

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission San Mateo County, California

Group Home Inspection

Facility Name: Canyon Oaks Youth Center

Facility Capacity: 12 (11 during COVID-19)

Address: 400 Edmonds Rd, Redwood City, 94062

Phone Number: 650-839-1810

Date of Inspection: 8/11/2020

Date of Last Inspection: 6/10/2019

Annual Population: Varies

Current Population: 9 youth as of 8/11/20, with one youth moving to foster home on 8/14/20.

Contact Person: Victoria Valencia, Supervising Mental Health Clinician

Facility Commission Inspection Team: Debora Telleria, Sathvik Nori, Doug Winter

School Commission Inspection Team: Melissa Wilson, Susan Swope

Presiding Juvenile Court Judge: Hon. Susan Etezadi

Facility Overview

Canyon Oaks is a co-ed STRTP facility offering comprehensive services to youth ages 12 through 18 years with serious emotional and behavioral challenges. Youth in the Canyon Oaks program can also be AB12 youth (extended foster care). Each resident receives individual services to meet their needs and circumstances. Youth are referred to Canyon Oaks Youth Center by Juvenile Probation, Youth and Family Services of San Mateo County and by school districts throughout San Mateo County per the IEP process. Before placement residents are certified by the County's Interagency Placement Review Committee as a youth who requires residential treatment services at an STRTP that provides intensive mental health services. The objective of the program is to help youth reduce symptoms, gain stability and transition into the least restrictive setting in which they can succeed. The typical resident spends one year at Canyon Oaks.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Commendations: Canyon Oaks is a well-run STRTP with caring staff who are trained in trauma informed practices. They have made the necessary adjustments to keep staff and residents safe during the Covid-19 pandemic. The residential staff have worked hard to compensate for the loneliness and boredom created by the lack of visitors and community outings. There have been no reported Covid-19 cases at the facility.

**San Mateo County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission
Group Home Inspection Report**

The JJDPC inspection was conducted virtually this year to keep the staff and residents safe. We met with the Supervising Mental Health Clinician, the Clinical Services Manager and three youth. We observed mutual respect and good rapport between the youth and the staff. Their impressive 2020 Resident's Handbook is comprehensive and easy to navigate.

Concerns & Recommendations Funds are needed to replace the grass and outside play area. Access to family and services are limited because of COVID-19 and continued effort is required to address these challenges.

Response to COVID-19: Canyon Oaks has had to restructure some of their programming because of COVID-19. Because of the pandemic, home visits, outings, family counseling and visits have all been cancelled. Youth are still allowed to go on hikes with staff. All staff are required to wear a mask, although the youth do not have to wear a mask. The facility has increased its regular cleaning and its process for receiving packages. Despite the pandemic, several of the residents have graduated from high school and middle school and some have returned home. Residents will attend school in the fall, but the teachers will teach from a remote location. They hope to have teachers back in the classroom by Labor Day.

REPORTS

Fire Inspection Report: Yes No Date: 12/19/2019

Comments: No violations found

Resident's Handbook: Yes No Date: Updated in 2019 (including Spanish version)

Licensing Inspection: Yes No Date: 11/19/2019

Rating Level: No deficiencies noted.

AREAS REVIEWED

Quality of Life

- Physical Buildings
- Meals/Nutrition
- Mental Health
- Physical/Dental Health
- Religious Services
- Volunteer Involvement
- Visiting

Programs

- Education
- Vocational/Employability
- Community Service
- Individual/Group Counseling
- Substance Abuse
- Other: N/A

Persons Interviewed

- Youth
- Director
- Youth Supervisor/Staff
- Food Services Staff
- Other: Clinical Services Manager

**San Mateo County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission
Group Home Inspection Report**

GENERAL INFORMATION

Target population of youth: Youth with serious emotional and behavioral challenges. Canyon Oaks has always been a facility providing high levels of service to meet the needs of this population. The levels of service have not changed as a result of the STRTP licensing.

Age range of youth: The residents can range in age from 12 to 19. Younger age is rare, but the facility can accommodate youth of that age. Youth who are 18 or 19 are eligible through AB12.

Youths' home counties & number of youth per county: Canyon Oaks only take youth from San Mateo County.

