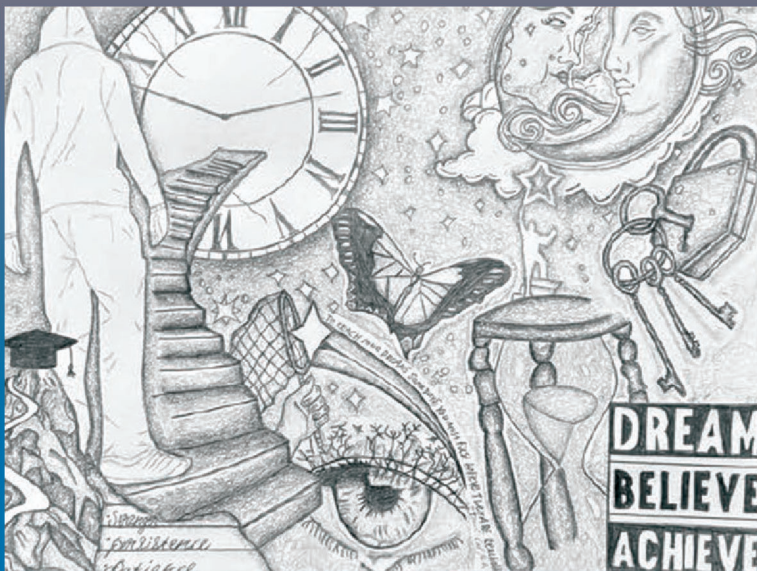


# ORANGE COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION

## ANNUAL REPORT 2025





# Superior Court of California

## County of Orange

### Juvenile Justice Commission

Dear Reader,

This 2025 Annual Report reflects a year of collaboration and service by members of Orange County's Juvenile Justice Commission who are dedicated to the well-being of youth in our county.

Throughout 2025, the Commission carried out its statutory responsibilities by visiting and inspecting Orange County's three juvenile detention facilities, the Youth Reporting Centers (North and Central), Orangewood Children and Family Center, and fourteen Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) homes. We also visited all ten Orange County law enforcement agencies that temporarily housed minors in secure detention. In addition, Commissioners served as liaisons to numerous county agencies and community partners, attended educational programs and trainings, and participated in graduation ceremonies and statewide meetings, including meetings of the new California Juvenile Justice Commissioners' Collaborative.

The Commission hosted quarterly stakeholder meetings bringing together representatives from County agencies and community organizations to share updates and other important information. We held three additional meetings attended by senior administrators from the Probation Department, Social Services Agency, Health Care Agency, and Department of Education. We are grateful for the professionalism, cooperation, and shared commitment demonstrated during these meetings.

We proudly sponsored the 8th Annual Essay and Visual Arts Contest for youth in juvenile detention facilities, highlighting the creativity and insight of system-involved youth. The winning artwork is on the cover of this Annual Report. We also sponsored the Juvenile Justice Outreach Book Club for the third consecutive year, fostering dialogue and literacy engagement.

Our Standing Committee on Education maintained regular meetings with leadership from the Department of Education's ACCESS Division. In addition, Commission working groups met to review and obtain additional information about substance use programs for youth, Away-From-Care Youth, and Education and Vocational Programs for Post-Graduate System-Involved Youth.

On behalf of the Commission, I extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Craig E. Arthur for his continued support and guidance. We are also deeply grateful to our Executive Administrative Assistant, Lii Toelupe, whose organization and dedication are essential to our effectiveness. Thanks also to Legal Processing Specialists, Josue Rogel and Emily Sanchez, for their assistance to Ms. Toelupe and for preparing our meeting materials. Finally, I want to recognize and thank Vice Chair Steven Winder and my fellow Commissioners for their extraordinary commitment and many volunteer hours. Collectively, Commission members contributed 2,033 hours this year in service to our community. Serving alongside such caring, thoughtful, and dedicated individuals has been an honor and a privilege.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judy Johnson".

Judy Johnson  
Chairperson

# THE ORANGE COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION (JJC)



The Orange County Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) is a group of private citizens appointed by the Superior Court with the concurrence of the Juvenile Court and authorized by CA Welfare and Institution Code Sections 225-231. In 2025, the JJC had one youth commissioner.

