

**Out of Sight, Out of Mind:  
The Plight of Adolescent Girls  
in the San Francisco Juvenile Justice System**

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**"We youth are supposed to be the future, but the way things are going, we are going to become the past."**

- Chanise Perkins, 16, interviewed in detention,  
San Francisco Youth Guidance Center, December, 1995.

**INTRODUCTION**

The crisis in the girls' unit in San Francisco's Juvenile Hall could have almost gone unnoticed as the Chief Probation Officer calmly presented his report to the monthly Juvenile Probation Commission on February 7, 1996. Chief Edgar Flowers noted that there were a total of 30 girls housed in the girls' unit (G2), "as of 3:40 p.m. today" -- in a facility equipped spatially and legally to accommodate 22 females. The overcrowding -- loading up mattresses three to a cell -- represents the highest surge "in five years," Flowers stated. Teenage girls are being arrested in San Francisco at higher rates than ever before -- and for increasingly serious offenses -- higher

than as far back as *ten* years ago.

Discussion about juvenile crime and delinquency usually presumes that offenders are boys. However, one-quarter of the youths arrested each year in the U.S. are girls (Chesney-Lind and Shelden 1992, p. 1). Women and girls are the fastest growing segment of the prison and jail population, but are all but invisible in terms of programs and statistics. The assumption that the only youths in trouble are boys contributes to neglect of the problems that lead girls into the juvenile justice system in the first place, as well as to the lack of attention, resources and creativity in developing services and programs for girls.

This report is about *girls* in the San Francisco Juvenile Probation system. There are two crucial reasons to be "girl specific." The first is that the situation for girls in the juvenile justice system is particularly grim. The San Francisco-based "Come Into The Sun Coalition" released an eye-opening study on the needs of women and girls in the criminal and juvenile justice system in San Francisco in March of 1992. After tabulating the results of a survey of 154 service providers, they found that young women's needs are "unexamined, untreated, and invalidated by both the system charged with serving them and by their own community and family support structures" (Delinquency Prevention Commission, March 1992, p. 3). Furthermore, the report found that:

The needs of girls on the edge of, or in the juvenile justice system are regularly neglected by the very correctional institutions mandated to address them. These institutions fail to develop a diversity of placement options for girls, to encourage and contract with community-based programs targeting the needs of girls, even to collect information on who the girls are, what they need, and what worked to meet such needs (Delinquency Prevention Commission, p. 8).

Despite the report's clear-cut findings and excellent recommendations, not much has changed in the last four years. A 1993 survey conducted by the San Francisco chapter of the National Organization for Women found that only 8.7% of programs funded by the Mayor's Office of Children, Youth and Their Families specifically addressed the needs of girls (cited in Siegal 1995). Professor Meda Chesney-Lind, the nation's leading expert on girls and delinquency, charges that "delinquency theory, indeed all of criminology, has ignored girls" (Chesney-Lind and Shelden 1992, p. 54). As female arrest and detention rates soar for teenagers, their needs are increasingly unmet.

Another reason to focus attention on adolescent females in the juvenile justice system is that they have particular -- often unmet -- emotional needs. Female adolescents are more likely to be victims of sexual, emotional and physical abuse (National Research Council on Child Abuse and Neglect 1993, p. 210). These

experiences can produce distinct forms of emotional expressions of low self-esteem which are revealed in a higher number of suicide attempts for girls, higher amounts of eating disorders, and other psychological problems (Pipher 1994). Furthermore, this background often highly correlates with adolescent girls' involvement in delinquency and status offenses<sup>(1)</sup> (Janus et al 1987). Girls also have their own problems with expectations of conforming to oncoming adult sex-role stereotypes with which they grapple as adulthood approaches. Finally, young women are uniquely affected by pregnancy, rape, prostitution, incest, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and AIDS infection, mothering, and drug addiction, all of which have distinctly gendered influences in the health care of female delinquents. Therefore, we need specific research and theoretical attention to female juvenile offenders and the pathways leading towards their re-emergence into wider healthy community participation.

## PART ONE: WHO ARE THE GIRLS IN THE SYSTEM?

We youth are supposed to be the future, but the way things are going, we are going to become the past.  
- Chanise Perkins, 16, interviewed in detention, San Francisco Youth Guidance Center, December, 1995.

### *Numbers Tell A Sad Story: A Statistical Picture of the Female Population in Trouble*

Major complications arise in gathering, presenting and analyzing a quantitative picture of the female population in the juvenile probation system. Assembling statistics and demographics in the field of juvenile justice (whether nationally, by state, county or locally) can produce a confusing muddle which renders the comparison of "rates" meaningless. No standardized method of reporting, compiling, and publishing the data exists. Terms such as "detention referrals," "petitions filed," "adjudicated cases," along with the more standardized "detention rates" and "arrest

(1) Status offenses are charges based solely on the "status" of being under 18 years of age, for example: running away from home, curfew violations, alcohol use and smoking cigarettes, truancy, "incurability," and "promiscuity."

*The needs of girls on the edge of, or in the juvenile justice system are regularly neglected by the very correctional institutions mandated to address them.*

rates" are all used at differing times and by reporters who differ in expertise. Tables rarely define their terms and some agencies are not fully computerized. Data specifically for girls are even more difficult to obtain. We found that the San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department does not systematically track statistics concerning the race and family background of female offenders, the types of crimes they commit and their recidivism rate. Employees at all levels throughout the probation system, legal representatives, and youths and their families are constantly at odds over what is actually happening to all participants involved in juvenile probation.

Furthermore, a certain danger emerges from the media build-up of hysteria over insufficiently analyzed data. "Law and order" advocates use statistics to justify the demonization of youth and to press for more punitive responses to juvenile offenses. For example, nationally, only 5% of all juveniles were arrested in 1992 -- and of those 5%, approximately 9% were arrested for a violent crime (Snyder and Sickmund 1995, p. iv). Yet the negative images of urban youth are so widespread that the majority of funds and efforts go towards building more youth prisons and towards stripping away legal protections for all youth that were instituted in 1899 when the first juvenile court was established in Illinois. As a result, preventative and rehabilitative programs for the other 95% of youth in the system are being cutback or eliminated. Furthermore, when studying a report (such as this one) which reveals "soaring arrest rates," it is important to look at the context and underlying assumptions behind the data.

In their interviews with us, both the Director of San Francisco Juvenile Hall, Judy Griffin, and Clinical Nurse Specialist at the Youth Guidance Center, Kristin Davenport, noted that the social demographics of the girls in the system, and their reasons for being detained, reflect the political agenda of the mayoral administration during any given era.

For example, Ms. Davenport pointed out that during Mayor Dianne Feinstein's administration, many youths were detained at YGC for "tagging" -- marking characters in ink or paint on buses and other public property. Female minors were brought to YGC on charges of prostitution due to weekly sweeps conducted by the police. Under Mayor Art Agnos, the number of female minors charged with prostitution declined due to a diversion program his administration created. With Mayor Frank Jordan, the arrest rate increased and included youths who were brought in for loitering and sleeping on the streets under his "Matrix" program against homelessness.