Pre-Plan for Emergencies: Yes No **Date of Last Drill:**

Comments:

STAFFING

Describe staff specialties: Seventeen full-time residential counselors (RC), thirteen relief residential counselors, two full time therapists, one occupational therapist, one part-time AOD therapist, one art therapist, one program specialist (therapist), one unit chief (therapist), one clinical services manager, one medical office specialist, one consulting psychiatrist (10 hours/week) who is onsite Wednesday and Fridays, one cook, one teacher and one para educator.

Describe staff including numbers, background, ethnicity, language: Most staff have been with Canyon Oaks for a long time, with the exception of clinicians which turn over more frequently. Four to six RCs are bilingual in English and Spanish. One RC speaks Tongan. Canyon Oaks always has one Spanish speaking therapist.

Educational requirements for staff: A bachelor's degree is now required; several staff members have master's degrees. The clinical staff members are professionally licensed.

Training provided for staff: 40 hour new hire training for residential counselors includes: Automated Time Keeping System (ATKS), BHRS Confidentiality & HIPAA for Mental Health and AOD, Critical Incident Management & Mandated Reporting, County of San Mateo Code of Conduct (Ethics), Compliance Training for BHRS 2014, Blood Pathogen: Exposure in the Workplace, Hazcom: What You Need to Know, Back Safety, Pro-ACT and Restraint Certification, Adult First Aid, CPR, and AED, Effectively Working with Interpreters, Introduction to Incident Command System and National Incident Management System/NIMS (ICS-100/ICS -100). All staff members have to take 40 hours of annual training, including CPR and PRO Act training (20 hours). Administrative staff have to take an additional 40 hours of training every other year. This in addition to any continuing education required to keep their clinical licenses up to date.

Staff to Youth Ratio

Awake: 3-6 RCs

**San Mateo County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission
Group Home Inspection Report**

Currently: 17 RCs, who work in 8-hour shifts

Sleeping: 3 RCs awake all night

How is staff backup handled during grave-yard shift? The Unit Chief and the Clinical Services Manager are on call 24/7. If there is an incident during the night or if there is an overnight coverage issue they will step in and cover the position.

Describe staff turnover, including frequency and reason: Staff turnover is low among the RCs and administrative staff, most of whom have been at Canyon Oaks for more than 10 years. Most of the turnover is associated with the clinicians, who are often interns. There are a lot of opportunities for clinicians and once they have obtained their necessary hours they often move on.

Describe general staff and youth interactions: We were only able to witness staff and youth interactions during the virtual youth interview section of our inspection. The interaction was casual, comfortable and playful. Canyon Oaks tries to provide therapeutic support for youth. They try to view their interactions with youth through a trauma informed lens taking into account the youth's history. Staff use a lot of redirection and only use crisis intervention techniques as a last resort. They try to make the environment as natural and comfortable as possible. RCs are required to participate in all of the group activities and to act as role models for the youth. There is a lot of play at Canyon Oaks.

CONDITIONS OF BUILDING AND GROUNDS

Give a general description of the property: One-story facility in a wooded area, next to the fire station. The front gate opens into a courtyard with a poorly maintained lawn area and basketball hoop. Newly painted, bright murals by the youth line two sides. The interior consists of offices, a large dining room (doubles as activity room), remodeled kitchen, and living quarters. Bedrooms are designed for one or two youth.

Give a general description of the main facility including housekeeping and sanitation: The Commission conducted a virtual inspection of Canyon Oaks and were unable to view the physical building and grounds because of COVID-19. The Unit Chief told us that the building and grounds were in good shape. She mentioned that the carpet was replaced and the kitchen was renovated within the last few years. They are currently waiting on a new refrigerator. There is a cleaning company that cleans the building every morning Monday through Friday to vacuum, restock toilet paper and other supplies, etc. Six times a year, three shifts of RCs complete a safety checklist to make sure the building is well-maintained and safe for the youth.

As mentioned in last year's inspection, the outside area is still in need of repair. The grass area still needs to be replaced to give the youth adequate play space outside. New outside improvements include a garden box planted by the youth and a new canopy and patio furniture courtesy of the CARES Act.

Lawns: Acceptable Unacceptable: As noted by the Unit Chief

**San Mateo County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission
Group Home Inspection Report**

Playing Fields: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Blacktop: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Paint: Acceptable Unacceptable unknown

Roof: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Drains and Gutters: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

General Appearance: Acceptable Unacceptable: As noted by the Unit Chief

Condition of Interior of Building

Walls: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Paint: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Floors: Acceptable Unacceptable: New carpet installed within last few years

Ceilings: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Drains: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Plumbing Fixtures: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Air Vents/Heating/Windows: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Smoke Alarms: Acceptable Unacceptable: Per the Fire Inspection dated 12/19/2019

Storage of Cleaning Fluids/Chemicals: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Recreation/Sports Equipment: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Hallways Clear/Doors Propped Open: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Sleeping Rooms: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Beds: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Art, Books, Personal Items Allowed in Rooms: Acceptable Unacceptable: These items are permitted in a resident's room according to the Unit Chief. The Resident Handbook does not list these items as contraband or items not permitted in a resident's room.

