



## 2012-2013 SANTA CLARA COUNTY CIVIL GRAND JURY REPORT

### JUVENILE HALL – ON THE RIGHT TRACK

#### Introduction

In August 2012, the Santa Clara County Civil Grand Jury toured Santa Clara County Juvenile Hall (Juvenile Hall). The Grand Jury acknowledges the performance and dedication of Juvenile Hall administration and staff in providing a safe and secure facility for the juveniles. After identifying items for potential evaluation, the Grand Jury returned to Juvenile Hall for a second tour in October 2012. During both visits, members of the Grand Jury were able to observe and interact with staff and juveniles in their everyday activities and environment, and the Grand Jury identified several matters for further review. The Grand Jury noted the physical condition of the facility and the need for repair and renovation. The facility, constructed in 1959 and remodeled in 1989, is aging and in need of capital improvements, although repairs are met in a timely manner by the Facilities and Fleet Department.

The Grand Jury also reviewed the grievance process offered to juveniles and determined that any required corrective action was addressed and resolved within one calendar day. Juvenile Hall has an extensive problem of graffiti and gang tagging. Officials are cognizant of the problem and are seeking solutions.

#### Background

Juvenile Hall is a section of the Juvenile Detention Division of The Santa Clara County Probation Department. Its website contains the following description of its services:

Juvenile Hall provides temporary residential housing for youth awaiting adjudication or disposition from the Juvenile Courts...Services are provided to youth to assist with their social reintegration back into the community and address their social, physical, behavioral, psychological, and emotional needs.

Juvenile Hall programs provide a wide variety of educational and treatment services based upon client risk and needs assessment.

Programs include:

- Substance abuse treatment and education
- Mental health treatment and counseling
- Planned parenthood
- Religious services and counseling
- Gang intervention
- Victim awareness

- Anger management
- Girl Scouts
- Career planning
- Court Work Program
- Foster Grandparent Program
- Support network for battered women
- Outreach programs
- Cultural diversity programs
- Literacy programs<sup>1</sup>

## **Methodology**

The Grand Jury met with executive members of the Department of Probation and the Facilities and Fleet Department. The Grand Jury also reviewed reports and various documents, including the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Commission Inspection Report, Office of the Fire Marshall Inspection Report, State of California Board of State and Community Corrections Biennial Inspection Report, Santa Clara County Public Health Department Annual Health Inspection Report, State of California Division of Occupational Safety and Health Complaint, and Juvenile Hall Open Work Orders.

## **Discussion**

Juvenile Hall is regularly inspected by the State of California Board of State and Community Corrections and by Santa Clara County investigative bodies, including the Office of the Fire Marshall, Facilities and Fleet Department, the Juvenile Justice Commission, and the Civil Grand Jury.

## **Facility Issues**

During Grand Jury visits, it was observed that Juvenile Hall shows deterioration typical of an aging facility, as also noted in reviewed reports. The Grand Jury determined that the Facilities and Fleet Department is working closely with Juvenile Hall administration to repair and correct problems. The Grand Jury reviewed all open work orders; only four were older than 30 days. This indicates to the Grand Jury that the communication between Juvenile Hall administration and Fleet and Facilities is productive.

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<sup>1</sup><http://www.sccgov.org/sites/probation/Juvenile%20Detention%20Services/Pages/Juvenile-Detention-Division.aspx>

The kitchen and cafeteria are small and old, and the original cooking and refrigeration equipment is outdated. Ceilings in the kitchen are open, with exposed pipes which collect dust and grease. The February 2012 and March 2013 Juvenile Justice Commission Inspection Reports state similar findings and note that the kitchen and adjacent dining area are in need of remodeling.

## **Staff Interactions with Juveniles**

During inspections, the Grand Jury observed overall clean and sanitary conditions, the use of motivational posters for positive reinforcement, the juveniles' artwork, a medical and dental care center, exercise classes and sports, and schooling. The staff of Juvenile Hall displayed a significant level of dedication, enthusiasm, and care.

## **Grievance Process**

During our tour, we learned that an internal grievance process is in place for the juveniles. The Grand Jury reviewed the process, as well as the complaints submitted by juveniles and responses tendered by the Juvenile Hall administration. The Grand Jury found that the complaints submitted between January 2012 and September 2012 which required corrective action were addressed and resolved by administration within one calendar day.

## **Graffiti/Gang Tagging**

The Grand Jury took note of the pervasive graffiti and gang tagging on the interior doors of the juvenile housing units.

The Grand Jury believes that it is counterproductive to the rehabilitative goals of Juvenile Hall for gang markings to be in view. Administration advised that repainting the doors has not resulted in a lasting solution to the problem of gang tagging and graffiti markings. The Grand Jury found that similar problems exist in other jurisdictions. Those jurisdictions have also been unable to remedy the problem.<sup>2</sup> The County should continue to explore solutions to ameliorate the situation.

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<sup>2</sup><http://www.sdcounty.ca.gov/jjc/docs/KMJDF-07.pdf>  
<http://articles.latimes.com/2001/feb/06/local/me-21829>  
<http://jjie.org/youth-detention-centers-georgia-rife-problems-says-juvenile-justice-commissioner/70126/>

## **Conclusions**

During the tours of Juvenile Hall, the Grand Jury reviewed the physical condition of the facility and the need for repair and renovation, the grievance process offered to juveniles, and the extensive problem of graffiti and gang tagging.

The Grand Jury concluded that staff and related departments are working to ensure that Juvenile Hall provides a safe and constructive environment for the rehabilitation of juveniles. Juvenile Hall staff demonstrated a high level of commitment and concern for the juveniles.

## **Findings and Recommendations**

### **Finding 1**

The interior of the doors in the individual housing units are covered with graffiti and gang tagging.

### **Recommendation 1**

The County should explore and test methods to eliminate graffiti and gang tagging in Juvenile Hall.

This report was **PASSED** and **ADOPTED** with a concurrence of at least 12 grand jurors on this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of May, 2013.

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Steven P. McPherson  
Foreperson

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Lyn H. Johnson  
Foreperson pro tem

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Chester F. Hayes  
Foreperson pro tem

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Francis A. Stephens  
Secretary