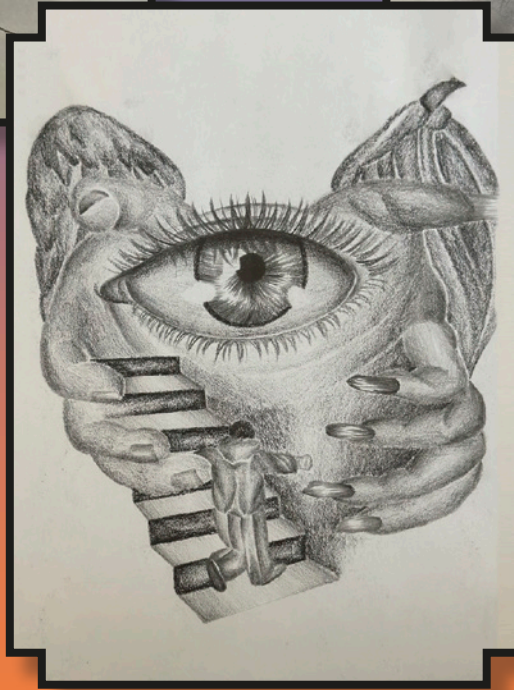
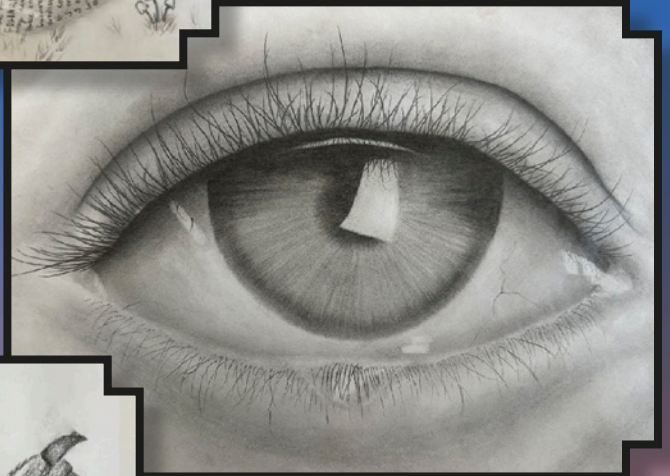
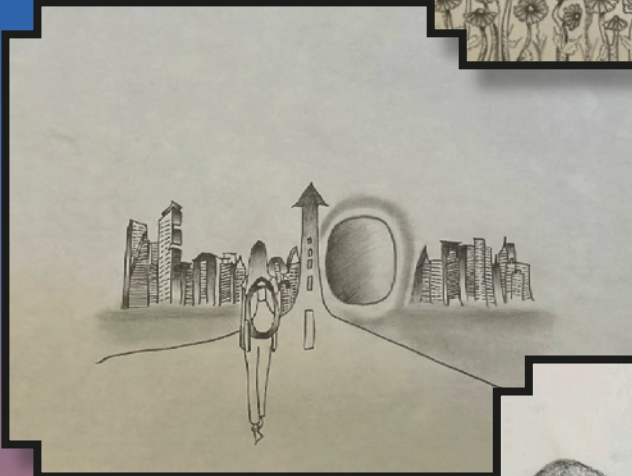


ORANGE COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION



ANNUAL REPORT 2024



Superior Court of California

County of Orange

Juvenile Justice Commission

Dear Reader:

This 2024 Annual Report summarizes some of the Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission's efforts and accomplishments. The Commission consists of dedicated, compassionate and hard-working members who possess a broad spectrum of experience and backgrounds.

This year, the Commission fulfilled our mandated responsibilities by visiting and inspecting Orange County's three juvenile detention facilities, the Youth Reporting Center--North, the Orangewood Children and Family Center, and thirteen Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) homes in Orange County. We also visited and inspected the thirteen Orange County law enforcement agencies who held minors in secure detention. We acted as liaisons with Orange County's numerous agencies and community groups and attended in-person programs, webinars, trainings and graduation ceremonies. The Commission members contributed a total 2180 volunteer hours in 2024.

The Commission continued to hold quarterly stakeholder meetings with County agency and community representatives. This year, we had three additional meetings with top administrators from the Probation Department, Social Services Agency, Health Care Agency and Department of Education. During these meetings, important information and updates were shared with the attendees. We truly appreciate the co-operation and respect these agencies and community groups have for each other and for the Commission and we thank everyone who attended these meetings.