Graffiti Present: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

**San Mateo County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission
Group Home Inspection Report**

Ample Blankets: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Study Area: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Adequate Lighting: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

Temperature: Acceptable Unacceptable: unknown

PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF YOUTH

Appearance: Acceptable Unacceptable:

Showers (frequency, privacy, supervised): Acceptable Unacceptable: Youth are free to take private showers whenever they want within reason.

Condition of clothing (clean, fit, etc.): Acceptable Unacceptable: Youth are free to change their clothing whenever they want within reason.

Clothing appropriate to current weather: Acceptable Unacceptable: Youth are provided clothing for appropriate season if they cannot afford to buy any themselves.

Comments: Youth seem to be provided adequate clothing and hygiene. None of the youth we talked to expressed any complaints in this regard.

YOUTH ORIENTATION

What is the intake process for the facility? Youth are referred to Canyon Oaks by social workers or Probation officers. Once referred, staff make themselves available to explain the rules and programs at Canyon Oaks. Clinicians and counselors work to make pre-appraisal plans and crisis plans before the youth arrives at the facility. Once at the facility, Youth are given the residents handbook and intake packet which lays out the house rules and grievance procedures.

Are youth oriented to the house rules and procedures? Yes No **Explain:** Yes, they are given a handbook with rules and procedures.

Are house rules and grievance procedures posted? Yes No **Explain:** Yes, in the handbook

What is in place to ensure that these rules and procedures are understood by youth? Counselors make themselves available to youth who may have questions.

Are clothing and possessions inventoried on arrival and departure? How are youth's clothing and possessions protected or stored? Upon arrival at Canyon Oaks, youth are required to fill out an "Inventory Sheet" recording all personal items they bring with them to the facility. A staff member will review the youth's inventory sheet to confirm its accuracy. Any items rendered unsafe and/or

**San Mateo County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission
Group Home Inspection Report**

inappropriate will be stored by staff in a locked cabinet for safe keeping. Each youth also has a personal storage box for small items like snacks, personal electronics (excluding cell phones), etc., which is locked in the "personals" closet for safe-keeping.

Interviewed Youth: Yes No **Details:** We talked to three different youth, all of whom seemed lively and energetic and were generally positive about their experience at Canyon Oaks. They all said that they felt staff treated them fairly and that the facilities were good. All three youth expressed complaints about the food saying that it could be bland and repetitive. They also felt that that the "color system" could be unreasonable at times and felt that staff did not give them enough freedom. Overall, the Youth expressed their appreciation of Canyon Oaks and felt that they were learning and growing.

MEALS/NUTRITION

Kitchen: Acceptable Unacceptable: The kitchen is staffed by a private chef who cooks meals. They are waiting for the delivery of a new refrigerator.

Do the youth share in preparation of meals? Yes No: There are culinary classes that allow youth the opportunity to participate in meal preparation.

Are meals served family style? Yes No:

Are youth permitted to converse during meals? Yes No:

Are staff present and supervising during meals? Yes No: Staff are supposed to eat meals with the youth.

Are weekly menus posted? Yes No: Menus are posted monthly.

Are servings ample, nutritious, appetizing? Yes No:

Weaker youth protected from having food taken from them? Yes No:

Are snacks and beverages available? Yes No: Snacks are available at 10:10am, 2:30pm and 8:00pm.

How does the facility meet special nutritional needs? Special dietary needs are discussed with the psychiatrist and communicated to the cook. They are posted in the kitchen.

Length of time allowed to eat? 30 minutes

Mealtimes (no more than 4 hours between meals, breakfast to dinner, without a snack).

**San Mateo County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission
Group Home Inspection Report**

Breakfast: served until 8:15am **Lunch:** 12:10pm-12:40pm **Dinner:** 5:00pm-5:30pm

Comments: Cereal is available at the 10:10am break if breakfast is missed.

MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

Access to Medical Services: Acceptable Unacceptable: Upon intake, the Medical Office Specialist makes appointments for a physical, eye exam and dental appointment. If the resident doesn't have Kaiser or any other private insurance, then the resident will be seen at San Mateo Medical Center for their general physician appointments. Follow-up medical/dental appointments will be scheduled annually or as medically indicated. If a resident wants to request an appointment, they can let any Residential Counselor know and they will assist the resident in discussing their needs with the Medical Office Specialist so that an appointment can be made if necessary.

Access to Mental Health Services: Acceptable Unacceptable: Mental health services provided at Canyon Oaks include the full-day Mental Health Services Intensive Program, Dialectical Behavioral Therapy group meetings, individual and family counseling, and access to a Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS) psychologist as needed. The Canyon Oaks psychiatrist meets with the youth regarding their medications and is available for consultation with the youth on Wednesdays and Fridays. Specialty mental health services are provided through the Health Plan of San Mateo with BHRS. For Medi-Cal eligible youth, Canyon Oaks can make a referral for Therapeutic Behavioral Services with a contracted agency for additional behavior coaching. Social work staff would provide case management to link services for the youth.

Individual Counseling: Acceptable Unacceptable: Each youth is provided a minimum of one hour of individual psychotherapy per week. Additional psychotherapy sessions are offered on an as needed basis depending on emergent needs and phase of treatment, reflective of the youth's needs as indicated in their Needs and Services Plan and their BHRS treatment plan.

Group Counseling: Acceptable Unacceptable: Each youth is provided a minimum of one hour of family therapy per week.

Substance Abuse Counseling: Acceptable Unacceptable: There is a part-time AOD counselor who can provide services to any youth who needs it.

PROGRAMS

Recreation (type, amount, etc.): Acceptable Unacceptable: While there have been Covid-19 related restrictions to access to recreational activities, youth still have a wide selection of recreational opportunities. Many of the youth enjoy hiking the many trail heads that are located within walking distance of the facility. The facility does have outdoor play space with a basketball hoop, but there is room for some maintenance and development for it to be fully utilized for recreational activities.

**San Mateo County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission
Group Home Inspection Report**

Youth have access to board games, puzzles, video games, cards, TV/movies and other similar indoor recreational activities. Recreational activities like outings to libraries, community centers, and events will return when appropriate. Recreational activities involving outside staffing (ex. yoga) are also currently suspended because of Covid-19.

Exercise (daily schedule, amount, etc.): Acceptable Unacceptable: Exercise opportunities have been limited by Covid-19 restrictions. Usually youth would be able to be taken to a track, park, etc. As mentioned above, outside providers for activities like yoga are currently restricted. The facility has considered a virtual replacement for classes like yoga, but are not sure they would be as engaging or effective for the youth. Currently exercise is mainly from daily hikes and recreational play time outside.

Access to Religious Services: Acceptable Unacceptable: Staff will take youth to a service of their choosing, if requested. Staff looked into having an outside provider come into the facility, however, there did not seem to be enough of an interest from the youth.

Victim Awareness Classes: Yes No: Not as curriculum, but could be used as part of group and individual sessions. Particularly during individual sessions if it were appropriate for the individual's treatment plan.

Gang Awareness Classes: Yes No: This is not generally applicable for Canyon Oaks youth, but, if necessary, would be tailored into treatment plan.

Sexual Harassment Classes: Yes No: No stand-alone class, but this is a very frequent and recurring topic of group sessions.

Parenting Classes: Yes No: Very rare, but outside resources are available.

Vocational Classes: Yes No: No set classes. There is a full-time occupational therapist who works with the youth to prepare them for potential entry into Workability program or to enter the community workforce. They work on resume building, skill development, career interests, etc.

Work Program: Yes No: Ability to work on site at Canyon Oaks and out in the community. Staff transport youth to and from work and monitor their progress.

Internet Access: Internet access is limited to the school facility and only during school hours. This is by design as some youth may have an internet addiction or could use the internet to engage in unsafe behaviors. Cell phones are kept with a resident's other personal possessions in a locked cabinet. Use of cell phones is supervised.

