

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission

San Mateo County, California

Group Home Inspection

Please respond to sections that apply to the facility you are inspecting.
Type or print clearly.

Facility Name: San Mateo Receiving Home

Date of this Inspection: 6/24/16

Address: 31 Tower Road, San Mateo, CA

Date of Last Inspection: : 8/27/13

Contact Person: Ayse Dogan , Receiving Home Supervisor

Facility Capacity: 12

Phone Number: (650) 312-5320

Current Population: 8

Presiding Juvenile Court Judge: Honorable Judge Cretan

Annual Population: 70-85

Commission Inspection Team: Lara Montoya, Mieke Barrows

Major Concerns, Observations, and Recommendations

The Receiving Home is a welcoming, well kept home for youth awaiting placement. There are numerous activities for them to participate in during the summer. We were happy with the conditions in the home and the descriptions of the activities/programming.

Recommendations: Conduct regular earthquake drills

Fire Inspection Report: Yes No Date: 6/22/16

Health Department Report: Yes No Date: 7/28/15

Miscellaneous: _____

Areas Reviewed

Quality of Life:

- Physical Plants
- Meals/Nutrition
- Mental Health
- Physical/Dental Health
- Religious Services
- Volunteer Involvement
- Visiting
- Other: _____

Programs:

- Education
- Vocational/Employability
- Community Service
- Individual/Group Counseling
- Substance Abuse
- Other: _____

Persons Interviewed:

- Minors
- Director
- Youth Supervisor/Staff
- Food Services Staff – n/a
- Other: _____

General Information

Stated purpose of facility: The Receiving Home is a county run, 30-day shelter for dependent youth awaiting placement. The staff at the Receiving Home also manage short term, long term and medically fragile placements for the county. They support foster homes as well. While there is normally a maximum stay of 30 days, youth can be court ordered to stay longer (e.g., to finish school if there is no placement near school, for transgender youth where placement is difficult to find).

Their mission statement is "To provide culturally relevant and trauma informed services for the stability, support and nurturing of residents; to help them strengthen their skills, encourage positive attitudes and to assist them in attaining their educational goals. We will respect the rights of residents to explore life's options and to maximize their individual potential."

Type of operating license: CCL group home

License number: 415650019

Most recent licensing inspection: 02-09-15

Rating level: They are not assigned a level because they are a shelter, but they estimate that they are the equivalent of a level 12.

Target population of juveniles: Youth needing temporary shelter while finding more permanent placement

Age range of juveniles: 6-17

Juveniles' home counties: San Mateo and many other counties – Southern California, Sacramento, out of state. Will house runaways until arrangements can be made to return them to their home county.

Pre-Plan for Emergencies: Yes No Date of Last Drill: _____

Comments: They have annual staff training on handling emergencies. Information is posted. They have a monthly fire drill. They have an emergency food supply and if they need to evacuate, they would go to Canyon Oaks. They have a van that can take all the residents. They do not have any regular earthquake drills.

Staffing

Describe staff specialties: Mental health clinician that does placement and mental health assessments; Staff with Masters in Drug and Alcohol; Staff with Masters in Social Work. Also have staff with interesting skills/hobbies to engage youth in other activities. For example, there are a few musicians who will play music with the youth.

Describe staff including numbers, background, ethnicity, language: 6 shelter care counselors; 1 full time clerk; 1 full time custodian; 13 extra help. Mostly women.

Ethnicities: Middle Eastern, Islamic, African American, Asian American, Latina, Caucasian

Languages: English, Spanish, Arabic, Vietnamese

Educational requirements for Staff: For permanent staff, they generally require a minimum of 18 months of experience providing advice, assistance, supervision and direction to dependent and neglected adolescent age children. Two staff have A.A. degrees, most have B.A. or B.S. and about 5 have Master's degrees.

