

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
JUVENILE PROBATION DEPARTMENT

Response to 2010–2011 Civil Grand Jury Report
“Moving Towards Positive Horizons”

Submitted by
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INTRODUCTION:

The Juvenile Probation Department is pleased to offer this response to the findings and recommendations contained in the report entitled *“Log Cabin Ranch – Moving Toward Positive Horizons”* prepared by the 2010-2011 Civil Grand Jury of the Superior Court, City and County of San Francisco. The Department has invested a tremendous amount of time and effort into the reformation and rehabilitation of the Log Cabin Ranch facility and programs, in recognition of the critical role the facility and its programs play in the City’s juvenile justice continuum of services. In the Department’s 2005 response to the Civil Grand Jury report, a vision for comprehensive reform was advanced with specific goals designed to, *“to provide comprehensive rehabilitative services to juveniles within the sound framework of enhanced public safety.”* The department immediately proceeded to conduct a literature search in order to identify the most promising practices available to achieve the goals of the city and its stakeholders. Stakeholders representing each of the juvenile justice practitioners were invited to the table to embark upon a detailed and arduous process to identify the priorities for the facility, reaffirm our collective commitment to Log Cabin Ranch as a viable dispositional option available to the courts, and to map out a specific strategy and implementation plan. While much has been achieved, there is still much to do. The department remains committed to dedicated, focused, and consistent leadership to create the best possible outcomes for every youth committed to Log Cabin Ranch, while demonstrating the value and worth of the city's investment in the facility. On behalf of the Department, its staff, and the many youths served by juvenile probation we express our gratitude and appreciation for the detailed and thorough analysis conducted by the Civil Grand Jury and its comprehensive report.

RESPONSE TO FINDINGS:

- 1. The current educational program does not take advantage of the beautiful natural environment of the site, which offers multiple hands-on teaching opportunities.***

AGREE IN PART

Log Cabin Ranch (LCR) sits on over 640 acres of land located in La Honda, California within the County of San Mateo. The campus is surrounded by lush green forests containing a variety of flora and fauna. Over the course of the past two years, the residents have participated in a number of projects that utilize the natural resources available on the grounds. These include the creation of two garden areas one of which includes a fruit tree orchard. Secondly, the residents have begun landscaping a community area that will be used for picnics, family visits, group sessions, presentations and other community events. The residents have taken pride in the creation of a natural pond that is being designed, sculpted, and built within the naturally occurring landscape. Thirdly, residents have participated in nature hikes within the woods that provide them with an opportunity to explore the plants that are indigenous to the area as well as the local wildlife. In addition to the hummingbird project identified in the Civil Grand Jury report, the residents completed several key art projects using materials found within and on the grounds of LCR. Their artwork was placed on display at the Zeum Children's Museum over this past summer.

- 2. Thorough and meaningful program evaluation based upon solid data about Log Cabin residents following graduation is needed. The Grand Jury acknowledges that the improved Log Cabin Ranch program does not currently provide sufficient data about its graduates. However, program assessment based upon such data is sorely needed.***

AGREE

One of the most basic and fundamental tenants of any quality correctional program rests in the ability to measure and evaluate the fidelity of the service delivery as well as the outcomes for the program participants. While the department tracks very closely, the outcomes of each program resident inclusive of their progress in aftercare and reentry, clearly an independent evaluation of the program is necessary. The department will continue to work within the framework of the city budget as well as exploring opportunities in conjunction with our philanthropic partners to fund a thorough and comprehensive program evaluation.

- 3. Log Cabin Ranch needs an effective "Enterprise Program" which could generate additional operational and programmatic revenue.***

AGREE IN PART

The Department agrees that an opportunity to generate revenue that directly benefits the residents and expands the capacity to enhance the programs is a great idea. We have seen through the partnership with the San Francisco Conservation Corps that the residents have the ability to learn construction skills that are demonstrated through products with professional grade quality and workmanship. However, given the programs limitations in the number of residents that can be admitted to LCR at any given time, the program does not have the capacity to develop and sustain the production volume necessary to make such an endeavor profitable. As the volume of residents increases, an effective enterprise program should be considered.

