

REFORMING HAWAII'S JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM: PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE HAWAII LEGISLATURE

I. INTRODUCTION

In June of 1988, the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives (NCIA), under contract with the Hawaii Department of Corrections, submitted a report entitled "Public Safety with Care: A Model Juvenile Justice System for Hawaii." NCIA was requested to complete a thorough review and evaluation of juvenile correctional programs currently administered by the Department of Corrections. The NCIA report confirmed the preliminary findings of a number of previous studies that found the present juvenile correctional system in Hawaii to be relying almost exclusively on institutional incarceration at the Hawaii Youth Correctional Facility (HYCF). In addition, placement in one of the three units in this facility is based almost solely on the youth's age and sex. As a result, there is very little distinction made between youth with minor offenses (petty theft, burglary) and youth with more serious offenses (rape, kidnap, robbery).

It is NCIA's firm conclusion that the HYCF facility is structurally incapable of providing any meaningful rehabilitative programming, despite the fact that the State currently spends \$40,000 a year on each youth. Its antiquated institutional structure reduces the staff's role to that of simply endeavoring to maintain order and control. Under the present system rehabilitative concerns are subordinated to custodial interests and are considered inconsistent with good institutional management.

II. REAFFIRMING REHABILITATION AS THE GOAL OF THE HAWAII JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL SYSTEM

It was noted by wards during interviews with NCLA that the daily routine at the HYCF is characterized by idleness, at best, and manipulation and violence at worst. These institutional conditions are clearly inconsistent with the goals of rehabilitation and public safety.

The programs presented in this report incorporate the seven essential criteria established by a Rand corporation study of the most effective juvenile rehabilitation programs across the country for chronic delinquent youths (Rand, 1983). According to the Rand Corporation analysis, effective rehabilitation programs:

1. Provide opportunities for each youth to overcome adversity and experience success, encouraging a positive self-image;
2. Facilitate bonds of affection and mutual respect between juveniles and their guardians and promote involvement in conventional family and community activities;
3. Provide frequent, timely, and accurate feedback for both positive and negative behavior;
4. Reduce or eliminate negative role models and peer support for negative attitudes and behavior;
5. Create opportunities for juveniles to discuss family matters and early experiences in a relaxed non-judgemental atmosphere;
6. Require juveniles to recognize and understand thought processes that rationalize negative behavior; and

7. Vary the sequence and amount of exposure to program components to adapt to the needs and capabilities of each participating youth.

Based on the current situation, NCIA reaffirms previous conclusions that the State of Hawaii should take urgent and immediate steps to permanently close the HYCF facility and develop a range of community based programs that conform to rehabilitative criteria. These programs should be capable of assisting youth to escape the cycle of abuse and neglect that perpetuates juvenile delinquency and subsequently leads to adult crime.

To initiate this process, NCIA proposes that the following three programs be started within the next four months. To assist the legislature in this endeavor, NCIA offers the following information.

III. RECOMMENDED PROGRAMS FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION

PROGRAM I - Intensive Outreach and Advocacy Program (IOAP)

Target Population:

Youth can be assigned an IOAP advocate for three reasons:

1. as an alternative to placement in the HYCF;
2. as part of a comprehensive intensive aftercare/release plan for family reunification; and
3. as a component of intensive foster care placement for youth who cannot return to their families.

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Start-up Costs:

For 1 program for the islands of Oahu and Kauai = \$36,000

For 2 programs for the islands of Oahu, Hawaii, and Maui = \$72,000

Operation Costs: For two programs = \$728,000 annually
For one program = \$364,200 annually

Yearly Costs Per Youth = \$6200

Number of Youth Served Per Year = 116 (one program)
174 (two programs)

Start Up Time: Approximately 1 month

Potential Cost Savings to the State: \$33,800 a year per youth

Contact Agency: Youth Advocate Programs, Inc.
P.O. Box 950
1500 North Second Street, 2nd Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17108

Mr. Tom Jeffers
(717) 232-7580

Program Description:

An intensive outreach and advocacy program (IOAP) provides family and community based services and supervision to youth within their homes and neighborhood. This approach is founded upon the belief that long term behavioral change is achieved by addressing the individual needs of each youth and effecting those elements in the youth's life that directly impacts behavior.

According to researchers Ohlin, Miller, and Coates (1978) of the Harvard Center for Criminal Justice Studies, providing youth with outreach and advocacy services will offer the vital function of establishing constructive relationships with community networks and will effectively reduce delinquent behavior. Based on their guidelines and the recent experience of a number of states and jurisdictions that have adopted this approach, effective delinquency prevention services must focus on the individual and the individual's relationships within the community.

