Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission
San Mateo County, California

Group Home Inspection

Facility Name: Our Common Ground
Facility Capacity: 24

Address: 631 Woodside Road, Redwood City, CA
Current Population: 11

Contact Person: Cris Morales
Annual Population: NA

Phone Number: 650 361 8656
Average Population: 14

Date of this Inspection: 2/20/2014

Date of Last Inspection: 9/10/2012

Commission Inspection Team: Moneisa Carson, Gurjeet Chalal and Susan Swope

Presiding Juvenile Court Judge: Susan Irene Etezadi

Major Concerns, Observations, and Recommendations

The inspectors all were very impressed with the program. We did note that the flooring in the residential building common areas, halls, and kitchen was worn, cracked and chipped. We would recommend that it be replaced, perhaps with an inexpensive bamboo wood, or simulated wood flooring to give those areas a more inviting and homelike feel and so that they can be kept demonstrably clean.

More importantly, there is not Health Department Inspection report, which is required annually for facilities housing more than six youth.

Fire Inspection Report: X Yes □ No  Date: 2/10/2014
Health Department Report: Yes □ No X  Date:
Miscellaneous: ______ There is no health department inspection report. They do have a Food Program Inspection Report from San Mateo County Environmental Health that notes deteriorating flooring around the refrigeration and pantry areas.

Areas Reviewed

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General Information

Stated purpose of facility: ______ To provide substance abuse, trauma, and mental health treatment depending on the individual client’s needs

Type of operating license: ______ Level 12 Group Home CCL

License number: ___________ 410508628 and 4156002090

Most recent licensing inspection: ______ About 7 months ago (June 2013)

Rating level: ___________________ 12

Target population of juveniles: ______ Adolescents

Age range of juveniles: ___________ 12 to 18 (rarely do they have any under 13)

Juveniles’ home counties: ______ San Mateo, Sonoma, Fan Francisco, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and Alameda. They have had some from Southern California and from other states.

Pre-Plan for Emergencies: X Yes □ No  Date of Last Drill: 1/24/2014

Comments: ______ They have to do all their drills at least once per quarter. They have emergency plans and drill for fire, emergencies, shooters, e.g.

Staffing
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Describe staff specialties: They have mental health clinicians with Masters and Ph.D.s, behavior health with Bas and field experience, Certified alcohol and drug counselors (CADAC), plus administrative staff and an intake coordinator.

Describe staff including numbers, background, ethnicity, language: They have a total of 20-25 staff members, including on-call staff. They are white, Hispanic, African American, South Sea Islanders (Tongan), and Native Americans. A number of them speak Spanish.

Educational requirements for Staff: Clinical staff must have an M.S.; psychologists must be licensed. They night manager has 10 years experience. Overnight staff have at least 3 years experience.

Training provided for staff: Staff receive regular in-service training by Managers, the Director or people from outside. They require 24 hours of training for each staff member per year. It’s an CCL requirement.

Staff to minor ratio: Awake 8:1  Sleeping 10:1

How is staff backup handled during grave-yard shift?: A clinician, mental health or behavioral professional is always on call.

Describe staff turnover, including frequency and reason: Turnover for full-time staff is very low. They tend to stay from 4 to 16 years. Most part time (on call) staff are going to school, have other jobs, or are looking for full time work and leave when they get it. Interns generally stay six months to a year.

Describe general staff and minor interactions: It is open, professional, friendly. There is a fine balance between maintaining a human and a professional relationship.

Comments: 

Conditions of Grounds and Building Exterior

Give a general description of the property: There are several buildings. There are administrative offices in a small house facing Woodside Rd., A larger residential building has dorm rooms set up for 2 or 3 residents, a kitchen, 2 restrooms with showers, and a common area for dining and recreation. There are two smaller trailer-type buildings with offices. There is a two-story school in a separate building, with the boys’ classroom on the first floor and the girls’ on the second floor. There is also a separate apartment that the girls currently use for their recreation, although they sleep in the main dorm building. There is a hard-top, open-space courtyard behind the administration building and between the residential building and the trailer-based offices. At the back of the property is a large open area with BBQ area, half basketball court and a grassy area for recreation.

Give a general description of the main facility including housekeeping and sanitation:
The sleeping rooms looked comfortable and homey, with residents’ “decorating touches.” The floors are worn black and white linoleum set in a checkerboard pattern throughout. It would make a huge difference if the flooring were a hardwood look. The kitchen floors definitely need replacing and the common room would be much more inviting with some redecoration and refurbishing.

Lawns: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Playing Fields: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ___ ½ Court basketball ________________________________

Blacktop: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Paint: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Roof: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ___ Looking at it from ground level ________________________________

Drains and Gutters: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

General Appearance: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ___ With exception of flooring ________________________________

**Condition of Interior of Building**

Walls: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Paint: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Floors: □ Acceptable X Unacceptable: ___ Tile is chipped and cracked. Should be replaced.