One of the Commission's highlights of 2024 as discussed in this report was sponsoring the 7th Annual Essay and Visual Arts Contest for youth in Orange County juvenile detention facilities. The winning artwork is on the cover. Another highlight was sponsoring the Juvenile Justice Outreach book club for a second year.

Also discussed in this report is that the Commission's Standing Committee on Education continued to meet regularly with top administration officials from the Department of Education's Division of Alternative Education. The Commission also created three new working groups to review and obtain additional information about: Substance Abuse Programs, Away From Care Youth, and Regulations and Guidelines for Meals and Snacks in Detention Facilities.

We would like to thank Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Craig E. Arthur, for his support, guidance and encouragement as we perform our responsibilities as Commissioners. Special thanks to our wonderful, talented and patient Executive Administrative Assistant Lii Toelupe, who keeps us organized and provides whatever support we need. Also, thank you to Legal Processing Specialist Josue Rogel for preparing drafts of our meeting minutes and providing additional assistance to Ms. Toelupe. Finally, I would like to thank our Vice Chair, Steve Winder, and my fellow Commissioners for their selfless dedication and numerous hours of work this past year. It is truly an honor and privilege to serve with all of them and to have served as Chairperson this past year.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judy Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Judy Johnson
Chairperson

THE ORANGE COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION (JJC)



Front Row: Dolores Yost, Denise Churchill, Connie Marshall, Madelyn Rodriguez, Nicholas Moreno, Mary Lou Vachet, Wyatt McClean & Lynda Perring

Back Row: Steve Winder, Ryan Rising, Judy Johnson, Marcy Garfias & Silvestre Lopez

(Not pictured: Dorothy Stafford & Joel Matson)

The Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) is a group of private citizens who are appointed by the Superior Court and is authorized by CA Welfare and Institution Code Sections 225-231.

JJC members have diverse backgrounds which include professional experience in education, business, law, mental health, Probation, Social Services, counseling, Credible Messaging/Lived Experience and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). In 2024, two JJC members were youth commissioners who are under the age of 22. JJC members contributed over 2,180 volunteer hours in 2024.



JJC ESSAY & VISUAL ARTS CONTEST



Steve Winder, Dorothy Stafford, Wyatt McClean, Mary Lou Vachet, Judy Johnson, Judge Lindsey Martinez, Lynda Perring, Silvestre Lopez, Madelyn Rodriguez, Connie Marshall & Dolores Yost

The JJC's 7th Annual Essay Contest and 2nd Annual Visual Arts Contest awards program was held at the Probation Department's Multipurpose Rehabilitation Center on November 21, 2024. The contest is an annual collaboration between the JJC, Probation Department and the Orange County Department of Education. The contest is also sponsored and supported financially by Project Youth OC, and the office of Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley.

This year, we had the most entries ever as 89 students, including post-secondary youth graduates, submitted essays in response to the writing prompt: "Looking Forward." All the winners read their essays at the awards program. Several youth also submitted graphite drawings focused on the same theme. The winning artwork was displayed at the awards program and is depicted on the cover of this Annual Report. All the winners received gift cards, and all participants received a certificate and a writing journal. The JJC hosted a pizza and cupcake party for the winners and their living units.

The JJC would like to thank the youth for sharing their thoughtful and self-empowering essays and artwork. The JJC would also like to thank the many people who attended the awards program to support and honor these youth including representatives from the OC Superior Court, Probation, Department of Education, Project Youth OC, and the Office of Youth and Community Restoration. The awards program was live streamed to parents and classrooms.

Quotes from essay submissions:

"I'm looking forward to becoming someone's hero."

"You won't see me here again. I will be too busy making my mark on the world."

"I will become the guide and role model to others that I wished I had."

JJC ESSAY & VISUAL ARTS CONTEST



Comm'rs Marshall, Vachet, Winder & McClean



Dr. Stefan Bean, OCDE Superintendent; Priscilla Suzuki, Dir. Probation; Jessica Johnson, Chief Deputy Probation; Dr. Michael Massa, OYCR Educ. SME & Dennis Cole, OCDE Chief of Staff



Analee Kredel, OCDE Assoc. Superintendent; Dave Connor, Principal; Ryan Cummings, OCDE Director; Comm'rs Johnson, Marshall & Lopez



Comm'rs Johnson & Lopez



Comm'rs Perring & Rodriguez



Laura Corona Marcum, Project Youth Orange County (PYOC) Exec. Director; Blanca Carranco, PYOC Director of Development; Manny Gutierrez, PYOC Director of Program Strategy; Comm'rs Lopez & Rodriguez