**TABLE 1**  
**National Juvenile Arrest Trends, By Sex and Offense:**  
**1984 -- 1993**

	1984	1993	% change in Rate
Total Arrests	1,466,212	1,791,083	up 21%
Male	1,144,694	1,364,103	up 18%
Female	321,518	426,980	up 32%
Violent Arrests	65,844	110,380	up 67%
Male	58,558	95,592	up 61%
Female	7,286	14,788	up 102%
Murder and Non-negligent	1,154	2,372	up 105%
Male	1,054	2,194	up 173%
Female	100	178	up 77%
Property Arrests	396,527	534,415	up 35%
Male	386,622	403,159	up 3%
Female	99,805	131,256	up 31%
Drug Arrests	63,425	84,902	up 34%
Male	53,364	75,535	up 40%
Female	10,061	9,367	down 7%

**Notes:** The estimated population ages 10 to 17 years old for 1984

was 21,001,000. The FBI does not provide estimated populations; Census Bureau estimates were used. Arrest data indicate number of arrests, not number of juveniles. Total arrests include less serious offenses not listed above. Violent arrests include murder, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Property arrests include burglary, larceny-theft and motor vehicle theft. Drug arrest include sale, manufacture and possession.

**Source:** Crime in the United States, 1993; U.S. Department of Justice, FBI. Table courtesy of National Council on Crime and Delinquency, forthcoming report.

Jordan also fought successfully for a youth curfew. Thus, when examining the cultural construction of juvenile deviance, we must consider the sociopolitical changes in attitudes and practices of elected officials and their administrations.

The following tables illustrate the statistical picture of teenage girls involved in the juvenile justice system on the national level, for California and for the City and County of San Francisco. These data are displayed, when possible, from the mid-eighties to the present for a decade overview, and for males and females.

Table 1 displays national juvenile arrest trends from 1984 to 1993, reflecting a dismaying increase in girls' arrests. However, it is important to realize that arrest rates reflect only one point on the continuum of a young woman's involvement in the system and that most arrests do not result in detention or conviction. Arrest rates can be seen as a reflection of police activity and largely uncover shifting social attitudes which the "cop on the beat" is charged with enforcing. Police officers arrive at the scene of a crime with instructions from the station, theoretical beliefs of their profession and personal experience. Patrol officers are charged with the enforcement of current social beliefs about crime and delinquency. For example, in this era of "three strikes" and a more punitive mentality towards crime and youth, police officers may arrest females at the scene of a violent crime for "attempted murder". In the past, these same females might have been characterized as "victims" or as having fought in self defense.

Nonetheless, the leap in arrests for violent crimes is an indication of the increasingly dangerous involvement of girls in the system. To understand these figures, it is important to look at the context in which these arrests are occurring. One of the most significant factors is the rise in poverty, particularly in communities of color. Every day in America 2,660 babies are born into poverty. And while 22% of all American children are poor, 44% of African American children are poor (Children's Defense Fund 1996). Over 1,400 teenagers a day become mothers; 40% of African American youth fail to graduate from urban high schools; 2.7 million children suffered from abuse or neglect in 1991 (Fortune Magazine 1992). From 1985 to 1992, nearly 17,000 persons under age 18 were murdered in the U.S. (Snyder and Sickmund 1995, p. 18). The Republican party's "Contract With America" reflects the nation's leadership's increasing unwillingness to assist families in need as programs that serve poor families are being drastically cut. The "War on Drugs" has resulted in massive arrests for nonviolent offenses among both adults and youth. And the "crack epidemic" has contributed to the growth of gangs, turf wars and random violence in poor communities. These are depleted communities under siege in which many of America's girls are growing up.

A study of girls in juvenile facilities conducted by the American Correctional Association in 1990 found that 61% were physically abused in the past, 54% had been sexually abused, 54% had attempted suicide at least once. More than half had used drugs on a regular basis and were more sexually active than other girls their age, resulting in pregnancies and abortions. The scholars noted:

These difficulties underscore the need to develop specialized programs not found in traditional juvenile

**TABLE 2**  
**Numbers of Youth in Custody, California Youth Authority, By Sex: 1985, 1990, 1995.**

	1985	1990	1995	% Change 1985 - 1995
Males	6,686 (95%)	7,886 (96%)	9,852 (97%)	up 47%
Females	312 (5%)	299 (4%)	345 (3%)	up 11%
Totals	6,998 (100%)	8,185 (100%)	10,197 (100%)	up 46%

**Note:** Numbers are cases of institutionalization as of December 31 of the reporting year.  
**Source:** Courtesy of the California Youth Authority Office of Information Systems.

facilities, where programs have been designed for a predominantly male population. In particular, these girls require specialized medical and social services that are unique to their problems (cited in Krisberg and Austin, 1993, p. 139).

Additional problems that confront girls in the system range from girls being more likely to be held in detention for lesser offenses than boys and that a higher percentage are held for minor nonviolent offenses (Chesney-Lind and Shelden 1992, p. 29); the fact that African Americans have the highest incarceration rate among both males and females, three to four times higher for females (CJCJ Report November 1994); and that girls have fewer rehabilitative and constructive housing options and spend more time in detention awaiting placement (San Francisco Juvenile Justice Task Force, Draft Report, 1994).

Table 2 represents the custody situation for male and female youths at the state level from 1985 to 1995. California's detention population in general is the highest in the nation, and is up 46% for all juveniles as well.

As Table 2 displays, from 1990 to 1995, girls experienced a 15% increase in custody totals, with an 11% increase during the decade between 1985 and 1995.

California locks up the most juvenile offenders in the country and has one of the

highest incarceration rates in the world for youths and adults. Despite the fact that this country spends \$3.2 billion annually to keep children in custody, the rate of crime remains steady and the recidivism rate remains high. As one expert states, "California's juvenile recidivist rate is seventy percent and rising," (Dowie 1993, p. 58). Incarceration has not been proven to reduce crime, yet California persists in spending millions to build more prisons rather than investing in prevention, rehabilitation programs, education and social and economic development to reduce the underlying causes of crime.

Tables 3 and 4 bring the picture of delinquency for teenage girls home to our own neighborhood. The Juvenile Probation Department publishes an annual report which presents data for "detention referrals" and "offense bookings" by gender. Table 3 describes a 47% increase in referrals to detention for girls from 1990 to 1994. Offense bookings represent yearly cases booked into Juvenile Hall due to actual offenses, as contrasted with youths who, for example, missed their transportation to another facility and had to be admitted while awaiting other placements. The 121% increase in girls booked into Juvenile Hall in the last 4 years represents a serious crisis for the juvenile probation facility, which can only safely and legally house 22 girls at one time.