Intensive outreach and advocacy programs are designed for flexibility in order to adapt to the individual circumstances of each youth. To meet the needs of those youths who are experiencing problems in their homes and communities an advocate can provide up to 30 hours per week with each youth. Advocates maintain small caseloads and are expected to fulfill multiple functions. According to Ohlin, Miller, and Coates (1978):

The staff member may, for example, play the role of a parent by finding out what kinds of problems a youth is having at school. The staff member may want to meet the youth and the vice principal or teacher to attempt to sort out and straighten out behavioral or academic problems. If this staff member helps a parent in doing these tasks that is even better, but faced with a disinterested parent, the staff member would act on behalf of the youngster in that specific situation.

Along with working in the home, a major function of the advocate is to link the youth to community resources. Staff are trained to connect the youth to local schools, to provide or arrange tutoring or educational assessments, and to connect youth to extracurricular activities. Other linkages may include parent support groups, drug treatment programs, recreation activities, or job training and placement programs. In addition, when necessary, the advocates will assume responsibility for procuring professional assistance such as family therapy, outpatient mental health services, or legal representation. Once a referral is made, it is then the responsibility of the staff person to insure that the youth and his family are following through on their obligations.

PROGRAM II - Short Term 30 Day Wilderness Challenge Program

Target Population

A wilderness challenge program will serve as an alternative to incarceration for three primary populations:

1. Youth sentenced to HYCF for short term incarceration;
2. Youth wanting to expedite their placement to a less restrictive settings; or
3. Youth facing possible parole revocation.

Start Up Cost = \$55,000

Operation Costs = \$156,000 Annually

Yearly Costs Per Youth = \$2,600

Number of Youth Served Per Year = 60

Start Up Time = 3 months

Potential Cost Savings to the State = \$733 a month for each youth currently placed in the HYCF

Contact Agency: Pacific Crest Outward Bound
110 S.W. Bancroft Street
Portland, Oregon 97201

Mr. Dave McNeil
(800) 547-3312

Program Description:

To immediately provide an alternative placement for the minor offenders sentenced each year to the HYCF for short term commitments and to reduce the commitments of those in restrictive placements, NCLIA recommends that the establishment a short term 30 day intensive wilderness challenge program.

The effectiveness of wilderness challenge programs as a means of modifying delinquent behavior has been the subject of numerous studies dating back to the early seventies. For example, in 1971 education psychologists Francis Kelly and Daniel Baer concluded:

Severe physical challenge may be an effective method in reducing recidivism in adolescent delinquents...action oriented adolescents may respond more to action programs than to cognitively oriented approaches... this approach could be of sufficient value to recommend it as a supplement, if not an alternative, to institutionalization.

Due to the proven success of these programs over the years in effectively reducing a youth's proclivity towards delinquent behavior, the number of states that have implemented wilderness programs for purposes of short term detention and evaluation has burgeoned. Kelly and Bear's (1971) conclusions were recently corroborated by a study completed in 1987 by the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services found that its 26 day wilderness program for youthful offenders had recidivism rates lower than any other juvenile justice program in the state.

In contrast to institutions, wilderness programs are specifically designed to build positive social skills, personal responsibility, respect for authority, decision making, and self-esteem. These objectives are achieved through graduated levels of physical and mental challenges that force the

youth to confront personal issues in a humane and nonviolent setting. After completing the program youth are assigned to a specially trained advocate for aftercare services to insure that the lessons learned in the wilderness environment will be transferred to the youth's actual life experience in the community. Aftercare services are generally provided for up to six weeks, but can be extended for as long as necessary.

Staff members remain with their units 24 hours a day throughout the entire 30 day program. When problems arise they are resolved constructively through group and individual confrontation. There is no institutional reliance on shackles or isolation rooms as a means to maintain control.

Because of the emphasis on intense physical and mental challenge, it is essential that the program be kept short term. This insures that youths maintain their interest and motivation throughout the duration of the program. In addition, the short term emphasis maximizes the programs educational impact without it being perceived as unnecessarily punitive.

After completing the 30 day wilderness program, youth will be returned to their homes and assigned an advocate. The advocate will assist the youth in applying the lessons learned in the program to their everyday life.

PROGRAM III - Experiential Education Program

Target Population:

- Youth, both male and female, sentenced to HYCF for Class A, B, and C, felony offenses.