BOOK CLUB

With the continued support of OC Probation, the Juvenile Justice Commission is proud to announce the successful completion of the third year of our book club. This program has been instrumental in fostering a love for reading and critical thinking among the participating youth. Through books selected by the UNIT "T" (Tango) Youth, we have been able to ignite insightful conversations that help our young members gain a broader understanding of the world around them. Whether it's building positive habits with James Clear's Atomic Habits, exploring psychological suspense in Paula Hawkins' The Girl on the Train, understanding relationships through Gary Chapman's The 5 Love Languages, or experiencing resilience and companionship in James Bowen's A Street Cat Named Bob, these books offer valuable insights that resonate deeply with our members.

The diverse range of literature covered in our sessions encourages the youth to explore different perspectives, cultures, and ideas. In addition, thanks to generous contributions, we have been able to provide a variety of snacks and fresh fruits, furthering the idea of trying new things and expanding their palates. Looking ahead, we are excited about the prospects of expanding this program to other units. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to OC Probation and our generous donors for their support. Together, we continue in our mission to foster a community of youth who love to read.

Youth referencing The 5am Club:

"I have learned to become a better version of myself, more disciplined. Waking up at 5 a.m. has been a challenge, but it sets the tone for the day."



Youth referencing The Girl on the Train:

"It's like a movie, but you can create it how you want it."

EDUCATION STANDING COMMITTEE



Harbor Learning Center South

OCDE Executive Dir. Dr. Katy Ramezani, Comm'rs Winder, Johnson, Vachet, Yost, OCDE Chief of Staff Dennis Cole & OCDE Assoc. Sup. Analee Kredel

The Commission's Education Committee was very active again this year as its members toured the Otto Fischer and Rio Contiguo High Schools, the William Lyon School at Orangewood, the Youth Reporting Center—North school, and the Harbor Learning Center South school and garden; talked to on-site administrators, teachers, and students; and met almost monthly with top administration officials from the Department of Education (DOE).

Some topics and issues that were discussed during these meetings were: teacher, staff and administration vacancies; frequency and reasons for classroom closures; classroom schedules and daily total instructional minutes; WIFI and other technology concerns; programming; and special education services. Over the course of the year, many of these issues were favorably resolved and the remaining issues are receiving the DOE's attention. Also, new laptops, desks, chairs, and textbooks were provided to many classrooms.

The Commission thanks the DOE administration, staff, and teachers who met with our committee this past year and for their co-operation and willingness to improve and provide the best education possible for system involved youth.

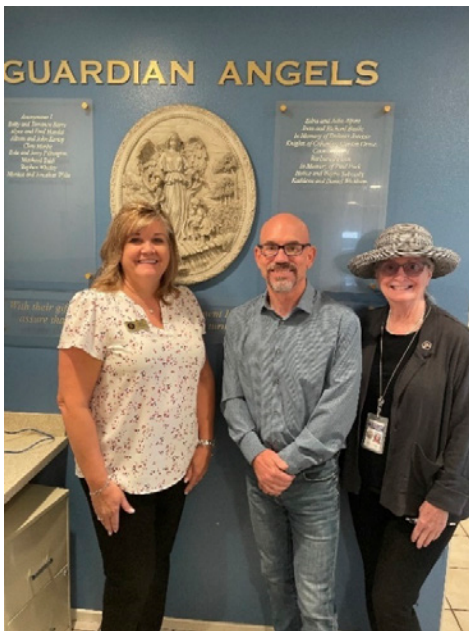


Principal Jim Perez, Comm'rs Vachet, Johnson, OCDE Assoc. Sup. Analee Kredel & OCDE Executive Dir. Dr. Katy Ramezani

SHORT TERM RESIDENTIAL THERAPEUTIC PROGRAM FACILITIES

The Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) facilities are primarily 6 bed residences in residential neighborhoods. There are two which are larger, and they both accommodate 16 residents. The six bed homes are single gender while the larger programs can accommodate both males and females.

The focus of the Commission reviews of these facilities is on observing the physical condition of the facility, determining whether residents have sufficient food, clothing, access to education, access to recreation, and access to the required therapeutic interventions/services. Each review also includes meeting with one or two residents alone to determine how they view their experience in the residence. If a concern is noted, the Commission gives feedback to the administrator.



