

JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION

ANNUAL REPORT



2021

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.



Superior Court of California

County of Orange

Juvenile Justice Commission

Dear Reader:

In 2021 the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) resumed most activities while observing COVID-19 safety protocols. While we could not restart our bi-monthly, in-person meetings, the JJC did perform on-site inspections on 11 selected Orange County law enforcement agencies, 20 Short Term Residential Treatment Program (STRTP) facilities and all Orange County Juvenile Institutions.

One of the most valuable parts of the JJC inspection process is talking to the institution and STRTP youth about their experiences, problems, likes and dislikes. Sometimes these children don't know who to talk to about their issues. A section in this year's Report called "JJC Facilitated Outcomes" discusses the actions of the Commission in response to information provided in these interviews.

With the passage of SB 823, California has changed the way youthful offenders are treated and rehabilitated. This new law takes responsibility for treating serious juvenile offenders from the California Division of Juvenile Justice and transfers it to the individual counties. The JJC has been interviewing youth about the realignment of services and the most critical issues. This year's Report includes a section on the JJC's involvement.

The year 2021 was the fourth year of the JJC Essay Contest. With the cooperation of the Orange County Probation Department and the Orange County Department of Education, youth from Juvenile Hall, the Youth Guidance Center, and the Youth Leadership Academy submitted 72 essays on "Hope and Me". Further information on the Contest is included in this year's Report.

We thank Orange County Juvenile Court Presiding Judge Motoike for her help, support and guidance. We also thank our Executive Administrative Assistant, Susan Korean for her work on behalf of the JJC.

We hope this 2021 Annual Report will help you understand the Commission's work and the responsibility we all have for the youth of our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jan Sturla".

Jan Sturla
Chairperson



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 Welfare and Institution Code Sections 225-231. The mission of the JJC 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. The JJC advocates for a compassionate and collaborative community to meet the mental, physical, and educational needs of system-involved youth.

COMMISSIONERS OF THE ORANGE COUNTY JUVENILE JUSTICE COMMISSION

Cheryl Hart
Judy Johnson



Michael Schumacher
Dolores Yost



Amy Crowley



Jan Sturla

Lynda Perring
Marcy Garfias
Mary Lou Vachet



Wyatt McClean
Robin Rounaghi



Not Pictured – Benjamin deMayo

COMMISSIONER EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE

Commissioners bring a wealth of experience and expertise, as well as a deep concern for the welfare of children and youth served by the Juvenile Justice System. These examples represent some of that expertise.

- ◆ **County Counsel, Orange County Superior Court**
- ◆ **Chief Executive Officer, County of Orange**
- ◆ **Senior Assistant District Attorney, County of Orange**
- ◆ **Director, Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA)**
- ◆ **Chief Probation Officer, Orange County Probation Department**
- ◆ **Juvenile Court Administrator, County of Orange**
- ◆ **Program Administrator, Orange County Department of Education (OCDE)**
- ◆ **Executive Director for a volunteer organization serving abused and neglected children**
- ◆ **Licensed Clinical Social Worker with mental health specialty**
- ◆ **Group Home Program Director**
- ◆ **Mentor, Orangewood Children & Family Services (OCFS)**
- ◆ **Girl Scout Leader**
- ◆ **High School Volunteer Mentor**
- ◆ **Mediator, Orange County Juvenile & Family Court**
- ◆ **Board Member for Al-Anon, Orangewood and other community organizations**
- ◆ **Orange County Public Defender**
- ◆ **Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)**
- ◆ **Special Education Advocate for system-involved youth**



Training & Webinars

MENTAL HEALTH/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- ◆ Transforming Trauma; Fostering resilience & Promoting School Success
- ◆ Dependency Court & Domestic Violence
- ◆ Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- ◆ STRTP Institutions of Mental Dideases (IMDs)

LEGAL AND LEGISLATION

- ◆ Information Sharing in Juvenile Cases
- ◆ Closing Juvenile Halls: San Francisco
- ◆ Reasonable Efforts with Judge Edward
- ◆ Juvenile Court 101- Be Well Wednesday

TRAFFICKING AND CRIMES AGAINST MINORS

- ◆ International Human Trafficking and the COVID-19 Pandemic
- ◆ Child Sexual Explotation (CSEC) Training
- ◆ PACT - Preventing and Addressing Child Trafficking
- ◆ Crime Survivors Roundtable
- ◆ Harm reduction Workshop

