are able to carry out the duties of a commission member in a manner satisfactory to the appointing authority. Each person serving as a member of a probation committee immediately prior to September 15, 1961, shall be a member of the juvenile justice commission and shall continue to serve as such until such time as his or her term of appointment as a member of the probation committee would have expired under any prior provision of law. Upon a vacancy occurring in the membership of the commission and upon the expiration of the term of office of any member, a successor shall be appointed by the presiding judge of the superior court with the concurrence of the judge of the juvenile court or, in a county having more than one judge of the juvenile court, with the concurrence of the presiding judge of the juvenile court for a term of four years. When a vacancy occurs for any reason other than the expiration of a term of office, the appointee to fill such vacancy shall hold office for the unexpired term of his or her predecessor.

Appointments may be made by the presiding judge of the superior court, in the same manner designated in this section for the filling of vacancies, to increase the membership of a commission to the maximum of 15 in any county which has a commission with a membership of less than 15 members.

In any county in which the membership of the commission, on the effective date of amendments to this section enacted at the 1971 Regular Session of the Legislature, exceeds the maximum number permitted by this section, no additional appointments shall be made until the number of commissioners is less than the maximum number permitted by this section. In any case, such county's commission membership shall, on or after January 1, 1974, be no greater than the maximum permitted by this section.

226. In lieu of county juvenile justice commissions, the boards of supervisors of two or more adjacent counties may agree to establish a regional juvenile justice commission consisting of not less than eight citizens, and having a sufficient number of members so that their appointment may be equally apportioned between the participating counties. Two or more of the members shall be persons who are between 14 and 21 years of age, provided there are available persons between 14 and 21 years of age who are able to carry out the duties of a commission member in a manner satisfactory to the appointing authority. The presiding judge of the superior court with the concurrence of the judge of the juvenile court or, in a county having more than one judge of the juvenile court, with the concurrence of the presiding judge of the juvenile court of each of the participating counties shall appoint an equal number of members to the regional justice commission and they shall hold office for a term of four years. Of those first appointed, however, if the number appointed be an even number, half shall serve for a term of two years and half shall serve for a term of four years and if the number of members first appointed be an odd number, the greater number nearest half shall serve for a term of two years and the remainder shall serve for a term of four years. The respective terms of the members first appointed shall be determined by lot as soon as possible after their appointment. Upon a vacancy occurring in the membership of the commission and upon the expiration of the term of office of any member, a successor shall be appointed by the presiding judge of the superior court with the concurrence of the judge of the juvenile court or, in a county having more than one judge of the juvenile court, with the concurrence of the presiding judge of the juvenile court of the county which originally appointed such vacating or retiring member. When a vacancy occurs for any reason other than the expiration of a term of office, the appointee shall hold office for the unexpired term of his or her predecessor.

227. The clerk of the court of the appointing judge shall immediately notify each person appointed a member of a county or regional juvenile justice commission and thereupon such person shall appear before the appointing judge and qualify by taking an oath faithfully to perform the duties of a member of the juvenile justice commission. The qualification of each member shall be entered in the juvenile court record.

228. A juvenile justice commission shall elect a chairman and vice chairman annually.

229. It shall be the duty of a juvenile justice commission to inquire into the administration of the juvenile court law in the county or region in which the commission serves. For this purpose the commission shall have access to all publicly administered institutions authorized or whose use is authorized by this chapter situated in the county or region, shall inspect such institutions no less frequently than once a year, and may hold hearings. A judge of the juvenile court shall have the power to issue subpoenas requiring attendance and testimony of witnesses and production of papers at hearings of the commission.

A juvenile justice commission shall annually inspect any jail or lockup within the county which in the preceding calendar year was used for confinement for more than 24 hours of any minor. It shall report the results of such inspection together with its recommendations based thereon, in writing, to the juvenile court and to the Board of Corrections.

229.5. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a juvenile justice commission may inquire into the operation of any group home that serves wards or dependent children of the juvenile court and is located in the county or region the commission serves. The commission may review the safety and well-being of wards or dependent children placed in the group home and the program and services provided in relation to the home's published program statement.

(b) In conducting its review, the commission shall respect the confidentiality of minors' records and other information protected under other provisions of law. It may review court or case records of a child provided it keeps the identities of minors named in those records confidential, and may review the financial records of a group home. However, the commission may not review the personnel records of employees or the records of donors to the group home.

(c) The commission shall give the group home manager at least 24 hours' advance notice of a visit to a group home. If the commission believes that there is a serious violation of applicable licensing laws or regulations or that residents of a group home are in danger of physical or mental abuse, abandonment or other substantial threat to their health and safety, the commission shall notify the Community Care Licensing Division of the State Department of Social Services for appropriate action, shall consult with the presiding judge of the juvenile court and chief probation officer as to whether or not a visit is appropriate, and shall notify other juvenile justice commissions of its actions, as appropriate.

(d) Upon the completion of a visit, if the commission finds any condition in the group home that poses a danger to its residents or otherwise violates any applicable law, ordinance, or regulation, the commission shall verbally advise the group home manager of its findings, unless it determines that the advisement could be detrimental to the children placed there, and shall send written confirmation of its findings to the group home manager within 14 days. The commission may also report its findings to the presiding judge of the juvenile court, chief probation officer, State Department of Social Services, or other juvenile justice commissions as appropriate. A group home manager may meet with the juvenile justice commission, chief probation officer, county welfare director, juvenile court, or the State Department of Social Services to resolve any problem or to submit a plan of correction.

230. A juvenile justice commission may recommend to any person charged with the administration of any of the provisions of this chapter such changes as it has concluded, after investigation, will be beneficial. A commission may publicize its recommendations.

231. Members of a juvenile justice commission shall be reimbursed for their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties. Such reimbursement shall be made by the county of appointment or, in lieu of such actual and necessary expenses the board of supervisors may provide that the members of the commission shall be paid not to exceed the sum of twenty-five dollars (\$25) per meeting not exceeding two meetings per month. In the case of a regional justice commission, the duty of reimbursement shall be divided among the participating counties in the manner prescribed by agreement of the boards of supervisors.

Orange County Department of Education Award for Outstanding Contributions to Education



Pictured from left to right: Commissioners Judy Johnson, Jane Foley, Dr. Ken Williams, Board Member, and Commissioners Eula Nelson and Max Madrid



Commissioner Livingston presented Ms. Elsa Greenfield the private donations from the Juvenile Justice Commissioners to the Community Service Programs, Inc., Huntington Beach Youth Shelter.

<http://www.occourts.org/directory/juvenile/jjc/index.html>