*Clete Menke, Program Director, Mary's Path STRTP
Comm'rs Churchill & Vachet*



Mary's Path - STRTP

Some highlights from our STRTP visits in 2024

"This place taught me that school is important." - Youth

"This past year, we had several girls who transitioned in a good way - they went to a less restrictive home setting, and we are very proud that we helped them make this happen." - Staff

INSTITUTION INSPECTIONS

Annually, the Juvenile Justice Commission inspects the county facilities that provide residential care and services for those children/youth who are part of the Juvenile Justice System. The purpose of the inspections is to ensure that high quality and appropriate care is being provided. The county facilities are:

- Orange County Juvenile Hall (JH)
- Youth Leadership Academy (YLA)
- Youth Guidance Center (YGC)
- Youth Reporting Center North (YRC)
- Orangewood Children and Family Center (OCFC)

The first four serve youth who are wards of the Court and the fifth serves dependency children and youth.

All of the facilities provide therapeutic services, education consistent with California state K-12 school requirements, recreation and activity opportunities, and family visitation.

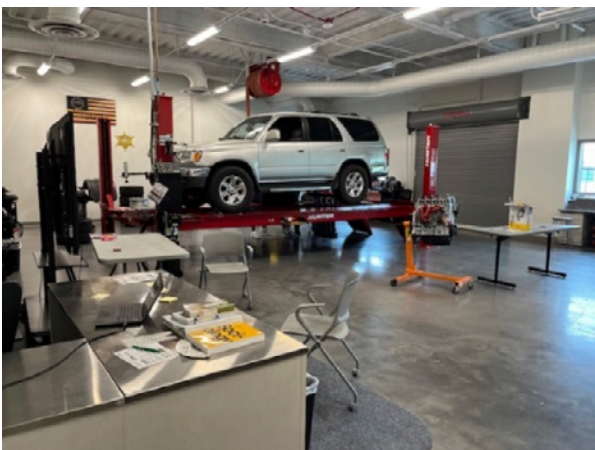
The goal for children and youth who are at the Orangewood Children and Family Center is to reunite them with their families or a suitable placement within 10 days.



Juvenile Hall - MRC



Orangewood Children and Family Center



Juvenile Hall



Orangewood Children and Family Center

INSPECTIONS OF OC LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

The JJC is mandated to inspect all law enforcement facilities where a minor is held in secure detention for any length of time and those where a minor is held in non-secure detention for 24 hours or more. No facility, other than the Probation-run institutions, holds minors for more than 24 hours. The JJC exceeds state law mandates by inspecting all facilities where a minor is held in non-secure detention for 6 hours or more. Listed below are OC law enforcement facilities operated by police or sheriff departments with their recent statistics on detention of minors. The JJC inquired about topics such as human trafficking of minors, the role of School Resource Officers, community youth programs, and interactions with Probation and Social Services.

In 2023, thirteen Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) met the criteria for inspection and were subsequently inspected in 2024 as recorded and highlighted in this chart.

Law Enforcement Agency	2024 Inspection	Number of Minors Detained		Minors in secure detention for any time		Minors in non-secure detention for 6+ Hours	
		2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
Anaheim PD	7/3	232	201	0	2	2	0
Brea PD	6/27	30	57	3	12	0	0
Buena Park PD	5/22	77	77	5	7	0	0
Costa Mesa PD	7/10	186	231	5	4	0	6
Cypress PD	N/A	5	7	0	0	0	0
Fountain Valley PD	N/A	23	57	0	0	0	0
Fullerton PD	6/28	158	166	3	1	1	0
Garden Grove PD	N/A	88	131	0	0	0	0
Huntington Beach PD	7/26	54	53	2	0	0	0
Irvine PD	N/A	24	24	0	0	0	0
Laguna Beach PD	8/6	56	44	1	1	0	1
La Habra PD	6/28	66	45	9	0	0	0
La Palma PD	N/A	0	6	0	0	0	0
Los Alamitos PD	N/A	9	3	0	0	0	0
Newport Beach PD	N/A	46	80	0	0	0	0
Orange PD	N/A	24	35	0	0	0	0
Placentia PD	6/27	53	44	3	3	1	0
Santa Ana PD	7/10	100	130	17	105	0	0
Santa Ana Unified School District	N/A	19	2	0	0	0	0
Seal Beach PD	N/A	5	33	0	0	0	0
Tustin PD	N/A	101	110	0	0	0	0
Westminster PD	7/26	58	49	1	0	7	0
CSU Fullerton PD	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dana Point - OCSD	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lake Forest - OCSD	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0
San Clemente OCSD	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0
SJ Capistrano OCSD	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aliso Viejo OCSD	8/6	1	2	1	0	0	0
Stanton OCSD	8/14	15	12	0	9	15	2
Yorba Linda OCSD	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTALS		1430	1599	50	144	26	9

