



2009 – 2010
Madera County Grand Jury
Final Report
Madera County Juvenile Detention Facility

Prepared By: Public Safety & Welfare Committee

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Introduction:

Pursuant to Penal Code 919 (b), on September 3, 2009, members of the Madera County Grand Jury visited the Madera County Juvenile Detention Facility (Facility). The Deputy Chief Probation Officer (Deputy Chief) and a Juvenile Detention Facility Sergeant escorted the members. The Facility opened in November, 2001 and was constructed to house a maximum of seventy male and/or female juvenile offenders. The average population is forty-two. The Probation Department is responsible for the operation and administration of the Facility.

Findings:

The Deputy Chief has been with the Facility for five months after replacing the previous Deputy Chief who retired December 31, 2008. Prior experience included twenty-one years with the Probation Department. The Facility has a total of thirty-three staff members. Included in the staff are twenty-two Line Officers, four Sergeants, four Corporals, two Administrative Staff and one Transportation Officer. Officers work twelve hour shifts with a maximum of fourteen days per month.

The Central Control Area is considered the highest security area and the brains of the Facility. This area receives deliveries, runs the monitor board, operates the cameras, dispatches officers for emergencies, answers the phones and distributes equipment. This is all done by only one officer on a twelve hour shift. The Madera County Grand Jury observed this workload to be extremely taxing for one officer. The officer could become overwhelmed in case of an emergency.

Juveniles range in ages from eight to eighteen with most being thirteen to seventeen. The juveniles are brought in through Processing and Booking. This procedure takes approximately one hour to complete. This procedure includes searches, showers, fresh clothing, fingerprinting and photographing. Rooms located within the Processing area include a holding room, safety room, photograph/fingerprint room and search room which includes a shower. The average sentence for a lower level offender is twenty eight days.

The Facility separates the juveniles into four Pods. Shirt colors represent different levels of offenders to assist the staff. Each Pod has fifteen cells (units) for a total of sixty units. There are three showers per Pod. The units are seventy square feet and consist of a bed, sink and toilet.

Each unit houses one juvenile. Each Pod has its own classroom for year-round education. General education is provided by the Madera County Office of Education. Included are high school graduation, GED preparation and on-line classes for college preparation. A laundry room is located in each Pod and the juveniles are responsible for doing their own laundry and cleaning their units. A storage unit in each Pod houses the uniforms, bedding, towels and supplies.

Minors with behavioral, emotional and disciplinary problems are isolated from the general population. Isolation has two areas with five units each. One side is used primarily for the female population and the other is used primarily for the male population. Each unit is seventy square feet. One is a handicapped unit. Juveniles confined to this area are permitted one hour of exercise per day as mandated by the State of California. There is a three day minimum and eight day maximum program for the juveniles. Juveniles can be housed longer depending on their adherence to the program. These programs are designed for highly undisciplined and emotionally disturbed children.

An outside vendor supplies the meals for the Facility at an average cost of \$8000.00 per month. It includes two cold meals and one hot evening meal per day. Nutritional guidelines are mandated by the State of California for caloric intake. Special diets are provided as needed.

Juvenile court proceedings are held daily on-site. The detention hearings are held in the morning and the dependency hearings are held in the afternoon. The courtroom also is used for two hour visitations on Saturdays. Certain minors have no contact visits based on offenses and behavioral issues.

An on-site medical facility is staffed by two full time LVN's and an RN in the afternoon. On the third day after booking, each juvenile receives a physical and psychological assessment. Every Wednesday there is tele-psychiatry available for the juveniles within the medical facility. Juveniles also have access to the social workers as needed. A physician is on site on Thursdays. The medical facility is opened from 7 AM to 7 PM daily.

The partially covered outdoor recreational area includes volleyball and basketball. The general population juveniles are given three hours per day outside to exercise and five hours outside on the weekends. For additional recreation, there is an on-site library which consists of donated paperback books that are screened for content. Juveniles are allowed a maximum of three books in their units. The library is open fourteen days a month.

The current budget is 2.7 million dollars annually. With the potential closure of the Madera County Juvenile Boot Camp, it is anticipated that some of the staff from Boot Camp may be absorbed by the Facility. It is also anticipated that some of the juveniles from Boot Camp may be placed at the Facility.

Conclusions:

The Madera County Grand Jury found the Facility to be very well managed. It was found to have adequate staffing and security. The staff appeared to be dedicated to the rehabilitation and education of the juveniles. The staff strives to teach the juveniles how to be held accountable, show self respect, exercise self discipline, have courage over fear, form healthy relationships and show respect for others.

Recommendations:

- The Madera County Grand Jury recommends that the Central Control Area staffing be evaluated for increase from one Officer to two during the day shift.

Respondents: Written response required pursuant to PC933 (c)

Madera County Juvenile Detention Facility
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Information: Response optional

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