JJC Commissioners have diverse backgrounds which include professional experience in Education, Business, Law, Mental Health, Probation, Social Services, Counseling, Credible Messaging, and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA). In 2025, they contributed over 2,033 volunteer hours. The 2025 JJC Commissioners are:

Denise Churchill  
Marcy Garfias  
Judy Johnson  
Silvestre Lopez  
Connie Marshall  
Joel Matson  
Wyatt McClean

Lynda Perring  
Ryan Rising  
Madelyn Rodriguez  
Dorothy Stafford  
MaryLou Vachet  
Steven Winder  
Dolores Yost



*JJC Bi-Monthly Meeting*



*Vice Chair Steve Winder & Chair Judy Johnson*

## JJC ESSAY & VISUAL ARTS CONTEST

On November 20, 2025, the JJC proudly hosted its 8th Annual Essay Contest and 3rd Annual Visual Arts Contest Awards Program at the Probation Department's Juvenile Hall Multipurpose Rehabilitation Center. The event reflects a continued partnership between the JJC, the Probation Department, and the Orange County Department of Education, with generous financial sponsorship from Project Youth OC and the Office of Orange County Supervisor Katrina Foley.

Participation in this year's contest demonstrated remarkable enthusiasm and talent. Seventy-four students, including post-secondary youth graduates, submitted essays inspired by the theme: "Dream, Believe and Achieve." The awards program provided an opportunity for each winner to share their work aloud, highlighting their voices, perspectives, and aspirations.

The visual arts component also showcased impressive creativity. Eight youth contributed graphite drawings interpreting the same theme, and the winning pieces were prominently displayed during the ceremony and are featured on the cover of this year's Annual Report.

Every participant was recognized with a certificate and a writing journal and/or a sketch pad in acknowledgment of their effort and achievement. Contest winners, along with their living units, were further celebrated with a pizza and cupcake party hosted by the JJC. A special dinner for the top prize winners was planned.

The JJC extends heartfelt appreciation to the youth for their honesty, insight, and artistic expression. Gratitude is also extended to the many supporters who attended the program to encourage and honor the participants, including representatives from the OC Superior Court, Probation Department, Department of Education, Project Youth OC, Project Kinship, and Santiago Canyon College. To ensure families, educators and other students could watch the program, the awards ceremony was livestreamed to parents and classrooms.

### Quotes from essay submissions:

*"I want to show others that change is possible, no matter where you start."*

*"I hope to inspire others walking the same path to never quit on their dreams, because if I can change my life, and see the bigger picture, they can too."*

*"I may be here now, but I'm already on my way to something greater."*



## JJC ESSAY & VISUAL ARTS CONTEST



*Judge Craig E. Arthur, Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court, Comm'rs Rodriguez, Lopez, Johnson, Yost, Winder, Perring, Vachet & Stafford*



*Santiago Canyon College's Basti Lopez, Jason Parks, Dean Michelle Samura; UCI Asst. Director Jennifer Jean Gomez; Comm'rs Winder, Rodriguez, Lopez, Vachet, Yost & Johnson*



*Comm'r Mary Lou Vachet, Essay & Art Contest Coordinator*



*Essay and Art Contest Awards Ceremony*



*Judge Craig E. Arthur, Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court, Dr. Maria Martinez-Poulin, Chief of Alternative Education ACCESS, Department of Education, Dennis Cole, Chief of Staff, Department of Education, Jessica Johnson, Chief Deputy Probation Officer & Comm'rs Johnson & Vachet*

## BOOK CLUB

Marking the third year since its inception, the JJC Book Club provides youth in Juvenile Hall the opportunity to gather in a small group setting and explore the world of books. This program is voluntary and the youth who choose to participate actively engage in discussion. The Book Club provides a unique experience for incarcerated youth by introducing them to the joy of reading coupled with sharing personal reflections and perspectives.

This year a wide selection of books was chosen such as *The Giver*, *The Rose that Grew from Concrete*, and *The Secret*. Because some new boys joined the club, the group reread *The Master Plan* and *Never Finished*. They also enjoyed reading poetry, including *The Invictus* by William Ernest Henly and *Our Deepest Fear* by Marianne Williamson. Pictured below are some of the vision boards created by the book club members along with quotes from the members. This special project provided an opportunity to share artistically some of the dreams, goals and aspirations of the youth as they contemplated what they had learned from the book selections.