Start Up Costs:

- Structured Secure Residential Program for 10 Youth = \$100,000 to
\$500,000

- Staff Secure Residential Program for 10 Youth = \$100,000 to \$400,000
- Non- Residential Program = for 20 Youth \$150,000

Operation Costs:

- Structured Secure Residential Program = \$175 per day for 10 youth =
yearly total of \$638,750
- Staff Secure Residential Program = \$125 per day for 10 youth =
yearly total of \$456,250
- Non-Residential Program = \$60 a day per for 20 youth =
yearly total of \$438,000

Yearly Costs Per Youth:

- Structure Secure Residential Program = \$63,875
- Staff Secure Residential Program = \$45,625
- Non-Residential Program = \$21,000

Number of Youths Served: 40

Potential Cost Savings to the State: \$67,000

Contact Agency: Associated Marine Institutes
14802 N. Dale Mabry Hwy., Suite 300
Tampa, FL 33624

Mr. Robert Weaver
813/963-3344

Program Description:

The third program NCIA recommends for immediate implementation is the experiential education program operated by the Associated Marine Institutes (AMI) in six states. This program has been hailed by independent evaluators, such as the Rand Corporation and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, as a highly effective national model.

Associated Marine Institutes is founded on three primary goals. These are:

1. to reduce or eliminate recidivism;
2. to increase vocational skills; and
3. to increase academic skills.

Recognizing that the majority of youth who become involved repeatedly in the juvenile justice system have histories of educational failure, AMI focuses on experiential and individualized education as a means to foster motivation and develop productive employment skills.

AMI's experiential learning curriculum places the youth in a series of projects that address various problems in the marine and earth sciences. These projects might require the youth to master skills such as seamanship, diving, and aquatics. The activities may involve specimen gathering for research into the local marine life or it may involve replanting shoreline vegetation to help protect the environment. Each of these activities are carefully planned for maximum student participation. Because experiential education allows the students to perform a primary and active role in their own learning, the education has personal meaning and is more likely to motivate them towards further effort.

As part of its commitment to working with the most difficult youth in the juvenile justice system, AMI offers both residential and non-

residential programs for the vast majority of youth who comprise the juvenile justice system.

Structured Secure Residential Program

The structured secure residential program is a locked facility designed for the more severe problem youth with lengthy histories of chronic delinquency or violent behavior. These youth are housed in facilities of no more than 10 to 15 beds. The numbers are purposely kept small to insure maximum individualized attention. Like the other programs listed, when problems and crises arise they are resolved in a humane and personalized manner without resort to artificial restraints.

This program could accommodate the total number of males currently incarcerated at the HYCF for A felonies.

Staff Secure Program

For those youth from fragmented families who require intensive intervention, but are not considered violent, a staff secure facility of not more than 10 can be offered as part of the AMI continuum of programs. These facilities are not structurally secure. Rather, security is maintained by 24 hour intensive staff supervision.

Non- Residential Program

The majority of AMI students reside in their homes while in the program. The daily education milieu is the same for both the residential and non-residential students. The focus is on promoting public safety by positively motivating the youth towards productive change. The atmosphere is non-oppressive, yet highly structured and closely supervised. Youth and staff interaction is an integral part of the programs success.

Aftercare Program

After the youth completes the education component of the program, AMI employs a 180 day aftercare program. During this period youth are closely monitored with crisis intervention whenever necessary. The basic components of the aftercare program are:

- intensive supervision to insure the youth does not re-offend;
- family assistance to help build health and nurturing family units;
- placement in the event the youth has no home in which to return; and
- vocational/educational guidance and referral to assist the youth towards procuring productive employment.

It should be noted that over 90% of AMI's population are convicted felons with 4 to 8 previous offenses. This is in contrast to the HYCF population which is comprised of only 74% convicted felons.

NCIA recommends that Hawaii immediately begin the process of contracting with AMI to implement the continuum of programs listed above. As its first priority NCIA suggests that the structured secure program be contracted for and that the girls facility at HYCF be utilized for this purpose. It is important to point out that AMI's start up costs can be minimized if the needed appropriate facilities are made available.

Implementation for AMI programs can be staggered as funding becomes available. However, NCIA urges that at least one component be contracted for immediately and that the other two be implemented as soon as funding can be made available.

Summary of Programs

NCIA selected these programs on the basis of their proven effectiveness in promoting public safety and by their potential to accommodate the entire current population at the HYCF. They were also chosen for their ability to adapt to the special social and cultural circumstances of the Hawaiian community. Each program is administered and staffed by individuals from the communities they serve. Local boards of directors provide oversight and policy directions while the national offices provide long term training and monitoring.

If all these programs were to be implemented in their entirety, the total yearly costs would amount to approximately \$2,417,000. This compares very favorably with the the HYCF yearly operating cost of \$3,000,000. By closing the HYCF the state could dramatically improve the quality of service and achieve a potential cost savings of \$583,000 per year.

In addition to the quality of these programs, they can also be established in a relatively short period of time and can easily be expanded if the need should arise. For example, the intensive outreach and advocacy program and the wilderness challenge program could receive referrals within three months of funding. It is NCIA's strong belief that the State should immediately take steps to implement these programs as a means to begin closing the HYCF. Based on our evaluation of the situation at this facility, any further delay in its closing would be unwise and unnecessary.

Prepared by Daniel MacAllair
January 1989