**TABLE 3**  
**SF City and County Probation, Youth Guidance**  
**Center Detention Referrals By Sex: 1990, 1994**

Source: San Francisco City and County Juvenile Probation Department, Annual Report, 1990, 1994

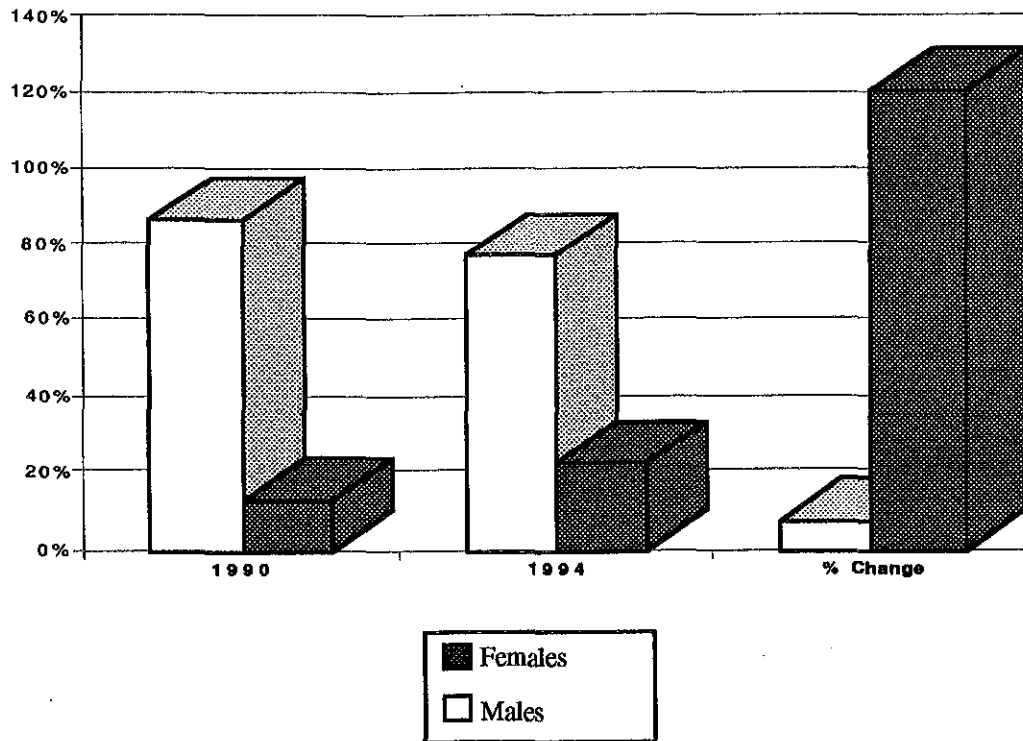
	1990	1994	% Change
Males	2,680 (86%)	2,376 (78%)	down 11%
Females	448 (14%)	657 (22%)	up 47%
Total	3,128 (100%)	3,033 (100%)	down 3%

	1990	1994	% Change
Males	2,184 (87%)	2,337 (77%)	up 7%
Females	315 (13%)	696 (23%)	up 121%
Totals	2,499 (100%)	3,033 (100%)	up 20%

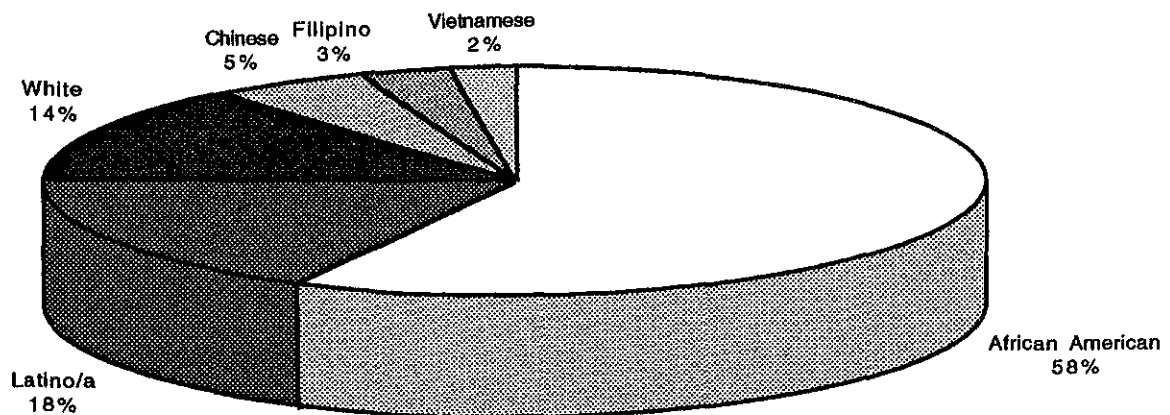
**TABLE 4**  
**SF City and County Probation, Youth Guidance**  
**Center Offense Bookings By Sex: 1990, 1994**

Source: Courtesy of the San Francisco Youth Guidance Center, Juvenile Probation Office of Information Systems and Services

**San Francisco City and County Probation, Youth Guidance Center  
Offense Bookings By Sex: 1990 and 1994**



**San Francisco Youth in Out-of-Home Placement  
1993**



**TABLE 5**  
**San Francisco City and County Out-of-Home Placements**  
**One Day Count**  
**May 1, 1995**

	Girls	Boys	Totals
Total	43	158	201
Race/Ethnicity:			
African American	26	76	102
Latino/a	7	35	42
White	9	22	31
Asian/Pacific Islander	1		
Total	43	155*	198*
Age:			
19	3	14	17
18	4	39	43
17	13	52	65
16	9	31	40
15	9	16	25
14	1	6	7
13	2	0	2
Total	41*	158	199*
Placement Option:			
Family/Foster Care	3	25	28
Col. Excelsior School for Girls	10		10
Other Group Home	30	133	173
Total	43	158	201

\*Numbers do not add up to total counts because original data is unclear.

**Source:** Courtesy of Dennis Sweeney, Director, Out-of-Home Placement Division, San Francisco Juvenile Probation Services.

***The Faces Behind the Numbers: A Conversational Picture of Girls in Detention.***

Although quantitative data tells a chilling story, through interviews with girls at YGC and with various staff members who work with them, we hope to present a fuller picture of the circumstances facing the girls, their families and the larger community. In December 1995, we interviewed ten girls in detention at San Francisco Juvenile Hall. Eight youths were African American and two were Latina. Their average age was almost 16 years old, ranging from 14 to 18 years of age. They were each from low-income or working class families.

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As we looked into their faces, we saw loss, sadness, disappointment. Many calmly told us their stories, including experiences of being stabbed or stabbing someone else, or about selling drugs or being a prostitute. Sometimes they seemed tough and "in-your-face". At other times, we glimpsed their vulnerability. They expressed their hopes and dreams of a better life; hopes and dreams in a society in which they rarely come true, especially for young girls of color.

Several themes emerged from our conversations that we summarize here.

