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September 18, 2009

Fletcher Phillips, Foreperson
Santa Barbara County Civil Grand Jury
Grand Jury Room, County Courthouse
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Re: Response to letter dated August 24, 2009

The Grand Jury requested an update regarding the Probation Department's response to the 2006-2007 Civil Grand Jury Report entitled "Los Prietos Boys Camp/Academy – An Oasis of Hope," Recommendation #1: "Add cameras to monitor additional areas of the facility. Consideration might be given to converting the current camera system to a secure web/internet based monitoring approach."

In October 2007, after Los Prietos returned to the Camp from evacuating for the Zaca fire, the Manager of the facility resumed collaborative efforts with the County's Communications and General Services Departments, Nippon Electronics Company (NEC), and Verizon in researching the cost of implementing this recommendation. The Manager of Los Prietos retired in March of 2008, however, he continued to work on this project. In July of 2008, due to budget reductions, the Santa Barbara Juvenile Hall (SBJH) was converted to a booking station. This massive Divisional reorganization caused this project to be placed on hiatus as the administrative team from Los Prietos and Santa Maria Juvenile Hall facilitated the movement of staff between the three facilities. Additionally, a new Manager was transferred to Los Prietos in July 2008.

The Government Code requires the maintenance of all facility video recordings for one year. To remain in compliance, Camp uses a VHS recording system and stores hundreds of tapes on site. Recently County Communications, through their continual research for this project, located an extraordinary offer that would upgrade the VHS recorders at Los Prietos to Digital Video Recorders (DVR). The purchase of the DVRs and memory will permit Los Prietos to maintain recordings for a year, without having to store tapes. The equipment cost is \$9,800 which is 50% less than the quoted amount last year for a system that did not include the one year memory and rendered an upgrade at that time unaffordable. The new system will provide the capacity to expand and add additional cameras.

Given the overall economy, reduced County revenues, and the State's budget deficits, funding continues to be a challenge particularly for non-mandated special projects. The timing of the purchase of the DVRs and memory, however, was perfect. With Communications locating the ideal equipment at half the expected cost, and with one time funding from the Department's radio depreciation account becoming available, the Department was able to upgrade antiquated equipment to a more state of the art system which will be installed as soon as the equipment is received. Alternative funding sources and continued research for cost effective equipment will be on-going relative to the Grand Jury's recommendation to add cameras to monitor additional areas of the facility. Given the recent upgrade, it is unlikely the Department will find it necessary or cost effective to convert the current camera system to secure web/internet based monitoring.

Institutions

Santa Barbara Booking Station
4500 Hollister Avenue
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 692-4800
FAX (805) 692-4801

Susan J. Gionfriddo Juvenile Justice Center
Santa Maria Juvenile Hall
4263 California Boulevard
Santa Maria, CA 93455
(805) 934-6270
FAX (805) 934-6280

Los Prietos Boys Camp
Los Prietos Boys Academy
3900 Paradise Road
Santa Barbara, CA 93105
LPBC (805) 692-1750 FAX (805) 692-1772
LPBA (805) 692-1770 FAX (805) 692-1773

The Grand Jury is also requesting an updated response to Recommendation #5: "Create a formal, ongoing mentoring program which actively engages past graduates in support of Los Prietos' mission."

This recommendation has been implemented. The Probation Department works with community based organizations, community leaders, and civic groups to provide mentoring opportunities for youth at Camp. Although not traditional mentoring services, the Community Transition Officers (CTOs) provide supervision and mentoring services for up to 90 days to the youth returning to the community. If they need assistance with programming, schooling, or job placement, the CTO's will provide the necessary guidance, direction, and referrals. If they are experiencing difficulty with their transition back into the community, the CTO is a resource not only to them, but for their parent(s) and teachers as well.

Los Prietos has a part time staff that is designated as a coordinator/provider of volunteer and mentoring services. In the 2006-2007 Grand Jury Report, Probation indicated that this position would begin recruiting volunteer mentors for the youth committed to the Camp program. Due to budget shortfalls in Fiscal Year 2007-2008 and the elimination of two Aftercare Officers in the Camp programs, the role of the staff evolved into making direct community referrals and linkages for the youth, giving computer support to the youth in the dormitories, and providing assistance to the youth as they transition back into the community. This staff also visits and supports youth who have reoffended and are detained in Juvenile Hall or incarcerated in County Jail. Although the initial plan was to have this staff recruit volunteer mentors, his strength is in providing direct mentoring services to youth within and outside the Camp program. This modification was appropriately made as there are alternate resources via the local contractor participants of the Construction Technology Program who have indicated a desire and willingness to mentor youth through job placement and the Work and Gain Economic Self Sufficiency programs. Both programs are avenues for linking youth to agencies and mentors within the community.

It is also noted that successful past graduates are solicited to make presentations to the wards in a variety of venues. Recently a former alumni from Camp and Los Robles High School (LRHS), who is now attending Santa Barbara City College, was a compelling featured speaker at the Spring 2009 LRHS graduation ceremony. A recent Camp graduate and Construction Technology participant was invited back to Camp to share his story about transitioning back into the community and to receive a tool belt and tools awarded by the Construction Technology Program to reward and acknowledge his success. Due to the age and criminal histories of many recent Camp graduates, they would not qualify as traditional mentor volunteers for at least five years after Camp graduation.

Los Prietos staff continuously seek mentoring opportunities for the youth in the Camp program and met with Jan Clevenger of the Solvang Rotary on September 15, 2009, to establish additional mentoring volunteers from the cities of Lompoc, Buellton, Solvang, and Santa Ynez. This expanded collaboration should significantly add to the mentor pool serving Los Prietos Boys Camp and Los Prietos Boys Academy.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if the Grand Jury requires clarification or further information. As always, the Probation Department appreciates the support and recommendations of the Grand Jury to improve operations and programs.

Respectfully,



Steven DeLira

Probation Manager

Los Prietos Boys Camp/Academy

Cc: The Honorable Arthur A. Garcia, Presiding Judge of the Superior Court
Patricia J. Stewart, Chief Probation Officer
Beverly Taylor, Deputy Chief Probation Officer