RACISM / RACIAL EQUITY

- ◆ Addressing the trauma of Strictural Rascism
- ◆ The PAtH to Racial Equity in Child Welfare

GROUP HOMES / FOSTER CARE

- ◆ Out of State Group Home Certification
- ◆ Reproductive Health for Foster Youth
- ◆ Breaking Down Barriers
- ◆ Family First Prevention Services

SB 823 - LEGISLATION COLLABORATION

Recently enacted legislation (SB 823) requires all counties in the State of California to provide local placement by July, 2022, for youth who were traditionally committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). These 'secure track youth' who may remain in the juvenile detention facilities up to the age of 25 are considered higher risk and need different programs. As Orange County prepared their realignment plan to accommodate these youth, two JJC Commissioners collaborated with the Probation Department and community organizations to identify current services and recommend future enhancements.

The Commissioners personally met with a number of these youth who were already in custody to obtain their input about which programs they felt were helpful and what they hoped could be integrated. The JJC also met with recently released youth who were participating in community support groups to learn from their re-entry experiences. Whenever we spoke to these young men and women, we assured them that their conversations were confidential since the JJC is not aligned with any one agency. Throughout these meetings, the youth were anxious to share their ideas and have their voices heard.

To make their extended time served more productive, the youth strongly suggested that more relevant education classes be made available. College credit courses as well as vocational courses were prioritized as something they all wanted. In order to reduce recidivism, the youth wanted to obtain training or an apprentice-type of certification for future employment. The youth also indicated that enhanced peer mentoring that focused on rehabilitation and re-entry would be helpful.

The Commissioners shared their results with the presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court and the Probation Department. They are all committed to continue the dialogue with this target population and the agencies that serve them to better prepare them for success.



FACILITATED OUTCOMES

During an institutional inspection, a female youth complained that she had graduated high school but could not participate in college-level classes like the male youth. The JJC discussed the matter with the staff and discovered she misunderstood. She is now enrolled in college-level courses.

At another institutional inspection, a youth complained that the library was only open one day each week. The JJC discussed the matter with institution leadership and the library is now open two days each week.

During an inspection of a STRTP, the Commissioners noticed that private storage boxes were not provided to the residents as required by California law. These boxes are now being provided to each resident.

As a result of JJC questions regarding opioid overdoses, youth are now being provided with information on Narcan as well as a sample upon discharge from Juvenile Hall.

During an institutional inspection, a resident said he was worried about visitation and establishing a relationship with his child. The Commissioners discussed the matter with staff, who provided visitation information to the youth. The JJC followed up with the youth to ensure he had received the information.

During an inspection, staff members mentioned an unusually high number of “dark” school periods where no instruction is provided. The JJC brought the matter up with the Department of Education staff, who are now working on the issue.

During an inquiry into juvenile institution schools, the JJC learned that recruiting and retaining teachers was challenging. The JJC reached out to a semi-retired teacher and explained the problem. That teacher is now in touch with the Orange County Department of Education and is seeking an institutional school teaching position.

JJC ESSAY CONTEST

For four consecutive years, the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) has conducted an essay contest in collaboration with the Probation Department and Orange County Department of Education. Due to continuing COVID restrictions, the contest was again held virtually with 50 participants on a zoom call.

The contest invites students from the Otto Fischer High School that serves Juvenile Hall and the Youth Leadership Academy and the Rio Contiguo High School that serves the Youth Guidance Center to write personal, reflective essays about the suggested topic: ‘Hope and Me.’ This year 72 students submitted essays including post-secondary students at Juvenile Hall. Gift cards for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place, as well as 8 Honorable Mentions were announced at a coordinated awards ceremony held on October 21st.

This creative writing assignment has proven to be profound and self-empowering. It allows the students to have their voices heard and gives them the opportunity to express their opinions, thoughts and observations. The students freely share their personal background, family situations and experience in and out of custody. The JJC, as well as the Judges of Juvenile Court, have also benefited from the contest. It has given us a better understanding of what has led a youth to offend and why it’s important to empathize and try to help.

INSTITUTION INSPECTIONS

Annually, the Juvenile Justice Commission inspects the four facilities that provide residential care and services for 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.

Orange County Juvenile Hall

- Juvenile Hall is a Probation maximum security facility for male and female youth who have committed serious offenses in the community.
- Treatment options include anger management, conflict resolution, substance abuse and others.
- One - on - one counseling is provided.
- Family reunification efforts are provided where appropriate.