**The Nature of Girls' Offenses**

Many of the people we interviewed mentioned the significant role that the use and sale of drugs -- specifically "crack" cocaine -- plays in the delinquency of adolescent girls. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, more experienced drug dealers began recruiting younger teens as "lookouts" or to handle the actual sales on the streets. Young girls, often the girlfriends of older dealers, are convinced to take the physical and legal risks of handling the drugs because the older male drug dealers calculate that the younger females will likely face lighter sentences or only end up on probation. Crack cocaine affects girls in other ways: if they are users, they often become prostitutes for money or trade sex for drugs, leading to an increase in sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and AIDS, and to their children getting

lost to the foster care system.

Two girls we interviewed had been arrested for selling crack in the Tenderloin (a crime-ridden neighborhood near San Francisco's Civic Center). The girls rarely admitted to using, only selling. They also denied that *their* boyfriends got them into any kind of problem behavior (such as prostitution or drug sales), but they did say that was the case with many "other girls". The youths talked about how much money they make selling drugs and that they use the money to buy "nice things", or "help out their mothers". One young mother we interviewed uses her money to take care of her baby. Another spoke about how hard it is to leave this lifestyle once you are used to it. They were proud of being able to earn a lot of money and minimize the risks.

I went to the Tenderloin and I saw all the money and it was fast money, that's all it was.

- Chanise Perkins, 16, arrested for selling drugs

I was skipping a lot of school. I kept thinking I could be out there making money. I didn't see the benefit of school. I couldn't see the long term.

- Chante Robinson, 16, arrested for robbery

According to Marty Rivas, a counselor in the girls' unit, girls used to be detained more for "victimless crimes", whereas now they are coming in for "harder crimes". She has seen an increase in gun use. Indeed, among 15 to 19 year olds, homicide by guns is the leading cause of death for black youth and the second leading cause after car accidents for white youth; suicide is third for both groups (Fortune Magazine, 1992). California is ranked with four other states for the highest rates of gun homicides in the nation (Myers 1996). Two girls we interviewed who were arrested for violent crimes stated:

The day I graduated from 8th grade was the day I was charged with attempted murder.

- Iman Barker, 14 years old

I tried to walk away but he kept fighting with me and I pulled out a knife and stabbed him. I had the knife to scare people. I never thought I would use it.

- Latasha Gordon, 14-1/2 years old

Girls are increasingly involved in gang activities, either in association with boyfriends or in their own gangs. Ms. Rivas



noted that when adolescent girls are charged with violent crimes, such as attempted murder, a male is often involved. One girl we interviewed attacked another because the victim had been seen kissing her boyfriend. Another attacked a girl on a school bus who "deliberately disrespected" her boyfriend's gang. We need more research to understand the increase of girls' involvement with violence (see Tracy and Shelden 1992).

Furthermore, it is increasingly important for girls' programs to address the issues of sexism and self-esteem. Battering of teen girls is on the rise. This may also be tied to the findings of a new report prepared by "Children Now" which found that most babies born to teenage girls in the Bay Area are fathered by adult men, indicating that adult males are more frequently involved with teens than was previously thought (Krieger 1995).

Involvement in the juvenile justice system takes girls on a different path than boys. Girls are more likely to be charged with status offenses: charges based solely on the "status" of being under 18, for example: running away from home, curfew violations, alcohol use and smoking cigarettes, truancy, "incurability" -- even promiscuous sexuality is a factor in arrest and detention of teenage girls. Researchers Chesney-Lind and Shelden point out that being arrested for status offenses is a key distinguishing characteristic of female delinquency. Experts Krisberg and Austin concur:

With respect to gender, young women continue to be arrested and incarcerated for behaviors that would not trigger a similar response for young males. The court has been reluctant to minimize its use of incarceration for these girls even though the facilities they are sent to are ill-equipped to handle their special medical, mental health, and social services needs (1993, p. 140).

Chesney-Lind and Shelden note that even the "language of status offense provisions invites discretionary application," which

allows parents, police and juvenile court authorities, who ordinarily decide whether PINS [status offense] proceedings should be initiated, to hold girls legally accountable for behavior -- often sexual or in some way related to sex -- that they would not consider serious if committed by boys (1992, p. 31).

Women and girls are treated particularly harshly by the system because their crimes are seen as an affront to society's views of the "proper" role and behavior of women. Girls are supposed to be passive and "good"; when they deviate from this pattern, they are immediately suspect and vulnerable to prosecution. Indeed, the social history of girls' detention reflects this belief-system: all teenage females referred to Juvenile Hall in Los Angeles during the Progressive era in the early 1900's were given a mandatory pelvic examination to ascertain whether or not they were sexually active (Odem and Schlossman 1991).

Today, once cited for status offenses, girls often stay involved in the juvenile justice system. For example, there is a high incidence of sexual abuse among girls who run away, which is often not treated when they enter the juvenile probation system as status offenders. Sometimes these adolescents will run away again, or run from an out-of-home placement, and spend time on the streets where they fall victim to substance abuse, crime, or prostitution as a means of survival. The system ends up prosecuting the runaway's crimes, rather than focusing on healing the abuse or poverty that was the cause (see Janus 1987).

### Problems with the San Francisco Juvenile Hall Facility

There is only one unit for girls in San Francisco Juvenile Hall. According to staff members who work with the girls, one problem is that older and younger girls are housed together, making their differing emotional and psychological needs more difficult to address. In addition, many view it as a problem that serious offenders are housed in the same unit as girls who commit minor crimes or are awaiting placement to another facility. Some staff observed that it is difficult to identify girls who might be in severe distress, preventing or delaying them from receiving appropriate attention.

Sometimes these problems are not really spatial problems: they are not due primarily to a lack of "beds". Many of the girls should not be detained in the first place. A number of girls that come through Youth Guidance

*Many of the girls who come through the Youth Guidance Center would be better served outside the juvenile probation system, either back at home with an effective gender-specific program utilizing community support, or in programs designed to meet their specific educational and medical needs...*

Center would be better served outside the juvenile probation system, either back at home with an effective gender-specific program utilizing community support, or in programs designed to meet their specific educational and medical needs, whether they be substance abuse, sexual/physical abuse histories, or other emotional deprivation issues (see also Ianni 1989).

All girls at the San Francisco Juvenile Probation facility talked at length about how awful it was to be in detention. They were concerned about inadequate telephone privileges and calls being cut off before they had a chance to say good-bye. They told us that the food is "nasty". Apparently, using the bathroom is a privilege, not a right. Some reported that they must yell and bang on the door to get the attention of counselors so that they can exit the cells and use the lavatory. It was their experience that they could not get the attention of the counselors soon enough to use the toilets comfortably: "especially if you are pregnant...some girls pee on the floor." Quality and availability of educational and other programs for girls varies, and those which are available are seen as merely stop-gap measures.