4. Despite well intentioned efforts there still remain "turf battles" among the stakeholders.

DISAGREE IN PART

The Department believes that the Juvenile Justice system has experienced a prolonged 'crisis in confidence' based on long-held beliefs, opinions, and philosophical differences that have been perpetuated over the decades. Unfortunately, this culture has permeated the various agencies for far too long and continues to manifest itself in contested dispositions, disagreements regarding programmatic initiatives, and in this case, feedback to the Civil Grand Jury. On the positive side, the department believes that it has developed many positive and effective relationships with all of the stakeholders and believes that the stakeholders have generally collaborated in good faith around the changes at LCR. The department remains committed to improved relationships amongst the stakeholders and will continue to listen to and consider constructive feedback where the preponderance of benefit is in favor of the youths we serve.

5. Due to the age of the buildings (circa, 1950), structural improvements to the Ranch are greatly needed.

AGREE

The Department agrees that structural improvements are greatly needed at LCR. While some "cosmetic" improvements such as painting, window replacement, heating and ventilation installation, and new furnishings, have greatly improved the quality of life and the environment for both residents and staff, it is clear that the aging and dilapidated buildings require significant renovation. Each year, the juvenile probation department includes significant areas of improvement in its contributions to the city's capital plan. We are committed to ongoing and continual efforts to secure resources to address the physical structures and systems throughout the campus. Ideally, an on campus transition house where parents and young residents can reunite in advance of the youths' discharge from the facility would offer opportunities for

gradual reentry into the community as well as intensive family counseling sessions over an extended period of time.

- 6. The Grand Jury believes that the Log Cabin Ranch is under-utilized and the recent positive programmatic changes warrant expansion to maximum capacity.***

AGREE

The Department agrees that the facility is currently under utilized. However, the ability to expand the number of residents currently served also requires additional LCR counselors, contractual resources, auxiliary staff, and further facility renovations. Ideally, the facility could focus the development of treatment groups based on age and intensity of service need. This approach could lead to the development of differential program options that would likely lead to variances and the lengths of stay as well as targeted interventions based on the needs of a particular cohort.

- 7. Current vocational programs offered at the Ranch set up the residents for disappointment because permanent jobs are not available in those areas of training. Additionally, training is not adequate for entry level positions.***

DISAGREE

The department does not agree that the current vocational programs offered at the ranch set residents up for disappointment because permanent jobs are not available in those areas of training. The construction trades remain one of the critical industries in the American economy. However, given the current global and national economic challenges, employers are finding it difficult to hire skilled and entry-level employees in most trades and professions. While we recognize that this presents a very real challenge for residents returning to the community, the problem is not unique to LCR or its residents. Further, while it may be more marketable to focus the trade development on specialized skills, the goal of the current vocational skills development programs focuses on providing residents with a variety of skills related to construction. In addition, given the limited time a youth is in residence at LCR, the focus of their competency and skill development is soft skills as well as technical skills related to employment. In many cases, the minor's participation in the LCR program prepares them to participate in SF RAMP, or other training programs where they can further enhance their knowledge, and skills while further enhancing their employability.

- 8. In the opinion of the Grand Jury, not all members of the Log Cabin Ranch staff have fully embraced the tenets of the Missouri Model.***

AGREE

The department agrees with this opinion. However, it is difficult to assess the degree to which an individual employee or agency worker has "fully embraced" the tenets of any policy, program, or departmental philosophy. However, the degree to which the department establishes and advances the expectations for its employees and partners, as measured by compliance with stated policies and procedures is an indicator of the level of fidelity that exists in the model adopted by San Francisco on which the department believes it can confidently rely. The department supports ongoing training and refresher courses focused on the Missouri Model. The department also recognizes that a programmatic shift of this magnitude requires ongoing and consistent efforts to train and supervise everyone with responsibility to support the program.

9. The basic high school program in its current form offers a limited education curriculum.

AGREE

The department has already provided the school district with feedback regarding the need to expand the educational offerings available to LCR. The district has assigned a new teacher to LCR who is highly qualified, creative, and motivated to teach at LCR. This teacher has already begun teaching a foreign language to the students and has experience with the "Big Picture" school model.

10. The Juvenile Collaborative Reentry Program is currently only available to youth returning from out-of-home placements such as Glen Mills and George Junior Republic. This very successful program should also be available to students reentering from the Log Cabin Ranch.

