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Superior Court of California
County of Tuolumne

By: Dana Neely Clerk



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2018-2019 Tuolumne County Civil Grand Jury Mother Lode Juvenile Detention Center Report

MOTHER LODGE REGIONAL JUVENILE DETENTION CENTER

SUMMARY

The Grand Jury toured the Mother Lode Regional Juvenile Detention Center (MLRJDC) on October 31, 2018. At that time there were 14 staff and 11 detainees (four of whom were from out of county). Detainees can stay at the facility until they are 19 years old. After that age they are transferred to the Tuolumne County Jail. The MLRJDC can be expanded to 30 juveniles in the future if needed by increasing staff members. The length of stay for a detainee varies. Detainees are evaluated upon entering the facility as to their physical and mental health. Every effort is made to eventually place the detainee with family.

BACKGROUND

The Mother Lode Regional Juvenile Detention Center (MLRJDC) is a newly constructed and newly inhabited facility. It was designed to keep the general public safe and also offer youth a rehabilitative environment. MLRJDC has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in place with Amador, Calaveras, Inyo and Mariposa Counties to place juveniles with MLRJDC. This affords MLRJDC some income from these counties to help offset costs. These counties pay \$100 per day for each youth placed with Tuolumne County.

GLOSSARY

FTE	Full Time Employees
LCSW	Licensed Clinical Social Worker
MLRJDC	Mother Lode Regional Juvenile Detention Center
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
TCJ	Tuolumne County Jail

METHODOLOGY

The Grand Jury was given a tour by the Superintendent of the Detention Center and the Tuolumne Chief Probation Officer, who were forthcoming and answered any questions asked.

DISCUSSION

The MLRJDC was opened in April 2017. It was designed to accommodate 30 youths. Originally the plans called for double this capacity but eventually it was decided that would not be needed. In the past 12 months there were 92 bookings. Of these seven were from Calaveras County, three from Amador County and two from Mariposa County. The average length of stay is 51 days. The average daily population for the last 12 months was 8.4 youth. The average daily population for the last six months was 9.4 youth. The highest population has been 14 and the lowest population has been five. Before the opening of MLRJDC, the processing time for taking youth to “out of county” facilities was approximately 3-6 hours. Now that they are being kept in County, it is closer to 30 minutes.

MLRJDC was built with the understanding that it was not constructed to make money. Tuolumne County felt that keeping our youth in County was the “right thing to do” and it was a commitment to our youth.

The Facility cost \$20 million to construct with \$16 million covered by State grants. The Center is currently using 2.1% of the general fund budget to operate. This is \$1,704,502 minus revenues of approximately \$202,800 for a net cost to the County of approximately \$1,501,702 for the 2018/2019 fiscal year. The actual expenses for 2017/2018 were \$1,423,501. Sonora Area Foundation has also given Hidden Treasures (trained volunteer mentors who meet weekly with detainees) a grant for youth activities and needs. The County is currently exploring other options to generate more revenue from the other four counties who signed the MOU with the County.

Also, more and more California juvenile facilities are underfilled, as juvenile crime has gone down, making the costs of running the facilities more expensive per detainee; this trend may trigger statewide downsizing or closing of juvenile facilities across the state (source: Vanishing Violence: Juvenile Hall Costs Skyrocket. San Francisco Chronicle, April 26, 2019). This trend could mean that Tuolumne County may benefit from housing

more juvenile detainees from out of county, which would generate more revenue to offset costs.

The 2018-2019 Grand Jury was informed by MLRJDC staff that keeping youth close to home is much more beneficial to rehabilitation efforts. They are able to see their families on a regular basis and also don't feel like Tuolumne County has abandoned them by shipping them far away from everyone and everything they know. It is much easier to place youth back with their families if they are close by. In the long run the County is saving money because the youth are usually not detained as long when they are kept close to home. This gives the family an opportunity to have group counseling. Recidivism, defined as no new crimes committed, in 2013-2016 was 49%. Since opening MLRJDC that recidivism has dropped to 19%.