#### A Developmental Perspective of Adolescent Delinquency

Adolescence arrives for young girls at the very moment when they are least equipped to handle the difficult social, emotional and psychological work of sifting through conflicting messages about female role expectations (Siegal 1995). Girls are more likely than boys to attempt suicide, have feelings of low self-worth and drop out of high school because of family-related problems. Growing up female is the subject of some noted recent social research: the 1994 American Association of University Women's project by Peggy Orenstein, *Schoolgirls: Young Women, Self-Esteem, and the Confidence Gap*; the 1995 Carnegie study of adolescence, "Great Transitions"; and psychologist Mary Pipher's 1994 best-selling book, *Reviving Ophelia*. Social scientists agree that girls often emerge from adolescence with low self-esteem, pregnancy problems, confusion over role expectations, low aspirations, and eating

disorders (Pipher 1994).

Adolescents who are chronically exposed to violence and poverty respond with rage, distrust and hopelessness. To make a reasonable transition to adulthood, adolescents need to feel a sense of safety and hope. This transition is not possible in the context of chronic violence (Greene 1993). Because of factors such as abuse and neglect, abandonment or death of a parent, substance abuse or moving from foster home to group home, many minors have not experienced the successful resolution of conflicts at earlier stages of development, which places them at a psychological disadvantage as they grow older.

For example, we interviewed Toi Johnson, a 16 year old who had a 27 year old boyfriend she met after running away from home. Arrested for prostitution, she said it "wasn't so bad", and that she was really only out on the street "lookin' good". She denied that her boyfriend encouraged her to do it. Toi articulated her fears that when she is released from detention to go back to live with her mother, she might not "be able to follow the rules": to go to school and be at home in the evenings. This is a young woman who has been making her own rules for the last two years. She told us that she wasn't sure she could go back to being a "square" -- a good little teenager, minding her mother".

We spoke with another girl for whom sexual abuse was instrumental in her involvement in the juvenile justice system. Starting at age 9, Iman Barker was sexually molested by her mother's boyfriend for a year and a half. Her mother denied her story. When she was 12, her mother choked her during a physical fight, and Iman ran away. She was arrested for attempted murder at age 14, but her dreams are to act or model or write poetry. Assistance in healing from the various losses she has sustained should be top on the list of her treatment plan.

#### Medical, Psychological and Emotional Needs of Female Offenders

We found a unified response from women who work with girls in detention when we

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asked about the specific problems that girls face. Probation officers, counselors and social workers characterized the girls as needing nurturing and emotional support. Evelyn Olman, an eleven-year veteran at the probation office, pointed out that it is very important for girls to be able to tell their sides of their stories. A nurse with Special Programs for Youth at the Youth Guidance Center stated that the "hallmark of this population is abuse and neglect. A high percentage of the girls are really behind in school...and most grew up in poverty."

Girls who are pregnant have special medical needs which are often difficult to meet, such as the above-mentioned unhampered access to the bathroom. Other issues that specifically relate to girls include access to birth control, information about and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases, HIV and AIDS, and problems related to parenting. Since the juvenile justice system is largely designed to work with boys -- and staff training is largely focused on working with boys -- the facilities are not equipped to effectively address these complicated circumstances girls face.

Youth who are convicted of charges in San Francisco do not serve their sentences at Juvenile Hall. However, they may remain detained there until their dispositional hearing, at which time their sentence is determined. The outcomes at dispositional hearings include being returned home, being sent to a foster home, being transferred to an isolated ranch program, being remanded to the California Youth Authority, or being sent to a range of other facilities through the Out-of-Home Placement Division. Many youth are referred to out-of-home placement. It is the often unique experiences of girls in out-of-home placements that we will discuss here.

## **PART TWO: GIRLS AND OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT**

### ***A Brief History of Placing Out***

The placing of juvenile offenders outside of their homes grew out of the movement to deinstitutionalize youth who had been held

in asylums, almshouses, houses of refuge or other facilities which were oppressive and inadequate for rehabilitating children. In the mid-1800s, the reformatory was created as a place where discipline and values would reform delinquent youth. The educational program included moral and religious training and the value of hard work. The underlying assumption was that these institutions could counteract the impact of poor family life, environment and poverty and that "unworthy parents must be deprived of the right to rear children..." (Platt, 1977, p. 51).

Yet frequently the race and class attitudes of the dominant society determined who were considered worthy and unworthy parents. For example, in the early 1800s,

because Irish immigrants were viewed as corrupt and unsuitable as parents, it is easy to see how anti-immigrant feelings could color judgments about the suitability of parental control. As a result, children of immigrants made up the majority of inmates of the houses of refuge (Krisberg and Austin, 1993, p. 19).

Because young delinquent women were viewed as "sexually promiscuous with little hope for eventual reform," they especially received discriminatory treatment (Krisberg and Austin, 1993, p. 19).

The first industrial school for girls in Illinois was established in 1876, because of the difficulty of finding homes for girls over 12 who were in orphanages. The aim of the school was to "prevent 'depraved,' 'unprincipled,' and 'unpure' girls from growing up to reproduce 'their kind three to five fold'" (Platt, 1977, p. 110) At that time, youths sent to such training schools lacked any due process or legal protections.

Eventually, the child-saving movement emerged in the mid-1800s to "prevent cruelty to children." It created the first comprehensive child welfare legislation in Illinois in 1899, establishing the first juvenile justice system in the country, and regulating the treatment and control of dependent, neglected and delinquent children. While attempting to improve some of the more horrible conditions poor children faced, the child savers actually extended the control of the juvenile court

*The Annual Juvenile Probation Department Report of 1992 showed that 60% of the girls are detained more than 7 days, compared to 6% of the boys, and that 32% of the girls stay more than 30 days compared to only 2% of the boys. For 80% of the boys detained, the average stay was under 3 days; only 28% of the girls were released in the same 3 day time period.*

system over the lives of poor, working class youth and youth of color. According to scholar Anthony Platt, the history of the juvenile justice system reveals it to be "an instrument of racial and class oppression" (1977, p. 190). Contemporary advocates believe that current statistics continue to support this contention (Currie 1985; Humes 1996).

Early development of community-based delinquency prevention efforts took place in the 1930s. As social attitudes changed, youth arrested for status offenses were no longer treated as criminals and held in locked juvenile facilities. The movement to deinstitutionalize youth and create community-based programs intensified in the 1960s with the growth of group homes, partial release programs, halfway houses and other attempts to decrease commitment rates to secure juvenile institutions (Krisberg and Austin, 1993, p. 47). Culturally relevant and gender specific community-based programs have been found to be effective at reducing costs by depopulating overcrowded detention facilities. However, in the current era of "three strikes", building new prisons and demonizing young people of color, the deinstitutionalization trend is being rapidly reversed.