WHOLLY DISAGREE

The Juvenile Collaborative Reentry Team is a concept that is currently grant funded to serve clients represented by the Public Defender's Office who are returning from group homes or out of home placement. The team periodically confers with the group homes where minors are placed, often out of state, and creates case plans that are implemented once the youth returns home. The team is comprised of case managers, social workers, and a probation officer and an attorney from the public defender's office. This model is currently in its infancy and has not yet been evaluated to determine its overall efficacy.

Response to Recommendations

- 1. Increase collaboration among the San Francisco Conservation Corps, the San Francisco Unified School District and Urban Sprouts to develop projects which utilize the natural environment for outdoor education opportunities including gardening, landscaping, native plant restoration, pond maintenance, creek habitat restoration, trail creation and hiking.**

This recommendation has not been implemented but will be implemented within the next 60 days. Future projects or the upcoming fiscal year include the development of rainwater capture containers that will provide water for the vegetable gardens and orchard. In addition, the facility plans to create nature and hiking trails throughout the wooded areas adjacent to the main campus. We look forward to reporting on our progress in the near future.

- 2. As sufficient data becomes available, establish relationships with local graduate schools in disciplines such as Social Work and Psychology who may be able to assist with outcome assessment and evaluation as there are a number of thesis topics for their students.**

This recommendation requires further analysis in order to determine, secure, and allocate the funds necessary to support the assessment and evaluation. Given the potential fiscal implications of an initiative of this nature, implementation of an action plan may need to occur in conjunction with the department's next budget submission. Further, the analysis will help in the determination of the most appropriate discipline and partners needed to help the Department achieve its goal of thorough and meaningful evaluation of its LCR programs. We have already begun exploration of a cost benefit analysis that should help the department to better understand the effectiveness of the Log Cabin Ranch programs as compared to the costs associated with recidivism as measured by re-arrests and sustained petitions, and the utilization of out of home placements.

- 3. Explore the possibilities of developing a contractual relationship with both the San Francisco Department of Public Works and the Department of Parks and Recreation for Log Cabin Ranch to sell to them benches and picnic tables made at the Ranch for use on City streets and in City parks.**

The recommendation will not be implemented at this time as it is not reasonable. The current LCR program does not have the capacity to sustain an enterprise operation given the number of residents in the facility, graduation rates, and the learning curve associated with new commitments to LCR. In addition, current program priorities associated with the San Francisco Conservation Corps work plan and the scope of work for fiscal year 2011-2012 has already been identified.

- 4. The Log Cabin Ranch Planning Committee, which currently meets on an ad hoc basis, should become a permanent committee, meeting quarterly to build on its original success. The committee should be used as a forum to discuss and address long held negative biases and "turf-battles" among the stakeholders. Further tasks could include: (1) exploring the expansion of involvement of community-based organizations with the Ranch; (2) exploring and seeking additional funding opportunities from private foundations and other sources; and, (3) expanding and broadening the vocational opportunities currently offered at the Ranch.**

This recommendation has not been implemented, but will be implemented within the next 90 days. The Department believes that the LCR planning committee should be reconvened on a quarterly basis to discuss the program operations including opportunities to expand the role of community-based organizations, explore additional funding opportunities, and advance ideas related to expanded vocational offerings. The planning committee can also serve as an effective vehicle for communication and a forum to discuss problems identified by individual stakeholders.

- 5. The Mayor and the Board of Supervisors should immediately provide capital funding for long neglected infrastructure needs.**

[Response to this recommendation will be provided by the Office of the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors]

- 6. The Mayor and the Board of Supervisors should support funding for a third cohort in the fiscal year 2011-2012 budget cycle, and for a fourth cohort in the 2012-2013 budget cycle.**

[Response to this recommendation will be provided by the Office of the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors]

- 7. Vocational and apprenticeship programs should be developed in fields such as auto mechanics, metal working and welding, pipe fitting, solar panel installation or other union-affiliated positions.**

This recommendation requires further analysis. The Department must explore various trades to determine which will be the best fit given the facility infrastructure, resident skill capacity, and technical and resource requirements associated with an effective implementation plan. The Department supports the development of vocational and apprenticeship programs that will

offer youths with opportunities to learn highly marketable skills in areas associated with green technologies, and other trades.