*I like the Book Club because....*

*"It grounds me, it allows me to experience new perspectives from the members and adds to my knowledge."*

*"It allows me to try new things. I also get to bond with my peers and grow closer."*

*"It lets me feel connected."*

*"I have a passion for reading and I like that I get to be in a group with people with the same interest as myself."*

*"I love discussions with my peers and hearing different views about the books."*

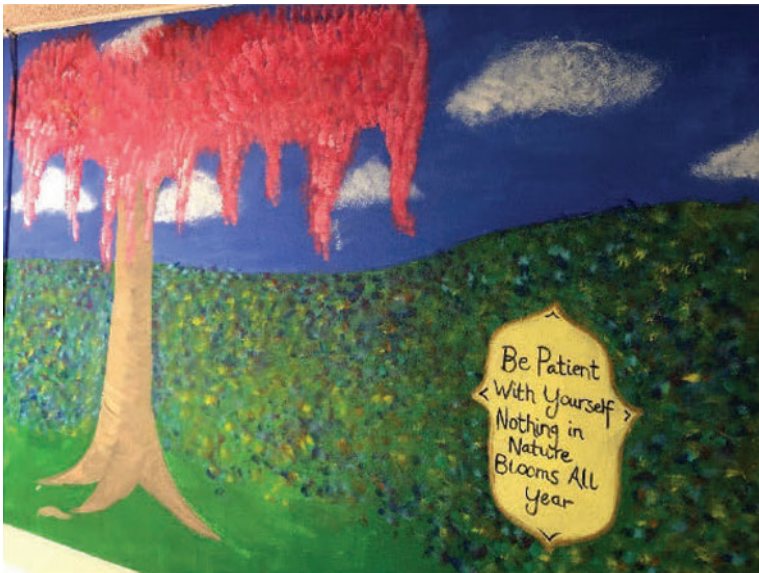
*"We talk about interesting topics and it feels like a safe place to talk about many things."*



# 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 fourteen 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 youth residents alone to determine how they view their experience in the residence. If a concern is noted, the Commission gives feedback to the administrator.



New Alternatives Crisis Resolution Facility (CRF)



New Alternatives Sibling Assessment Facility (SAF)



New Alternatives-CRF Annual Review  
*Comm'rs Rising & Garfias*



Rite of Passage - Johnson STRTP

# 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)
- Youth Reporting Center Central (YRC)
- Orangewood Children and Family Center (OCFC)

The first five serve youth who are wards of the Court and the sixth serves dependency children and youth.

All of these 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.



**Otto A. Fischer and Rio Contiguo Annual Review**  
*Principal Dave Connor, Asst. Principal Narciso Iglesias,  
Comm'rs Winder, Johnson & Vachet*



**Youth Guidance Center Annual Review**  
*Probation Division Director Regina Martinez,  
Probation Officer Margarita Heil, Comm'rs Lopez, Marshall & Vachet*



**North Youth Reporting Center (YRC) Annual Review**  
*Academic Support Asst. Julisa Carranza-Perez, Teacher Mario Alvarado,  
Teacher Allison Carey, Comm'rs Vachet & Winder*



**Central Youth Reporting Center (YRC) Annual Review**  
*Supervising Probation Officer Brent Ward,  
Comm'rs Winder, Johnson & Vachet*

## 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 2024, ten Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) met the criteria for inspection and were subsequently inspected in 2025 as recorded and highlighted in this chart.

Law Enforcement Agency	2025 Inspection	Number of Minors Detained		Minors in secure detention for any time		Minors in non-secure detention for 6+ Hours	
		2024	2025	2024	2025	2024	2025
<b>Anaheim PD</b>	<b>6/25</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Brea PD</b>	<b>5/5</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Buena Park PD</b>	<b>3/25</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Costa Mesa PD</b>	<b>6/26</b>	<b>231</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
Cypress PD	n/a	7	10	0	0	0	0
Fountain Valley PD	n/a	57	15	0	0	0	0
<b>Fullerton PD</b>	<b>3/25</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Garden Grove PD	n/a	131	106	0	0	0	0
Huntington Beach PD	n/a	53	48	0	1	0	0
Irvine PD	n/a	24	24	0	0	0	0
<b>Laguna Beach PD</b>	<b>4/3</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>La Habra PD</b>	<b>5/5</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
La Palma PD	n/a	6	4	0	0	0	0
Los Alamitos PD	n/a	3	1	0	0	0	1
Newport Beach PD	n/a	80	73	0	0	0	2
Orange PD	n/a	35	49	0	0	0	0
<b>Placentia PD</b>	<b>7/10</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Santa Ana PD</b>	<b>6/26</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Santa Ana Unified School District	n/a	2	1	0	0	0	0
Seal Beach PD	n/a	33	7	0	0	0	0
Tustin PD	n/a	110	93	0	0	0	0
Westminster PD	n/a	49	51	0	0	0	1
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	n/a	2	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Stanton OCSD</b>	<b>6/25</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Yorba Linda OCSD	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>1599</b>	<b>1431</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>