YOUTH DISCIPLINE

**San Mateo County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission
Group Home Inspection Report**

Describe the discipline process of youth:

Canyon Oaks utilizes instances needing behavioral control and discipline as opportunities for therapeutic intervention. Types of therapeutic intervention include: signal interference; increasing awareness of consequences; offering alternatives/prosocial replacement behaviors; using staff proximity; ignoring minor misbehaviors; joining the youth's frustration and redirecting; helping youth overcome hurdles; placing hand gently on youth's arm or back; using directive statements; assigning extra chores; using humor; giving time outs or room time; using one-to-one supervision, protective separation, quiet room, and therapeutic holding; addressing at resident group meeting and restricting telephone access. Corporal or unusual punishment, mechanical restraints, infliction of pain, humiliation, intimidation, ridicule, coercion, threat, mental abuse or other actions of a punitive nature, including, but not limited to: interference with the daily living functions including eating, sleeping or toileting, or withholding of shelter, clothing, medication, or aids to physical functioning are not allowed.

Logs are kept for any behavioral incidents. Staff will meet with youth for a debrief of what happened. This debrief could be with the group if multiple people were impacted by the incident. In more serious crisis moments staff will clear the floor and attempt to de-escalate. Staff may offer food, self-soothing, or other non-physical methods to resolve the crisis. Each student has a crisis plan when they arrive. Crisis plan includes what may work, or what does not work, for a particular resident. Crisis plans are open as a draft when residents first arrive and as counselors get to know the youth – then formalized – then updated every 30 days. In extreme circumstances involving the safety of youth in crisis, other residents, or staff, local law enforcement or appropriate agency will be contacted.

Number of Law Enforcement Contacts: 37 in 2019 and 38 in first half of 2020.

Describe interaction with police (Incident Reports): 2019 (numbers are for law enforcement contacts not incident reports): Aggression Counseled 14, Missing Person 11, PES/ Hospital 5, Substance Related 3, Sexual Abuse Report 2, Booked into YSC 2. Jan-June 2020 (numbers for incident reports): Missing Person 25, Aggression Counseled 9, PES/Hospital 9, Sexual Abuse Report 2, Follow-up 2, Booked into YSC 1. Note: Some incidents have multiple incident reports written for one law enforcement contact; thus, the number of law enforcement contacts may be less than number of incident reports.

GRIEVANCES

Grievance Process: Acceptable Unacceptable: To commence the grievance process a resident fills out a form. Any grievance is sent to the staff supervisor. It is recorded, validated with the resident and investigated. The supervisor meets with the client and the staff involved and then meets with all parties together. They continue to meet until the issue is resolved and then log the outcome. Actions taken and the status must be documented within five days. The Community Care License phone number is listed for a resident to call if they find it necessary to follow up. Each grievance is reviewed by the Office of Consumer Affairs.

Number of grievances this year: Six grievances filed from 2019 through June 2020 (Eight dating back to December 2018 provided in documentation).

**San Mateo County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission
Group Home Inspection Report**

Trends and/or Comments: Most of the complaints centered around alleged breaches of confidentiality.

COMMUNICATION

Access US Mail? Yes No:

Postage Free? Yes No

Incoming/Outgoing Mail (screened? Confidential?): Yes No: Mail is opened to make sure no contraband or anything inappropriate, but not read.

Access to Telephone? Yes No: Typically, youth have phone access from 5-9 in the evening or during break times.

Visiting Schedule: During Covid-19 only facility staff are allowed on site. Case workers started this week, but no other outside persons are permitted. In the absence of Covid-19, normal visitation schedules would be posted weekly.

Do all youth have access to visitations? Yes No: Youth are not currently allowed visitors or home visits because of health concerns due to Covid-19. Pre-pandemic, visitation was not restricted at the facility and offsite home visits were only restricted if clinicians or parent/guardian had concerns for the safety and stability of the youth.

Under what circumstances would visitation be restricted? Safety of the youth.

Are visitation logs kept? Yes No: Clinicians always maintain logs and notes of visitation in individual client folders.

Adequate Space: Acceptable Unacceptable: Visitation can take place almost anywhere at the facility. Residents can show parents/guardians their rooms, but may not have extended visitation in the rooms.

Staff Supervision: Acceptable Unacceptable: Staff observe visitations generally and give youth and visitors privacy.

Privacy Provided: Yes No:

Games or Activities Provided: Yes No: Same recreational materials usually available to residents are available during visitations.

**San Mateo County Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Commission
Group Home Inspection Report**

Signature of Commissioner(s) preparing this report:

Debora Telleria /s/ Debora Telleria

Date: 9/08/2020

Sathvik Nori /s/ Sathvik Nori

Date: 9/08/2020

Doug Winter /s/ Douglas J. Winter

Date: 9/08/2020