Ceilings: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Drains: □ Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ___ Did not check ________________________________

Plumbing Fixtures: □ Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ___ Did not check ________________________________

Air Vents/Heating/Windows: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Smoke Alarms: □ Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Storage of Cleaning Fluids/Chemicals: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ___ Locked storage ________________________________

Recreation/Sports Equipment: □ Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Hallways Clear/Doors Propped Open: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Sleeping Rooms: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________
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Beds X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Art, Books, Personal Items Allowed in Rooms: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Graffiti Present: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ___ None observed

Ample Blankets: □ Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Study Area: □ Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Adequate Lighting: □ Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ___ Common room seemed to have low light.

Temperature: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ________________________________

Orientation of Minors

What is the intake process for the facility? ___ It depends on the referring agency, whether it’s Probation or Social Services. If the client goes to court and is assigned to OCG, the referring party contacts OCG’s intake person and send information on the client to OCG to review. They have some exclusionary criteria. If the client is appropriate, they accept them. If the client is a Kaiser patient, they have outpatient CDRP programs that they are sent to first. If the client fails in the outpatient program the parent can ask for inpatient setting. The admission process is the same.

Are minors oriented to the house rules and procedures?: X Yes □ No Explain: ___ They have a welcome interview when the rules are reviewed and agreed to and the new client is assigned a Bib Brother of Sister from among current clients who are doing well. They also have a particular staff member who tired to get to know them. The resident mentor orients them for the next three days. ___

Are house rules and grievance procedures posted?: X Yes □ No Explain: ___ They are on the bulletin board, the Community Board. The resident also gets an orientation packet that has their rights, the grievance and other policies.

What is in place to ensure that these rules and procedures are understood by minors?: ___ A system of peer-oriented accountability. They use the therapeutic treatment model. They book each other for breaking rules each evening during the wrap up. The staff goes through the bookings. They hold each other accountable every day. If one client gets booked for the same thing frequently, staff uses a learning experience. If the behavior continues, the client’s counselor is made aware of it. ___

Are clothing and possessions inventoried on arrival and departure? How are juvenile’s clothing and possessions protected or stored? ___ Yes. The staff member and the client sign off on the inventory. Clients store their belongings in their rooms. They have a safe in the office for valuables.
Interviewed Minors: X Yes □ No Details: We spoke with one minor, who was happy with the peer-run program. He said it has helped him learn to deal with people. He said that staff don’t usually step in. He said the food was good, although he would like more variety. He said the rules used to be stricter and he liked that better. There aren’t as many long-time residents there right now. He especially appreciates that they facilitate special visits for him with his little brother who is in foster care.

Meals/Nutrition

Kitchen: □ Acceptable □ Unacceptable: We were there right after dinner. The kitchen probably looked messy because the youth had not yet cleaned up. However, the floor in the kitchen looked worn and cracked with parts of tiles missing and it should be replaced.

Do the youth share in preparation of meals?: X Yes □ No Details: On the weekends. There is a cook who prepares meals Monday through Friday.

Are meals served family style?: □ Yes X No Details: There is a steam table in the dining room where some residents serve the others.

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

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

Are weekly menus posted?: X Yes □ No Details: On the refrigerator in the kitchen, which is open to the residents.

Are servings ample, nutritious, appetizing?: X Yes □ No Details: The cook gets feedback from the residents and works with them to provide food they will like.

Weaker minors protected from having food taken from them?: X Yes □ No Details:

Our guide has never seen a resident even attempt to take food from another in 10 years. Youth can have seconds if they want, so there’s no reason to try to take another’s food.

Are snacks and beverages available?: X Yes □ No Details: They are required to provide three snacks a day. They have fresh fruit available for residents 24/7.

How do you meet special nutritional needs? □ The cook is made aware of any special needs— allergies, diabetes, etc.

Length of time allowed to eat?: 30 minutes. Servers get more time.

Mealtimes (no more than 4 hours between meals, breakfast to dinner, without a snack).
Breakfast: M-F at 7 am  
Lunch: 1210-110  
Dinner: 5:15-5:45 or 5:30-6

Weekends vary. With breakfast at 8 on Saturday and Brunch from 11 to 11:30 am on Sunday.