# STANDING COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUPS

## Standing Committee - Education

The Commission's Education Committee remained active this year. Committee members toured Otto Fischer and Rio Contiguo High Schools, the William Lyon School at Orangewood, and the Youth Reporting Centers' North and Central schools. During these visits, they met with on-site administrators, teachers, and students, and held several meetings with senior administrators from the Department of Education's ACCESS (Alternative, Community and Correctional Education Schools and Services) Youth in Care division. Key topics and concerns discussed included teacher, staff, and administrative vacancies; Wi-Fi and other technology needs; academic programming; special education services; and expanding the availability of Career Technical Education (CTE) programs.

Over the course of the year, many of these concerns were addressed, and the remaining issues continue to receive the DOE's focused attention. Notably, the wood shop inside Juvenile Hall was upgraded with state-of-the-art equipment and tools. In addition, the DOE has committed to prioritizing and strengthening ACCESS schools through its ACCESS 2030 strategic plan. The Commission extends its sincere appreciation to DOE administrators, staff, and teachers for their collaboration, responsiveness, and continued dedication to providing high-quality educational opportunities for system-involved youth.

## Working Group - Away From Care Youth (AFC)

The Commission formed this working group in 2024 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), the Probation Department, and continue to review the Orangewood Children and Family Center (OCFC) monthly reports. This year, the working group was informed that the SSA and Probation Department formed a multidisciplinary team meeting that meets weekly with other county partners to review foster youth who are at risk for crossing over to the Probation Department due to their behaviors. As a result, the Probation Department offers a "Youth and the Law" educational course to foster youth, and the departments work together to reduce away from care behaviors and to keep youth safe in the placement sites. 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.

## Working Group—Education/Vocational Programs and Services for Post-Graduate System-Involved Youth

This new working group was formed because more youth are staying in the juvenile justice system until they reach the age of 25. The increase is a result of realignment of the juvenile justice system in California under SB823. The law shifted the care, custody and treatment of serious juvenile offenders from the state to counties. The working group met with the Probation Department and discussed available programming for this population. The group also met with faculty representatives of UC Irvine's LIFTED program which provides college classes to adult prison inmates. After being contacted by this working group, the Dean of Santiago Canyon College and other administrators from the college hosted a collaborative meeting attended by representatives of the JJC, DOE, Radical Reversal and UCI LIFTED during which there were introductions and discussions about possible ways to provide more services to these youth.

# 2025 TRAININGS AND WEBINARS

## Juvenile Justice & Legal Topics

OYCR Youth Justice Action Webinar: Juvenile Justice Legal Updates  
OYCR Youth Justice Action Webinar: Creating Career Opportunity Pathways: Employment – Related Services for Youth with Disabilities who are justice-involved  
OYCR Webinar: The Importance of Restorative Justice in an SYTF Collaborative Court  
State Advisory OYCR on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention  
OYCR Youth Justice Action Webinar: Understanding the Stepping Home Model: A Framework of Best Practices for Supporting the Well-Being of Justice-Involved Youth  
West Coast Credible Messengers Conference: A Grassroots Approach to Juvenile Justice  
National Center for Youth Law Webinar: Children Behind Bars: The Real Costs of Youth Incarceration  
CWC Youth Justice Committee Webinar  
OYCR Youth Justice Action Webinar: The California Juvenile Justice Toolkit: A New Resource of Youth Programming  
OYCR Webinar: Adolescent Mind, Adult Time: The Science and Realities of Juvenile Transfer  
OYCR Youth Justice Action Webinar: Please Don't Give Up on US: Stories from Children and Youth Incarcerated in California