WORKING GROUPS

Review of Away From Care Youth (AFC)

The Commission formed this working group because of our interest and concern for the foster youth in Orange County who are away from care without permission, and their risk for trafficking, crime and substance use. As part of our review, working group members met with the Social Services Agency (SSA), contacted Project CHOICE, and continue to review the Orangewood Children and Family Center (OCFC) monthly reports. This working group was informed that OCFC's coaching/mentoring has assisted in reducing the number of AFC numbers through staff counseling youth who return from being away. For some AFC youth who found their way to Project CHOICE for the day, there was collaborative communication and creativity from social workers, educators, and community partners to ensure education and safety was in place to keep the youth off the streets while a new residence was located for the youth to reside. The SSA continues to utilize their AFC liaison social worker who is making a concerted effort to engage with the youth who engage in chronic AFC behavior. Further, SSA has classes and support groups for youth who may be CSEC-involved (commercially sexually exploited children), and for youth engaged in substance use or AFC behaviors.

Review of Regulations and Guidelines for Meals and Snacks

The Commission formed this working group because, during the Commission's annual inspections of juvenile detention facilities, youth often complained about the quantity and quality of food. As part of its review, working group members contacted the Public Health Nutritionist/Registered Dietician, read the applicable government regulations and guidelines, and reviewed the Office of Youth and Community Restoration's Juvenile Youth Bill of Rights which states that youth have the right "to receive adequate and healthy meals and snacks." Members also attended on-line meetings of the Board of State Community Corrections (BSCC) Nutrition Workgroup. The Commission's working group confirmed that meals and snacks served in Orange County juvenile detention facilities complied with current applicable dietary guidelines and regulations. However, based on our working group's review and research, the Commission submitted a written request to the BSCC with suggestions that the quantity, quality and selections of food served during meals and snacks be improved.

Review of Substance Use and Mental Health Programs/Services

The Commission formed this working group because many system-involved youth have diagnosed substance use and mental health issues. This working group focused on finding out more information about what treatment options were available for system-involved youth when they were discharged and living in the community. As part of its research, the working group was informed by the applicable agencies that there currently are no residential substance youth treatment beds for male youth in Orange County. The County has a Letter of Agreement to send male youth out of county to Tarzana Treatment Center. There is one substance use 6 bed treatment facility for female youth in Orange County, Vera's Sanctuary, and Commission members visited that facility. The working group was informed that there are currently 3 intensive out-patient substance use treatment centers for youth in Orange County. Working group members visited and toured two of these centers: Twin Town and Wel Mor, and met on-line with administrators of the third center, Phoenix House. The County provides free transportation to these centers. The Commission was advised that the Be Well Irvine Campus, which is scheduled to open sometime in 2025, was designed to have 32 residential substance use treatment beds for youth.

TRAININGS AND WEBINARS

Juvenile Justice & Legal Topics

OYCR Juvenile Justice Legal Updates

OYCR AB 505: Background and Key Changes

OYCR Youth Justice Action Webinar: Credible Messenger Mentoring Movement

OYCR Youth Justice Action Webinar: Victims and the Justice System: Myths, Facts & New Solutions to Better Serve Them

OYCR Webinar: Adolescent Contact, Lasting Impact: Aligning Youth Justice Practice with Research

OYCR Webinar: Keeping Youth at the Center-Principles and Strategies for Engaging Young People

OYCR Webinar: CASOMB Guidelines: Treating and Supervising Youth Who Have Committed a Sexual Offense

OYCR Webinar: Advancing Diversion – Research, Expansion and Innovations in Practice

Project Kinship Conference

HIRE Webinar: Family Treatment Court & other collaborative court updates

California Youth Justice Summit The Village: Connecting Youth Justice with Community -Centered Responses

OYCR Webinar - An Introduction to Post Disposition SYTF Collaborative Courts

Educational Topics

Third District Conditions of Children Community Forum

“Know More, Do Better Educational Workshop for Parents 2.0” Event by SSA CSEC Steering Committee

JBAY Webinar: Removing Obstacles - A Toolkit for Implementing AB 789 Satisfactory Academic Progress Requirements

Back to School 101 Webinar: Fostering Connections So Every Student Succeeds

Diversity & Racial Topics

EIOC Webinar: Navigating Authentic Advocacy: Uplifting Black and Queer Communities