Training provided for staff: When they start, staff receive 72 hours of shadowing other staff. Senior Shelter Care Counselor Stacy Rusu provides one on one training as well. On their first day, new staff are given a packet that they complete. The training staff has to initial every area that is covered during training. There are also questions that the new staff need to read from the handbook and answer. They are mandated to be CPR/First Aid and CPI (nonviolent crisis intervention) certified. Also, the Receiving Home and Community Care Licensing mandate a minimum of 20 hours of training on various topics such as foster youth rights, trauma, etc throughout the year.

Staff to minor ratio: Awake 1:4 Sleeping 1:4

They adjust according to needs of group but always have the amount required by CCL.

How is staff backup handled during grave-yard shift?: Supervisors on call

Describe staff turnover, including frequency and reason: Low turnover; when staff do leave it is for employment opportunities, life changes with their families, retirement.

Describe general staff and minor interactions: Most of the youth were at the library during most of our visit but the interactions we did see were caring and respectful.

Comments: _____

Conditions of Grounds and Building Exterior

Give a general description of the property: The Receiving Home is located on Tower Road next to Gateway school. It is a pleasant building with some outdoor recreation area. The building is locked to outsiders (residents are not locked in).

Give a general description of the main facility including housekeeping and sanitation: The Receiving Home is neat and clean with a welcoming feel. There are several common areas with furniture, games, TV and other recreation options.

Lawns: Acceptable Unacceptable: n/a

Playing Fields: Acceptable Unacceptable: n/a

Blacktop: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Paint: Acceptable Unacceptable

Roof: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Drains and Gutters: Acceptable Unacceptable: didn't observe

General Appearance: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Condition of Interior of Building

Walls: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Paint: Acceptable Unacceptable: they are waiting for the county to paint certain areas in the home

Floors: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Ceilings: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Drains: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Plumbing Fixtures: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Air Vents/Heating/Windows: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Smoke Alarms: Acceptable Unacceptable: they have carbon monoxide detectors, too

Storage of Cleaning Fluids/Chemicals: Acceptable Unacceptable: All chemicals are locked in two storage rooms. One is in the kitchen and the other is off the games room closest to the Supervisor's office.

Recreation/Sports Equipment: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Hallways Clear/Doors Propped Open: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Sleeping Rooms: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Beds: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Art, Books, Personal Items Allowed in Rooms: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Graffiti Present: Acceptable Unacceptable: none present

Ample Blankets: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Study Area: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Adequate Lighting: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Temperature: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Orientation of Minors

What is in intake process for the facility?: When the youth arrive, they meet with the counselor and social worker to go over the intake packet. They get a tour of the facility and are issued toiletries and clothing as needed.

Are minors oriented to the house rules and procedures?: Yes No Explain: Reviewed as part of intake process.

Are house rules and grievance procedures posted?: Yes No Explain: Posted

What is in place to ensure that these rules and procedures are understood by minors?: Rules are reviewed and posted.

Are clothing and possessions inventoried on arrival and departure?: Yes No

How are juvenile's clothing and possessions protected or stored?: Each resident has a bin located in the central office where they can store items. This office is locked or staffed at all times.

Interviewed Minors: Yes No Details: _____

Commissioner met with one of the residents. Resident has been at the home for five months and identifies as transgender. Resident reported feeling safe at the shelter and feels valued. Resident stated staff provide a safe place to live and staff are easily accessible. When there is a disruptive resident or crisis situation, staff isolates the others while diffusing the situation. If there are any grievances, resident stated feeling comfortable speaking to staff directly and grievances are generally acknowledged and addressed.

Resident reported that they are aware of shelter rules and are provided a handbook to refer back to.

Residents are allowed one hour of free time per day outside of the shelter. Residents are not granted internet access and are able to use computers only to do homework and type papers. Cell phones are kept in the staff office. Residents are allowed use of cell phones - one resident at a time for limited time. They are not allowed to bring their cell phones in their room for confidentiality reasons.

Resident would like access to phones to listen to music. They are provided radios but are not able to download and listen to music of choice.