Currently there are no detained juveniles being placed in Foster Care, which is a huge expense. Recently the Center had its first adoption, a 17 year old.

There is a Juvenile Justice Commission that has been appointed by the Presiding Judge of the Tuolumne County Superior Court and meets every 2nd Thursday. They interview youth and report on the progress of the juveniles at the Center.

Recently the Farm Bureau has offered \$2,500 grants to several facilities for gardens. They were so impressed with two of the youth at MLRJDC that they gave the Center two grants instead of the standard one grant. The 4H Master Gardener volunteer helped to mentor the youth with these beds. The youth wanted to move the beds because they weren't receiving enough sunlight for the plants to do well.

At Thanksgiving, Hidden Treasures brought Thanksgiving dinner for the youth. The detainees couldn't believe that the dinner was actually for them. They are not used to anyone caring enough about them to provide something like this. A lot of the youth have expressed sincere gratitude for helping them turn their lives around. When these youth were being taken out of county, they felt like they were not wanted.

Youth entering the facility are first evaluated to assess medical or mental health needs. If none are required they are given a room with the general population of the facility. The 1st floor contains the male population and the

2nd floor is for females. There is also a large social area, thus the youth are not locked in their rooms all day. There are also two outdoor recreation areas, one covered and one uncovered.

EDUCATION

MLRJDC provides a regular school curriculum five days a week in their classroom. Youth are in class from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm with a half hour lunch and two breaks. One retired college mathematics professor volunteer provides 12 hours of academic tutoring weekly. Tuolumne County Superintendent of Schools provides credit recovery and specialized education services. Three youth have graduated high school in the facility due to their commitment and one-on-one academic assistance. Weekends they are allowed visitation on Saturday mornings plus free time for special events. The youth are required to clean up the classroom, living area and dining area after meals.

MEALS

The MLRJDC was constructed with a functional kitchen but for now it is more cost effective for TCJ to provide the meals. The food is prepared according to dietary guidelines although youth do occasionally complain about it. There have been some cooking classes offered to the youth. Occasionally the Superintendent will have a BBQ. Youth have to earn the right to attend.

STAFFING

Currently there is one Superintendent, 11 Juvenile Correctional Officers, two Probation Aides and a half-time Behavioral Health Clinician. Volunteers make up a large portion of the staff, which is evidenced by the community involvement in the following areas:

- 19 trained mentors come weekly to meet with detainees one-on-one (Hidden Treasures);
- Five members of local churches make up the Board of Directors for Hidden Treasures with one local retired principal who heads them and provides one-to-one weekly mentorship;
- 35 volunteers who have provided special meals during weekly religious services and five local churches donate monetarily to provide activities and special weekly meals;

- Ten local restaurants donate special weekly meals for youth on Sundays;
- The local Christian Motorcycle Association has donated multiple holiday meals;
- Three local individuals have provided culinary lessons to the youth (how to make and enjoy nutritious meals);
- Two retired librarians maintain and update the MLRJDC library;
- One volunteer cosmetologist provides monthly haircuts;
- Five local volunteers make individual quilts for every youth to have in their room and keep upon release;
- A local artist donates time and provides art supplies;
- Two trained and approved adult mentors provide weekly recreation and supportive services to the youth;
- One volunteer guitarist provides weekly guitar lessons to youth;
- A local dentist donates his time and expertise to treat severe dental issues; and
- One local orthodontist donated his time and expertise to treat a youth with severe dental issues.

Offices and a break room are provided for staff. There are also offices for counseling. Counselors come to the facility once a week to meet with youth. There is a joint assessment of a youth's situation, whether to stay in MLRJDC or to be placed in Child Protective Services.