#### ***San Francisco's Out-of-Home Placement Program***

In 1993 the San Francisco Probation Department housed 195 minors in out-of-home placement (159 males, 36 females). Of these youths, 87% were in group homes and 13% were in foster homes; 85% were placed outside San Francisco City and County. The average length of stay in a placement at that time was 8.5 months. The demographic breakdown of this out-of-home placement population is as follows: African Americans comprised 55% of youths, Latinos 17%, Whites 13%, Chinese 5%, Filipino 3%, and Vietnamese 2% (San Francisco Juvenile Justice Task Force, Draft Final Report, 1994). In May 1995 there were 201 minors in out-of-home placement - 158 boys and 43 girls. Table 5 (on p.7) displays the data for a "one-day count" of the out-of-home placement deployment of youths in the San Francisco probation

system for the 201 youths on May 1, 1995. As Table 5 illuminates, girls represent 21% of youths in out-of-home placement in this particular day-count. For these data, nonwhite females represent 79% of the population of the girls in out-of-home placement. The average age for girls in out-of-home placement is 16 years old. The large majority of these girls are living in group home settings.

A special report prepared in March of 1994 by a Juvenile Justice Task Force convened by Mayor Frank Jordan included numerous references to the lack of services for girls throughout the juvenile justice system, including out-of-home placement, and recommendations to address this problem (San Francisco Task Force, Draft Final Report 1994). We found in our interviews and research that the same problems remain and little has been done to improve the circumstances of girls in the system.

The 1994 Task Force found that more placements are available for boys than girls. Girls tend to spend more time at Juvenile Hall than boys partly because there are few other options available. The Annual Juvenile Probation Department Report of 1992 showed that 60% of the girls are detained more than 7 days compared to 6% of the boys and that 32% of the girls stay more than 30 days compared to only 2% of the boys. For 80% of the boys detained, the average stay was under 3 days; only 28% of the girls were released in the same 3 day time period. Whether you look at detention rates or time spent awaiting placement, girls are detained at disproportionately high rates.

In San Francisco, when minors are arrested they go through an adjudication process that can lead to several results. If they plead or are found guilty, they will eventually appear at a disposition hearing before the juvenile court where the court decides what will happen to the minor. Options include fines and restitution payments, community service, voluntary probation for minor offenses, probation at home or with a relative, foster care, being sent to a county ranch or some other group home or institution such as a psychiatric

*78% of children in San Francisco in foster care are African American in a city where the total population is 16% African American.*

facility, substance abuse program, or, for more serious and frequent offenders, the long term locked-down facilities of the California Youth Authority. In making this decision, the court relies heavily on the recommendations of the probation officer, although defense attorneys provide other reports and evaluations that are taken into account as well.

A recommendation for out-of-home placement is usually based on the probation officer's determination that efforts to work with the child in the home have been or would be unsuccessful. There are valid reasons for which minors need to be placed outside of their homes, such as physical or sexual abuse. Sometimes residential programs are preferred options to more restrictive assignments such as the ranch system or the California Youth Authority. However, few, if any, services are provided to youths or their families to try to keep them together. Some researchers and youth advocates believe that families may be written off too quickly. Racism and socioeconomic status further influences involvement in the juvenile justice system (Wordes, et. al. 1994; Duster 1987). This is reflected in the disproportionate number of African American, Latino and Asian youth who are detained and placed in San Francisco out-of-home placements (see Table 5). This racial disproportion is reflected, not only in the delinquency court, but in the juvenile dependency system as well. San Francisco has an unbelievably high placement rate of African American children in foster care through the dependency system (W&I Code 300s) -- 78% of children in San Francisco in foster care are African American in a city where the total population is 16% African American (Foster Care Fact Sheet 1996).

The Out-of-Home Placement Division of the Probation Department is responsible for placing minors when they are referred by the court. There are a variety of factors which the Department takes into consideration when selecting placements for youths, among them:

- \*number and nature of offenses
- \*history of placements, including

frequency of running away

\*history of arson or other violent offenses

\*history of substance abuse problems

\*psychiatric disorders

San Francisco County uses a variety of group homes and other placements for boys and girls. These residential facilities are assigned "levels" according to the education and training of the staff and what services are offered on-site. The highest levels are for secured psychiatric facilities. Other programs offer therapy and other services for which qualified staff are on-site. Smaller group homes which use other community-based services for their residents, such as out-patient counseling, receive lower-level ratings. Group homes are residential facilities, often three or four bedroom houses leased in residential neighborhoods. Youths live in a home-like setting and go to school and therapy, organize chores, housework and cooking, in a group setting.

Out-of-home placements represent considerable financial obligations for the Juvenile Probation Department. Group homes bill the Department monthly rates, which are regulated by the State Department of Social Services. Costs range from \$484 per month per youth in foster care, to \$1,000 a month for small group homes, to \$3,500 to \$4,500 a month for more specialized treatment facilities and services. The total monthly cost of delinquent group home placements is approximately \$500,000, or \$6 million annually (Juvenile Justice Task Force, 1994, p. 41). We found that in a typical month, San Francisco City and County pays more than \$118,784 for about 40 girls in various placements, including out-of-state placements (San Francisco Juvenile Probation Department, OOHP Division, May 1, 1995). Funding for placements comes from a mix of federal, state and local revenues. Much of the funding for out-of-home placement comes from federal AFDC/Foster Care allotments, although parents are responsible for a portion of the care provided. On the average, San Francisco pays approximately 50 % of the out-of-home placement costs (Task Force Draft Report, 1994, p. 41). In contrast, the cost of maintaining a youth in the community with a support network of

*The total monthly cost of delinquent group home placement is \$500,000, or \$6 million annually...in a typical month, San Francisco pays more than \$118,784 for about 40 girls in various placements, including out-of-state placements... In contrast, the cost of maintaining a youth in the community with a support network of culturally relevant services averages \$30 per day, or \$36,000 a month for 40 youths.*

*Few placements are set up to deal with the specific needs of girls, or to develop individualized therapeutic plans to address the physical, sexual or substance abuse affecting girls in the juvenile justice system.*

culturally relevant services averages \$30 per day, or \$36,000 a month for 40 youths.

Each facility in California is licensed to operate by the Community Care Licensing Division of the California Department of Social Services. This Division monitors the physical plant, staffing and general operations of group homes. In addition, probation officers from the Out-of-Home Placement Division visit new placements before deciding to utilize their services. Incidents that occur at a placement may lead to the County refusing to send minors there. For example, when a boy was severely injured in one wilderness program, the County stopped sending youths there for several years. One of the girls we interviewed described being molested by a manager of the group home she was in. When the girls started talking about it and made a complaint, the group home was closed down. The recent case of a boy who committed suicide in a San Francisco group home is under investigation to determine responsibility and to develop procedures to prevent this type of tragedy from recurring.