Comments: ______________________________________________________

**Personal Appearance of Minor**

Appearance: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ____________________________

Showers (frequency, privacy, supervised): X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: There are two individual shower stalls. Residents can sign up for the time slot they want for 15 minutes either in the morning or the evening. ____________________________

Condition of clothing (clean, fit, etc.): X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ____________________________

Clothing appropriate to current weather: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ____________________________

Comments: ______________________________________________________

**Programs**

Recreation (type, amount, etc.): X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: They have video games, basketball, volleyball, football, soccer ball, weights. They go to the YMCA on Hudson twice a week and have 60-90 minutes to swim. They have hikes and other outings on the weekends. ____________________________

Exercise (daily schedule, amount, etc.): X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: They have physical recreation daily. PE isn’t required. They have time for walks. ____________________________

Access to Religious Services: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: If a resident wishes to attend a church service, they will find an appropriate church and facilitate attendance. They also give them time for religious observance on site if they wish. ____________________________

Access to Medical Services: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: Their staff medical liaison sets up appointments locally or with the resident’s family doctor. Any medications are self-administered. ____________________________

Access to Mental Health Services: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ____________________________

Individual Counseling: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: Weekly or every other week, more if needed__________________________

Group Counseling: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: 10 groups available each week. They are required to attend one every day. ____________________________

Substance Abuse Counseling: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: Available if needed ____________________________
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Victim Awareness Classes: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: __ Incorporate in group when appropriate.

Gang Awareness Classes: X Yes □ No Details: __ When needed ________________________________

Sexual Harassment Classes: X Yes □ No Details: __ Incorporated in group when needed ____________

Parenting Classes: X Yes □ No Details: __ Incorporated in group when needed. ____________________

Vocational Classes: □ Yes □ No Details: They provide ILSP (Independent Living Services Program) monthly. Some get paid to take life skills classes. They get resume building classes. ________________________________

Work Program: □ Yes □ No Details: __ Phase 4 helps them find a job. ____________________________

Other: __________________________________________________________________________________

Discipline of Minors

Describe the discipline process of minors: __ See section on orientation, page 5 __________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

Comments: ______________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

Grievances

Grievance Process: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: __ If a resident has an issue with staff they will first try to solve it in an encounter group. If that doesn’t work they will fill out a grievance form for the Program Director who will try to solve the problem. If that doesn’t solve it, the grievance is submitted to the Executive Director. ________________________________

Number of grievances this year: __ In last 12 months, maybe 5 or 6 ______________________________

Trends and/or Comments: __ Usually it’s against a staff member who held them accountable. __________

Correspondence / Telephone

Access US Mail?: X Yes □ No Details: ________________________________

Postage Free?: X Yes □ No Details: OCG provides the postage. ________________________________

Incoming/Outgoing Mail (screened? Confidential?): □ Yes □ No Details: Incoming is not screened. Outgoing is. ______________________________________________________________________________
Access to Telephone?: X Yes □ No Details: _______ Residents can make calls based on an approved list.
Phone calls are private. They are allowed up to 15 minutes per call.

Visiting

Visiting Schedule: Weekdays 6:30-7:30 pm □ Weekends □ Sun 1-3 pm □ Special Events _______

Do all minors have access to visitations?: X Yes □ No Details: _______ Unless prohibited by court order.
Visitors’ list must be approved by the resident’s family therapist.

Under what circumstances would visitation be restricted?: ______________________________

Are visitation logs kept?: X Yes □ No Details: ______________________________

Adequate Space: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: ______________________________

Staff Supervision: X Acceptable □ Unacceptable: _____ Visual, not within hearing distance.

Privacy Provided: X Yes □ No Details: ______________________________

Games or Activities Provided: X Yes □ No Details: _______ Whatever is always available for the youth.
They have lots of board games and puzzles.

School

List the schools your residents attend: _______ School is on site. It is staffed by the Sequoia Unified School District. They also have some outpatient students in the school. There are three teachers.

How is transportation to school provided: _______ NA ______________________________

Are students able to participate in school-based extra curricular activities?: _______ Activities are on site.

Is tutoring available?: _______ Yes ______________________________

Adequate Supplies, Books, Paper, Computer?: _______ Each student has his/her own computer

Access to computers/Internet? How is this managed?: _______ They use web-based tools. The teacher’s computer controls the students’ computer access. The teachers monitor usage. They can see what’s on the students’ screens and can take control of the student’s screen if necessary.

Describe the relationship between school and staff: _______ Relatively strong. They try to communicate frequently among staff and share each other’s perceptions of how residents are doing. They also try to establish a healthy relationship with each resident.

Comments: ______________________________
Comments

General comments or concerns that should be noted that haven’t already been addressed?:

OCG has Four Inpatient Phases for Its Residents

1. Arrival—orientation, learning the program, its philosophies, dressing and behaving appropriately

2. Self-reflection and therapy

3. Home passes

4. Transition—looking for a job, what’s next, performing 20 hours of volunteer work.

Signature of Commissioner(s) preparing this report:

Susan Swope Date: 19 March 2014
Moneisa Carson Date: 19 March 2014
Gurjeet Chalal Date: 19 March 2014