

Memorandum



Date: July 26, 2004

To: Honorable Clifford R. Anderson III
Presiding Judge of Santa Barbara County Superior Court

Susan J. Gionfriddo

From: Susan J. Gionfriddo, Chief Probation Officer

Subject: Response to 2003-2004 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury Report on
"Criminal Justice and Detention Facilities"

CC: David Clous, Foreperson, 2003-2004 Santa Barbara County Grand Jury
Honorable Rodney S. Melville, Assistant Presiding Judge
Honorable Barbara J. Beck, Presiding Juvenile Court Judge
Michael F. Brown, Santa Barbara County Administrator
Juvenile Justice/Delinquency Prevention Commission
Probation Department Administrative Staff

I would like to express my appreciation to the 2003-2004 Grand Jury for recognizing and commending staff in our Juvenile Detention Facilities. Their input and observations are always appreciated.

Please find attached our responses to the Grand Jury's findings and recommendations.

Attachment a/s

Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall Finding and Recommendation

FINDING 1: *The furlough program, which has been discontinued, was a positive activity that offered juveniles a positive work experience and provided a valuable community service.*

Response: The respondent agrees with the finding.

RECOMMENDATION 1: *This valuable program should be reinstated when funds become available.*

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented at the present time due to ongoing departmental budget reductions. Although realizing the overall value of this community-wide weekend work program to the youth and to the community, the Probation Department had to curtail its operation in July of 2002 due to budget constraints. It is the intention of the Probation Department to reinstate this nonmandated work program when the local and state budget environments improve. When in operation the Juvenile Hall Weekend Work Project program was a valued low-level sanction for use by the Juvenile Court and Deputy Probation Officers. While learning the basic foundation of a work ethic the youth were provided the opportunity to give something back to the community through their efforts at graffiti removal, trash pickup and park maintenance.

Los Prietos Boys Camp/Tri-Counties Boot Camp Finding and Recommendation

FINDING 1: *The facilities at the Boot Camp and Boys Camp are underutilized due to a lack of sufficient staffing. Beds Remain empty.*

Response: The respondent disagrees with the finding. It is noted that at the time of the referenced Grand Jury inspection of the Boys Camp facilities, the programs were subject to waiting lists delaying the transfer of wards from the Juvenile Halls to the Camp. Although the Camp facilities are utilized less than in previous years and the populations are now less than the Board of Corrections rated bed capacity, the primary reason for this reduction was the discontinuation of the Memorandums of Agreement between Santa Barbara, Ventura, and San Luis Obispo Counties in Fiscal Year 2003 – 2004 for the operation of the Tri-Counties Boot Camp. Historically Ventura County leased 20 beds and San Luis Obispo County reserved 5 beds for out of County wards. These revenues significantly offset general operating expenses for the Camp facilities that were maintained at maximum capacity. Camp operations were reorganized and the facility downsized as of January 1, 2004, from 96 beds (Los Prietos Boys Camp - 56 beds/Los Prietos Boys Academy - 40 beds) to 75 beds (Los Prietos Boys

Camp - 40 beds/Los Prietos Boys Academy - 35 beds). However, it should be noted that when the facility was at a maximum capacity of 96 beds, only 71 of the beds were utilized for wards from Santa Barbara County. After the downsizing and the withdrawal of Ventura and San Luis Obispo Counties as fiscal partners, there was actually a net increase of four additional beds, since all of the current 75 Camp beds are available for wards from Santa Barbara County.

RECOMMENDATION 1: *Funds should be made available to increase the staff at the Camps so that the additional placements can be made.*

Response: The recommendation will not be implemented. Budget reductions within the Probation Department do not presently allow for the addition of more staff to the Camp programs. Should the need arise to house more than 75 wards at the Camp, then additional staffing will be required. With the reduction of aftercare services, the loss of low-level sentencing options like the Weekend Work Project, a well-documented increase in gang activity countywide, and the potential reduction of other local treatment alternatives, there is an imposing potential need for more Camp beds than the present total of 75. To date, staffing reductions have included two Supervising Juvenile Institutions Officers and seven Juvenile Institutions Officers. Although the Probation Department would welcome additional staffing at the Camp to enhance services, treatment, supervision, community service, and aftercare services, staffing levels for the current 75 bed occupancy at Los Prietos Boys Camp and Los Prietos Boys Academy meet the minimum standards set by the State Board of Corrections for staff-to-ward ratios within juvenile camp facilities. In the event that the use of private placements increase, or sizeable and long-term waiting lists develop for wards awaiting placement in the Camp programs, the reallocation of Institutions Division personnel will be reviewed, or a formal request will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors for consideration of funding for the allocation of additional Camp staff.