- 8. There should be regular on-going training in the "Missouri Model" for all Ranch employees, regardless of their classification or department affiliation. Employee evaluations should include an assessment of the employee's ability to properly utilize the model in his/her interactions with the residents. For the Ranch to be successful all stakeholders must be using the same language and be on the same philosophical path.**

This recommendation has not been implemented but will be included in the Department's current year training plan. It should be noted that the Department embarked upon a very aggressive training plan for fiscal year 2010-2011 that included a variety of topics designed to enhance the clinical skills of the counseling staff. Many of these training sessions were open to therapists, educators, and program agency employees. In addition, the department worked with the Missouri Youth Services Institute following the initial training sessions to provide the LCR staff with a refresher course in the model. Again, the department fully agrees that this training should be expanded to reach all service providers with an appropriate introduction, overview, and information regarding the application of the Missouri Youth Services Institute model as adopted by LCR.

- 9. The San Francisco Unified School District should explore additional educational options that would challenge all Log Cabin Residents. These options include programs such as the "Big Picture" model currently used at court-appointed schools or a charter school scenario.**

[Primary response to this recommendation will be provided by the San Francisco Unified School District.]

The Department agrees with this recommendation. When the Department changed its service delivery model in 2009, it also developed a focus on a service learning model that takes advantage of the "outdoor classroom." The partnerships with Urban Sprouts, and the San Francisco Conservation Corps provides an opportunity for integrated lesson plans and curricula that is supported by the school district and the other agency partners. For example, math taught in the classroom is then used in the construction projects; science lessons in the classroom become the basis for discussions and observations that take place in the garden. At the same time, the department recognizes that LCR residents have varying degrees of academic knowledge and aptitude. Therefore, the educational programs must be dynamic and

individualized in order to meet the unique needs of each student. The department is open to opportunities to explore other educational models that may be well-suited for LCR.

10. Log Cabin Ranch should develop a speakers' bureau and/or mentorship program that would bring people to the Ranch to share information about various occupations and the positives and negatives of those occupations.

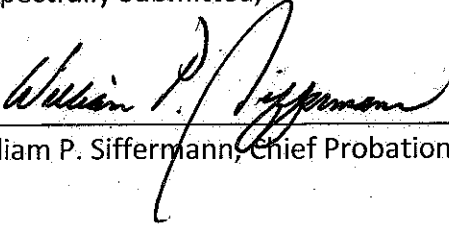
This recommendation requires further analysis to determine the staffing resources associated with the development, training, and sustainability of a meaningful speakers' bureau and/or mentorship program as framed in the recommendation. The Department does not disagree that a speakers' bureau and/or mentorship program could be beneficial to the residents at the ranch. Although, in the absence of such a program, the Department in conjunction with the Youth Guidance Improvement Committee conducted two major job and resource fairs where individuals from a variety of professions and agencies came to LCR and met with residents, provided information, answered questions and offered their services to the residents. In addition, a ½-day Men's conference was convened on a Saturday where community members visited LCR and made presentations to the residents as well as provided inspirational and motivational messages designed to engage the residents and develop meaningful connections, with possibilities for continued relationships that extend back into the community. The department is open to further exploration of this concept.

11. The Juvenile Probation Department should immediately seek either City or grant funding to expand the Juvenile Collaborative Reentry Team program to include youth reentering society from the Log Cabin Ranch.

This recommendation is not warranted at this time. It would be unwise to expand or attempt to replicate the Juvenile Collaborative Reentry Team (JCRT) model until a proper evaluation can be completed. In addition, Log Cabin Ranch has a far more robust and dynamic process to engage all youths with no limitations based on legal representation. The youth and caregiver can meet with a multi-discipline team that is actively involved in the youth's treatment plan throughout his stay at LCR. The young person attends the meeting and is an active participant throughout the entire process. This same team works with the youth and family through the case review team process to develop a meaningful aftercare plan and reentry strategy. Once the youth is returned to the community, an after review team comprised of the minor's therapist from LCR, an occupational therapist, the job placement counselor, assigned probation officer, Multi-systemic therapist or Youth Transition Specialist all meet weekly to review the youth's progress in aftercare, modify the case plan, and provide the youth and family with necessary supports until the wardship ends. All of the participants in the youth's aftercare process have had an opportunity to work with the youth while at LCR and provide a seamless transition in their


service delivery once the minor returns to the community. Evaluation of the current case review and aftercare team models should occur prior to consideration of a new model.

Respectfully Submitted,



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