When visiting a placement, probation officers use various criteria to determine if it is successful in working with youth. These factors include how full the program is, the longevity of the staff (looking for low staff turnover), recidivism and how many youths run away from the program. However, there is no systematic data collected on how many children successfully complete a group home placement or how many run away or are expelled. There are few statistics compiled concerning placement evaluations and it is difficult to determine differences in placements and success/failure rates for girls and boys. Overall, there does not appear to be a systematic process of evaluation of the placements used by the San Francisco Probation Department. This finding was also made by Mayor Jordan's Task Force, which recommended that "all community based contractors and group care providers be evaluated (based upon measurable outcomes)" (San Francisco Task Force, 1994, p. 6).

Most of the placements for delinquent girls are smaller group home settings located

throughout Northern California. Close to 85% are located outside of San Francisco, primarily because of the high cost of operating in San Francisco (i.e., meeting all of the various building requirements and codes). Many placements are co-educational. There are two specialized programs for pregnant and parenting teens, and some high-level psychiatric facilities. There is a great need for aftercare and for programs that facilitate the transition to adulthood for older teens, including life skills and parenting programming. Nancy Yalon is the Intake Coordinator for the San Francisco Out-of-Home Placement Division and coordinates about 100 out-of-home placement options. She stated that she is always looking for more placements for girls. There is only one suitable residential treatment center for girls who have been sexually abused -- which occurs for the majority of girls in the juvenile justice system overall. There are not enough programs for what Yalon and others term, "acting-out, angry girls". These young abuse victims may not need clinical psychiatric care, but they often need help with behavior problems. "What is needed," according to Ms. Yalon, are:

places with on-ground schools that can deal with the psychological disorder first and can handle this behavior without expelling the girl. Once the psychological disorder begins to be dealt with, it is possible to move into other areas of treatment.

The state of Colorado operates one program, The Excelsior School for Girls, that many believe is the most successful in working with girls who have more serious or multiple problems. There is no facility like it in California, which means that girls who require long term or specialized placement, must be sent out of state, far from their families. This also means that more state funds are sent out of California.

Out-of-home placement is predicated on the notion of providing increased and sustained opportunities for rehabilitation of families in the juvenile system. But for the most part, there are few effective placement options and little innovation, funding or evaluation has gone into developing programs for girls. Our respondents sensed that there is a decrease in the number of

group homes for girls, although there continues to be an increasing demand. There is also a lack of mid-level options. Few places are set up to deal with the specific needs of girls, or to develop individualized therapeutic plans to address the physical, sexual or substance abuse affecting the girls in the juvenile justice system.

Placements specifically designed for female offenders are often filled to capacity -- there is an immediate need for more programs which are girl-specific. Another issue which affects the decision to provide adequate placement options for girls is the perception that working with teenage girls is "more difficult" (Feldman and Elliott 1990). It is true that working with female juvenile offenders presents many complex tasks -- as does working with male juveniles. Because the dominant ideology, training and philosophical framework in juvenile rehabilitation is grounded in a masculine paradigm, focusing on rehabilitating female delinquents must take its own gender-specific directions and requirements. Yet, the prevailing impression among juvenile probation personnel remains that staff at group homes "prefer" to focus on working with boys -- we believe this may be primarily because the staff training is based on working with boys.

Typically, girls wait about two weeks at the juvenile detention facility before going to their first placement. However, if they have a history of violent behavior or of running away, it is much more difficult to place them as there are fewer options. It is not unusual for girls to wait weeks and even months to be sent to a placement, noted Patti Lee, a public defender with the Juvenile Court. However, Marynella Woods, a court social worker in the Juvenile Division of the Public Defender's Office, poignantly told us:

The least of the problems is the time girls spend waiting for placement. The problem is the lack of heart in how girls are placed and the lack of preparation for when they are released.

### ***Issues Regarding a Ranch for Girls***

Many of the people that we interviewed

talked about the need for a ranch for girls. This would give the system a mid-level option for placement that would be an alternative to the California Youth Authority or Colorado's Excelsior School for Girls and might provide the discipline and structure that may not be found in smaller group homes. Some counties have decided to use a ranch program for certain populations instead of any group homes.

Even though the ranch concept may be appealing, there are problems with implementing it. The success of any program depends on how it is structured and the training of the staff who work there. It would need to provide comprehensive services for education and vocational training and to meet the psychological and medical needs of the girls, as well as having a developed program to effectively handle the major concern of girls' isolation from their children, families and communities. If the goal of any rehabilitative effort is to re-integrate an offender into their community, removing the girls to isolated pockets in the outer Bay Area must be carefully thought out.

Furthermore, several experts we interviewed in San Francisco expressed concerns about the effectiveness of the Log Cabin Ranch School for boys, which would be the model for a girls' program. The detainees as well as many of the staff have expressed concerns about the lack of medical and educational programs and services available at Log Cabin. This question remains to be answered: if the existing program is not successful, why should a similar one be set up for girls?

Programs for girls need to meet girls' specific needs and cannot be modeled purely on a boys' program. It seems unlikely that a ranch would be able to meet the needs of girls with the complexity of problems that we have identified here, under the current direction of the San Francisco Probation Department. Unless the proposal is well thought out and carefully developed, a girls' ranch will be just another "quick fix" solution to the problem of girls in trouble with the law.

*If the goal of any rehabilitative effort is to re-integrate an offender into their community, removing the girls to isolated pockets in the outer Bay Area must be carefully thought out.*



### *Girls' Perceptions of the Effectiveness of Group Home Placements*

Complaints about out-of-home placement from girls are far-ranging. Many of their comments can be attributed to teenage rebelliousness and a resistance to structure and rules on the part of girls who have raised themselves for much of their lives. Yet there is a great deal we can learn from them about how they experience being in a group home or other placement.

For example, daily life in most group home programs is regulated by a "reward and punishment" model. If girls behave in certain ways, they can accumulate "points" and move up in the group home system from one level to another, with more benefits -- such as increased phone privileges or later bed times -- at the higher levels. Staff at the placement site determine how many points a resident receives each week. Many of the girls we spoke to felt that no matter how hard they try, they get knocked down. There is little flexibility, or if there is, the girls believe points are used in discriminatory fashion. Favoritism by staff in group homes is one of the most common complaints by female residents.

Comments about the experiences in out-of-home placements from girls we interviewed included:

\*"The staff talks about you and is disrespectful. They get on your nerves, they are aggressive and abusive."

\*"There isn't enough counseling."

\*"There is racism toward the black girls."

\*"They limit where you can go because of what previous residents did, but we aren't previous residents."

\*"I heard a staff person say 'The reason I work here is for the money. I have no other choice.'"

Marynella Woods, who has worked with the Public Defenders Office for over a decade, movingly described the process of a minor going to a placement:

Until people really get what it must be like for a girl to meet a probation officer who is a stranger, drive to a house you don't know in a city you may not know, where there are underpaid, undertrained staff, with lots of rules, and you are supposed to embrace that as

home, these programs will not really work. This is not healing. It is an alienating and lonely kind of experience. Until this is dealt with, this model really won't work. The way placements happen and the placements are at best mediocre. It is too much to expect from girls to be cut off from friends and family and anything familiar.