PROGRAMS

The primary functions of MLRJDC are the supervision, treatment, and rehabilitation of youth accused of criminal or delinquent behavior. MLRJDC contracts with local medical services. They have successfully treated a variety of conditions, from severe STD's to ecto-parasites. One youth was suffering from malnutrition upon intake, and multiple youth experience drug withdrawal upon intake. Psychiatric services provide specialized medication services to youth identified with a mental illness. Tele-psychology is available for the youth to access counselors during the week and weekends in an emergency. There is also a trauma informed LCSW working with the youth, providing individual and group therapeutic intervention for a variety of mental health and substance abuse related conditions. A nurse comes to the facility twice a week for any health issues. She can be contacted by tele-computer if needed. This tele-computer is also available for youth to visit with their family if the family

lives a great distance from MLRJDC. Youth that are in these services tend to maintain these programs if they stay in county because these contacts are local.

There are multiple evidence-based programs to reduce recidivism and promote positive change. These programs address impulse control, anger management, emotional regulation, substance abuse, PTSD, and self-care.

MLRJDC offers, facilitates, and encourages an array of pro-social recreational activities, to include exercise, strength training (e.g., tractor tire manipulation), volleyball, basketball, Ping-Pong, karaoke, board games, soccer, creative writing, journaling, arts and crafts, barbequing and movie night.

There are weekly multidisciplinary meetings with the youth which result in comprehensive individually driven treatment plans. They have a motivation system in place in which positive behavior is noticed and reinforced. They have experienced extremely positive behavior as a result of this.

Youth also participate in work programs daily. These include lawn care, floor care, kitchen cleaning, dishes, vacuuming, mopping, and trash removal.

The staff look at behavior challenges as an opportunity to mentor and positively change antisocial behavior. They have a culture of caring about the youth, recognizing their behavior as a product of negative life experiences.

The Center reconnects youth with their parents, family members and other supportive adults by offering six hours of weekly in-person visitation and daily phone calls.

As communicated through one of the interviews, the MLRJDC staff take youth who are "broken, angry, hurting, abandoned, sick, drug addicted, criminally oriented, impulsive, reckless, suicidal, self-injurious, jaded, credit deficient, emotionally damaged and alone ... and tell them they are worth something ... that they are precious assets....that their families and communities need them and will not give up on them." MLRJDC introduces hope, discipline, motivation, compassion, laughter, self-worth, pro-social thinking and positive plans for the future. It emphasizes education,

community harmony, non-violence, critical thinking, respect, working and earning what they achieve and healthy living.

COURT APPEARANCES

Currently MLRJDC staff are transporting youth to any court appearances, medical and dental appointments.

CONCLUSION

The staff appear highly dedicated to changing delinquent and criminal behavior of the youth. They are very proactive in rehabilitation programs. They are extremely focused on rehabilitating youth and returning them to their families. The MLRJDC is extremely clean, and well kept. The staff is very courteous and informative. MLRJDC is very conscientious about budgetary limits in providing services to youth.

FINDINGS

F1. The Motherlode Regional Juvenile Detention Center appears to be saving the County money in the long term, and is good for the community, by reducing County youth recidivism from 49% to 19%.

F2. The Tuolumne County volunteer community is heavily invested and committed to providing support and services for MRJDC juvenile detainees.

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FILED

JUN 06 2019

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IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF TUOLUMNE

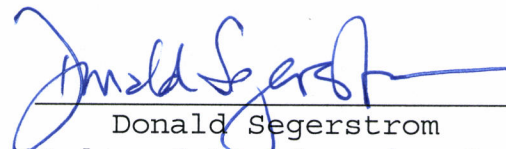
IN RE:

GENERAL ORDER

2018-2019 Grand Jury

I certify that the 2018-2019 Tuolumne County Grand Jury
Final report section on the Mother Lode Regional Juvenile
Detention Facility complies with Title Four of the California
Penal Code and direct the County Clerk to accept and file this
section of the final report as a public document.

Dated this 6TH day of June, 2019


Donald Segerstrom
Judge of the Superior Court

GENERAL ORDER