Resident expressed gratitude for being awarded extra curricular time and money through point system. Points are deducted for not following rules. Resident feels point system should be restructured and not punitive if resident shows and expresses genuine remorse or if resident shows empathy towards another resident. Resident does not feel points should be deducted for showing empathy by hugging when another resident is crying or in distress.

Residents are provided group therapy daily and have individual counselors/therapists that they meet with weekly. Resident reports feeling supported and having easy accessibility to counselors and therapists.

Resident requests more art supplies such as butcher paper and paint supplies. Resident states accessibility of books is a plus.

Meals/Nutrition

Kitchen: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Do the youth share in preparation of meals?: Yes No Details: Youth are welcome, but not required, to share in preparation of meals. On Tuesday nights, they have supper club – volunteers come in to cook with the youth.

Are meals served family style?: Yes No Details: _____

Are minors permitted to converse during meals?: Yes No Details: _____

Are staff present and supervising during meals?: Yes No Details: _____

Are weekly menus posted?: Yes No Details: _____

Are servings ample, nutritious, appetizing?: Yes No Details: We were not there during meal time.

Weaker minors protected from having food taken from them?: Yes No Details: This is not really a problem here.

Are snacks and beverages available?: Yes No Details: Usually have a regular group snack time. Youth can also get snacks if they are hungry – if it's close to mealtime, they might be told to wait.

How do you meet special nutritional needs?: Special nutritional needs are accommodated. They will get them food to meet their dietary requirements.

Length of time allowed to eat?: As long as they need

Mealtimes (no more than 4 hours between meals, breakfast to dinner, without a snack)

Breakfast: _____ **Lunch:** _____ **Dinner:** _____

There are not strictly set mealtimes – approximate times depending on what is happening that day.

Comments: According to youth interview, residents eat meals and snacks together and cannot leave kitchen area until everyone is done eating. The refrigerator is locked at all times and residents must ask permission to get food.

Personal Appearance of Minors

Appearance: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Showers (frequency, privacy, supervised): Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Condition of clothing (clean, fit, etc.): Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Clothing appropriate to current weather: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Comments: _____

Programs

Recreation (type, amount, etc.): Acceptable Unacceptable: There are recreation options at the home. They also go on group outings together – Half Moon Bay beach, movies, Pier 39. The schedule reflected regular outings. If they are on level, youth can go on walks.

Exercise (daily schedule, amount, etc.): Acceptable Unacceptable: Nothing specific is set, but exercise is encouraged. If they are on level, they can take a walk alone. Staff does group walks but generally youth like to go off grounds to parks (up to the Pier in SF, walks on the beach at Half Moon Bay). Youth earn more points toward their weekly allowance if they use exercise equipment.

Access to Religious Services: Acceptable Unacceptable: Can request it – if staff can take them there, they will. Family can bring them. It is rarely requested.

Access to Medical Services: Acceptable Unacceptable: Usually have a checkup at San Mateo General before they arrive. Work with teen clinic at San Mateo General if any issues arise while they are at the Receiving Home.

Access to Mental Health Services: Acceptable Unacceptable: Work with 2 county psychiatrists as needed. Have individual therapy from BHRS 1-2x week.

Individual Counseling: Acceptable Unacceptable: Have individual therapy from BHRS 1-2x week

Group Counseling: Acceptable Unacceptable: Have nightly groups on life skills (bullying, how to get along, etc)

Substance Abuse Counseling: Acceptable Unacceptable: They take youth to NA/AA. Can also to 1:1 counseling with staff

Victim Awareness Classes: Acceptable Unacceptable: none

Gang Awareness Classes: Yes No Details: Rare to have issues

Sexual Harassment Classes: Yes No Details: _____

Parenting Classes: Yes No Details: They don't admit infants. They might have a young mother or pregnant teen. They would then have access to parenting classes through social worker.