OYCR Webinar: Race, Adolescence, and the Criminalization of Youth of Color

Child Welfare/Foster Care Topics

Webinar: Overview of the Child Welfare System

Putting the Puzzle Together CAST

Complex Care IEP Webinar

Substance Use/Mental Health Topics

OYCR Youth Justice Action Webinar: CalAIM and other justice involved initiatives – Leveraging Funding Opportunities to Better Serve Youth

Complex Care Webinar: Resonating with Youth: A Look at Hip-Hop, Engagement, and the Brain

OYCR Webinar – California Juvenile and Family Judiciary Trainings on Substance Use Disorders

Why Did They Do That? Understanding and Developing Trauma Informed Practices in Jails Webinar

2024 JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION GUEST SPEAKERS



Dawn Smith- Health Care Agency
Comm’rs Churchill, Johnson & Garfias



Aubree Childs-Fight Therapy Foundation
Comm’rs Lopez & Churchill



Project Kinship’s Jessica Vasquez, Steven Kim, Aaron Reyes,
Madeline Rodriguez, Raymond Sanchez & Comm’r Rising



Social Services Agency’s Claudia Castro, Martha Rosas
Comm’rs Churchill & Garfias



Dr. Jonathan Watson-HCA/Correctional Health Services
Comm’rs Johnson, Vachet & McClean

2024 SWEARING IN OF JJC COMMISSIONERS

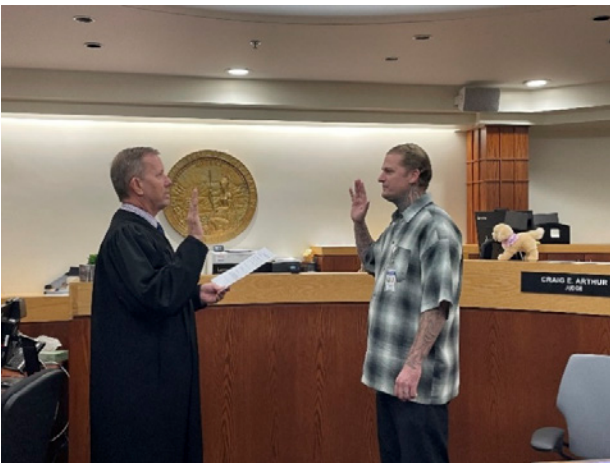
BY JUDGE CRAIG E. ARTHUR, PRESIDING JUDGE OF THE JUVENILE COURT



Commissioner Dorothy Stafford



Commissioner Marcy Garfias & Commissioner Denise Churchill



Commissioner Ryan Rising

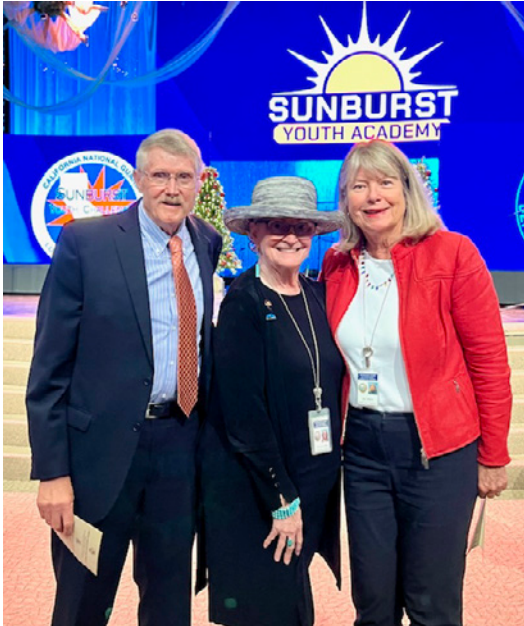


Commissioner Joel Matson



Youth Commissioner Nicholas Moreno

JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION ACTIVITIES



Sunburst Youth Academy Graduation

Steve Winder, Mary Lou Vachet & Judy Johnson



Project Youth Annual Event

Steve Winder & Dolores Yost



OCFC Annual Holiday Event

OCDE's Principal Ruth Ramirez, OCDE's Santiago Magallon

Annalia Magallon, Leanne Magallon & Comm'r Vachet



Project Kinship Conference

Steve Winder & Mary Lou Vachet

The mission of the Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission is to inquire into the administration of juvenile court law in this county and to ensure that the highest standards of care and services are maintained for the youth within the Juvenile Justice System.



To contact us or learn more,
go to: www.occourts.org/directory/juvenile/jjc
or email: jjc@occourts.org