## Educational Topics & Conferences

“Know More, Do Better 3.0” Event by CSEC  
Ensure Justice Conference  
Raise Foundation Webinar - Internet Safety and Cyberbullying  
OYCR Youth Justice Action Webinar – La Cultura Cura Overview: Transformational Health and Healing  
CSEC Prevention and Awareness Reporting Protocols for Schools' Development  
Conditions of Children in OC Community Forum  
OYCR Youth Justice Action Webinar: Fueling Innovation and Centering Youth: Lessons from Kings County's Juvenile Court Schools  
Webinar: Incarceration to College Statewide Convening  
Project Kinship Conference  
Race to Summit: California College Affordability Summit  
OYCR Youth Justice Action Webinar: Fewer Chutes, More Ladders: Preventing Juvenile Legal Involvement and Ensuring Successful School Reentry for California's Youth

## Child Welfare/Foster Care Topics

CAST Lunch 'N Learn  
Annual Blue Ribbon Ceremony  
CDSS Family Maintenance Child and Family Teams Workshop

## Substance Use/Behavioral Health/Wellness Topics

CIBHS Webinar – Advancing Equity in Behavioral Health through Harnessing Key Change Levers  
HMA Webinar: Orange County Substance Use Disorders: Best Practices for Working with Youth  
Special Education Lunch 'N Learn: Supporting Youth in Care with Complex Needs  
Webinar: Drug Testing Modalities in Juvenile Dependency Cases: Urine Testing, Drug Patch, and Secure Continuous Remote Alcohol Monitor (SCRAM)  
Strategies for Coping Webinar

## 2025 JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION GUEST SPEAKERS



**Michelle Medina & Lisa Delamater- SSA Children  
& Families Services**  
*Comm'rs Yost, Vachet & Churchill*



**Justine Makoff - Free Rein Foundation**  
*Comm'rs Winder, Yost, Vachet & Matson*



**Kim Versluis & Sandy Azvaradel - Start Well**  
*Comm'rs Stafford, Johnson & McClean*



**Kevin Moore, Miguel Arreguin & Priscilla Suzuki - Probation Department**  
*Comm'rs Marshall, Johnson & Lopez*

## JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION ACTIVITIES



**Sunburst Youth Academy Graduation**

*Dr. Stefan Bean, Orange County Superintendent,  
Dr. Maria Martinez-Poulin, Chief of Alternative Education ACCESS,  
Dr. Jacqueline Cardenas, Machele Kilgore, Mari Barke, Dinah Ismail,  
& Comm'rs Stafford, Vachet & Marshall*



**Orangewood Children and Family Center Event**

*Comm'rs Lopez, Churchill & Winder*



**Juvenile Hall College and Career Day**

*Teacher Richard Berman & Principal Dave Connor,  
Comm'rs Winder & Yost*



**Annual Blue Ribbon Kick-off**

*Scott Burdick & Comm'r Churchill*



**Santa Ana Police Department Inspection**

*Comm'rs Lopez, Rodriguez & Vachet & Corporal Gavin Roelofs*

# JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION ACTIVITIES



**Cell Dogs Graduation**

*Janette Thomas, Comm'rs Marshall, Stafford & Johnson*



**Know More, Do Better 3.0 Conference**

*Comm'rs Vachet, Yost & Winder*



**Summer at the Center**

*Comm'rs Johnson, Perring, Lopez & Rodriguez*



**Project Kinship Conference**

*Comm'rs Vachet, Lopez & Rodriguez*



**Otto A. Fischer and Rio Contiguo Graduation Ceremony**

*Juvenile Presiding Judge Craig E. Arthur & Judge Vibhav Mittal*

*Comm'rs Vachet & Johnson & Lii Toelupe*

## JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION ACTIVITIES



**CA Foster Youth Conference**  
*Comm'r Churchill & Speaker Oree Freeman*



**Placentia Police Department Inspection**  
*Detective Revard, Police Service Officer Rodriguez, School Resource Officer Cleveland, Police Services Supervisor Gomez, Comm'rs Vachet & Winder*



**Special Education - Supporting Youth in Care with Complex Needs Training**  
*Judge Craig E. Arthur, Presiding Judge of Juvenile Court; Raina Lee, Sr. Administrator, Foster Youth Services; Comm'r Vachet & Rae Lynn Nelson, Jennifer O'Malley, Sue Singh, Robin Gilligan, Sonia Llamas & Ryan Cummings*

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](http://www.occourts.org/directory/juvenile/jjc)  
or email: [jjc@occourts.org](mailto:jjc@occourts.org)