Vocational Classes: Yes No Details: _____

Work Program: Yes No Details: _____

Other: _____

Discipline of Minors

Describe the discipline process of minors: They use a points program where youth earn privileges and allowance based on their behavior and cooperation. These points earn allowance (up to \$20/week) and privileges. They are never locked in their rooms. Staff is trained in CPI and use verbal de-escalation and engagement to work with youth. For more serious offenses (ex: smoking pot on facility, fighting, suspended at school), youth will be considered 'off program'. This is a 3-day status where they lose privileges. If youth are very disruptive, staff can call the San Mateo County Sheriff. They are very responsive and will come and talk to the youth.

Ms. Dogan mentioned that she would like to simplify the existing point system.

Comments: In past inspections, there was a concern that youth could be put off level if they refused placement. This is no longer the case. If a youth refuses placement, staff will talk to them and explain the benefits but there are no negative consequences with regard to discipline levels.

Grievances

Grievance Process: Acceptable Unacceptable: Youth can talk to Ms. Dogan if they have a complaint. If they do not feel comfortable talking with her, they can talk to their social worker. For a formal complaint, they can call CCL – the number is posted in the common area.

Number of grievances this year: get about 2-4 informal complaints per year

Trends and/or Comments: There were no written complaints.

Correspondence / Telephone

Access US Mail?: Yes No Details: _____

Postage Free?: Yes No Details: Mail is stamped in another location by county

Incoming/Outgoing Mail (Screened? Confidential?): Yes No Details: As long as mail is addressed to the Receiving Home at 31 Tower Road, mail is not screened. If it is mailed to the general county address, all mail is opened and then directed to the receiving home. Outgoing mail is not screened but the sealed envelopes are sent to the county for stamping.

Access to Telephone?: Yes No Details: Youth often have cell phones that they may use. Can also use landlines in the office.

Visiting

Visiting Schedule: Weekdays _____ Weekends _____ Special Events _____

Visiting schedule is determined by social worker.

Do all minors have access to visitation?: Yes No Details: _____

Under what circumstances would visitation be restricted?: By the social worker or by court order

Are visitation logs kept?: Yes No Details: Specific visitation logs are not kept by the home, but visitors must sign in and out of facility. Visits are mentioned in the daily log and social workers document visitation.

Adequate Space: Acceptable Unacceptable: _____

Staff Supervision: Acceptable Unacceptable: Staff does not supervise visits. If supervision is necessary, it is provided by social workers or family care workers.

Privacy Provided: Yes No Details: _____

Games or Activities Provided: Yes No Details: _____

School

List the schools your residents attend: They try to keep youth in their home school district. It was summer break during our inspection, but last semester they attended Carlmont High School, Ralston Intermediate, Hillsdale High, Aragon High and Gateway.

How is transportation to school provided?: Schools are good about providing transportation. Older youth will often take the public bus.

Are students able to participate in school-based extra curricular activities?: Yes

Is tutoring available?: Yes, it is arranged through the educational liaison. The county has a contract with a tutoring agency and sometimes tutoring is provided by the school.

Adequate Supplies, Books, Paper, Computer?: They provide paper, etc. Some youth have their own laptops. Receiving home also has laptops for youth to use for schoolwork and they can also use the staff computer in the office.

Access to Computers/Internet?: Yes No How is this managed?: Staff keep an eye on youth when they are on the computer.

Describe the relationship between school and staff: There is an educational liaison from the San Mateo County Office of Education that helps youth with registration (if necessary), transportation, IEPs, etc.

Comments

General comments or concerns that should be noted that have not already been addressed?:

Several years ago, there was some concern that the county might put out an RFP for the operation of the Receiving Home. This is no longer an issue.

AB 403, the Continuum of Care Reform, is affecting all group homes in California. The Receiving Home will be changing from a shelter to an STRTP (short term residential treatment program). They will be running groups 4 days a week with outside clinicians. These groups will cover different areas, like drug/alcohol and eating disorders, and will be more intensive than they are now. They will add a family therapy component to their program. They will also be assigned a public health nurse so they will have a single point of contact in the county health system.

Signature of Commissioner(s) preparing this report:

/s/ Mieke Barrows Date: 7/5/16

/s/ Lara Montoya Date: 7/5/16

_____ Date: _____