Girls we interviewed in Juvenile Hall echoed these sentiments:

I don't want to go to a group home. There is no love for you there. No one loves you like your mother. You need that to be able to face your life. There is corruption in the group home system. They should help kids stay at home. If your mom can't help you, why do they think the group home can?

- Chanise Perkins, 16 years old

It's hard for staff to understand how we feel. Staff has not experienced what we have been through. The ones in charge of hiring give staff too much authority. There are too many restrictions for everything. If they would just leave me alone. They doubted me a lot. The Director used to say to me, 'I doubt you'll last another day here.' They had me wrapped around their finger with threats to send me back to Juvenile Hall.

- Corey Tiller, 14 years old

All of the girls who commented on placements wanted to stay in the city where their friends and families are. "I want to go home. I want to be near my baby and my family. My son makes me feel like I could do something with my life", one young mother pleaded with us.

### *The Girls Tell Us: How The System Can Work Better*

"What does spending more really mean? How do you spend it? The only thing I know for sure is that we need better or more or something -- because we're losing too many young people."

- Kathy Danaher, volunteer, San Mateo Court Designated Child Advocates

One of the most difficult aspects for any program is how to compete with the streets, and how to redirect the values and morality that come from surviving on the streets. The survival skills the girls have developed are strengths that can be built on, not denigrated or ignored. However, the battle between these competing paradigms is being lost by care-providers and the juvenile justice workforce. Nancy Yalon, Intake Coordinator for the Out-of-Home Placement Division, believes that she is now seeing a

*Staff should have a real commitment to youth; they should be someone you can talk to...someone who is doing something with their life....Now that is a role model to look up to.*

*-Corey Tiller, 14 years old*



"second generation" of youths coming into out-of-home placement -- the children of the young men and women who spent part of their youth in group homes.

As we spoke with girls in the system and women who work with them, the following ideas were expressed concerning the elements of a successful program. The expertise lies largely with the young people who are involved in the system, and the people who work with them:

- A financial commitment to hire qualified staff who are well trained, caring, well-paid and sensitive to the girls' experiences.

- Develop an intensive program specifically for the rehabilitation of female juvenile offenders.

- Well-defined group home structures, including clear regulations, house rules, and enforcement procedures.

- Effective educational and vocational training programs, especially a separate program for older girls.

- Improved counseling and therapy services for girls and their families -- treatment should focus on the needs of the whole family.

- Programs that focus on self-esteem, thinking independently, and identifying and resisting the effects of sexism.

- Services which focus on the rising problem of the physical and sexual battery of teen girls.

- Emancipation and independent living-skills programs, combined with planning for transition out of a group home and back into the family and the community.

- Parenting skills classes for teen mothers.

- Mentorship and peer counselor programs.

- Family reunification programs.

- Comprehensive after-care programs which continue working with girls once they are sent home.

- Focus careful attention on medical and dental needs of teenage female offenders.

- After-school programs of arts, sports, music, theater, dance, photography, journalism -- in the communities where girls live.

One 14 year old said that a group home should provide an alternative to "the other way of life." She also felt that,

Staff should have a real commitment to youth; they should be someone you can talk to, like a big sister. Someone who is doing something with their life. Like they have been through the hard life and have made it. That is a role model to look up to. I never turned to help because I didn't want to see I needed it. I helped myself. Now, I need a push.

- Corey Tiller, 14 years old

It is difficult to pinpoint what works but, in the words of Marty Rivas, a counselor in the girls' unit at Juvenile Hall, "Be firm, fair and flexible. Being consistent is very important because the girls remember everything." One 14 year old hoped to learn from the experiences of others in the group home. But as she summed it up, "They can help you a lot if you want it, but if you don't -- you won't benefit."

## CONCLUSION: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

I worry about living til tomorrow. I think about it every day. I know a lot of people who have died and I saw two people die in front of my house. But I'm not prepared to die. I have a lot of living to do.

- Chante Robinson, 15 years old

In order to ensure that the girls who find themselves involved in the juvenile probation system have a chance to rehabilitate and grow out of the system, we make the following recommendations:

- The Chief Probation Officer should be directed to immediately reduce the overcrowding at Juvenile Hall for both girls and boys. In addition, there should be an independent study of the intake process at Juvenile Hall, with recommendations as to how to reduce the population.

- There should be immediate regional and local evaluations and assessments of resource allocations to gender specific programs. For example, the City of San Francisco should conduct such a study of the Mayor's Office (i.e. the Mayor's Office of Children, Youth and Their Families) as well as other city departments (i.e. the Department of Human Services and the Juvenile Probation Department). Private foundations which service area populations on a regional basis should be strongly encouraged to perform similar evaluations

and assessments of the programs which they fund. According to the Women's Foundation, the current national average of resources allocated to female specific programs by private foundations is 5% of total available funds.

- The Probation Department should be directed to improve its data collection processes to include gender and race/ethnicity in all categories of data and to develop a system to track minors sent into out-of-home placements (how many complete a program, how many run away, etc.)

- The San Francisco Probation Department should be directed to explore girl-specific programs which have been proven effective around the country and to develop similar programs here. In particular, San Francisco should play a role in developing a residential program for juvenile female offenders that will be able to address emotional or psychological issues without expelling them for disruptive behavior. This program should also allow parenting teens to have their children with them.

- A systematic process of evaluation should be designed and implemented for all programs and placements utilized by the Probation Department. Programs with high rates of runaways or placement failures should not continue to be utilized. Criteria should be developed for this evaluation that include many of the elements identified in this report such as aftercare programs, family reunification and family counseling components, emancipation and life skills classes, etc.

- All probation officers should be directed to work with community programs as much as possible. In addition, performance evaluations of probation officers should be performed annually and should note the ability and improvements of officers to work with girls, and each officer's knowledge and utilization of community services for girls. Probation officers should be trained in the cultural, language and gender-sensitive skills needs to work with females in the system.

- There should be more local out-of-home placement programs designed for teenage girls. Curriculum should include specialized treatment for victims of physical, emotional and sexual abuse. It should also include effective family reunification, emancipation, lifeskills, mentorship and peer counseling, parenting skills for teen mothers and aftercare components.

- Out-of-home placement sites with a demonstrated rate of success in dealing with girl-specific problems should continue to be part of a continuum of care including prevention/community based organizations/day treatment; foster and group homes; medium security ranch programs; and, as a last resort, the California Youth Authority.

- Other approaches need to be developed for the organization of group home life which might be more successful in teaching young women to address their needs and problems. Giving residents a say in decisions which affect their daily lives and common agreement and understanding about how rules are enforced, would contribute to a more effective experience and would empower girls and raise their self-esteem in the process. In addition, there is a need for group home organization to focus more on family reunification.

- There should be an immediate study of the differing medical needs of girls who are pregnant, and ways of addressing these needs, as well as a study of other specific needs of girls and recommendations as to how to develop individual therapeutic plans which will effectively address them.

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