Youth Leadership Academy (YLA)

- The Youth Leadership Academy is a secure probation program for males only.
- This program focuses on the youth's smooth transition back into the local community.
- Treatment options are available to address substance abuse, gang prevention and aggressive behavior.
- Group therapy, family planning, crisis counseling and individual therapy are also provided.
- Youth have access to post - secondary education.



Each of the facilities provides an accredited school program staffed by the Orange County Department of Education so that education is not interrupted while in residence. Each facility has medical staff on site to address medical needs and youth have access to behavioral health care.

Youth Guidance Center (YGC)

- ◆ The Youth Guidance Center is a secure Probation four dormitory campus that includes a gymnasium and outdoor recreation area.
- ◆ This program is for male and female residents aged 14 to 18.
- ◆ Substance abuse is the treatment focus.
- ◆ There is emphasis on career readiness and occupational skill assistance.
- ◆ The post-secondary education options at YGC are expanding.

Orangewood Children and Family Center

- ◆ Orangewood Children and Family Center is a Social Services cottage campus serving Court Dependents.
- ◆ This program serves both male and female youth from birth to age 18.
- ◆ The length of stay is intended to be 10 days or less.
- ◆ The goal is to return the youth to their families or, if that is not possible, to locate a suitable placement.



INSPECTIONS OF OC LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

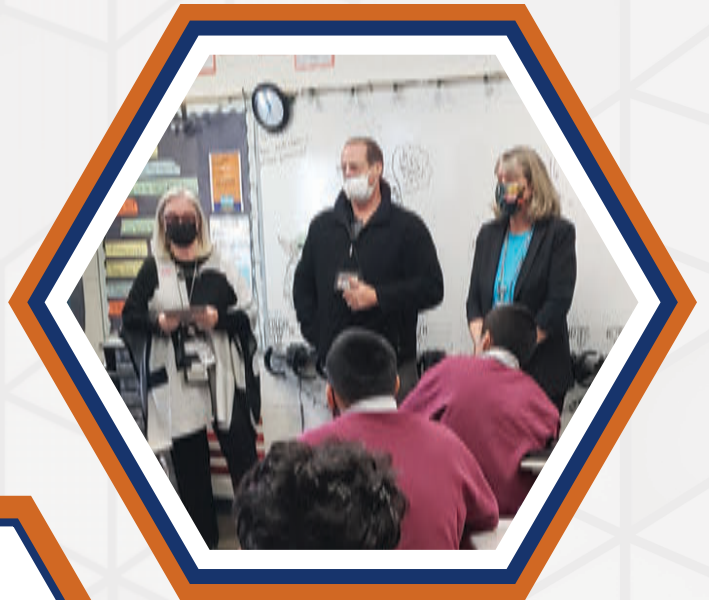
The JJC is mandated to inspect all law enforcement facilities where a minor is held in secure detention for any length of time and those where a minor is held in non-secure detention for 24 hours or more. No facility, other than the Probation-run institutions, holds minors for more than 24 hours. The 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 all OC law enforcement facilities operated by police or sheriff departments with their recent statistics on detention of minors. 2021 inspection dates are listed for those that met inspection criteria. The JJC inquired about topics such as human trafficking of minors, the role of School Resource Officers, community youth programs, compliance with COVID-19 protocols and interactions with Probation and Social Services.

In 2020, eleven Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) met the criteria for inspection and were subsequently inspected as recorded in this chart.

| Law Enforcement Agency | 2021 Inspection | Number of Minors Detained | | Minors in Secure detention for any time | | Minors in non-secure detention for 6+ Hours | |
|------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|------|-----------------------------------------|------|---------------------------------------------|------|
| | | 2020 | 2021 | 2020 | 2021 | 2020 | 2021 |
| Anaheim PD | April 15 | 93 | 91 | 8 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Buena Park PD | April 15 | 73 | 52 | 8 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Costa Mesa PD | April 22 | 72 | 63 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 0 |
| Fullerton PD | April 29 | 27 | 29 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Huntington Beach PD | April 22 | 36 | 42 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Laguna Beach PD | May 10 | 57 | 40 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| La Habra PD | April 29 | 50 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Placentia PD | May 10 | 52 | 31 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Santa Ana PD | May 4 | 90 | 58 | 59 | 23 | 0 | 0 |
| Westminster PD | May 4 | 46 | 28 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| SJ Capistrano OCSD | May 10 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 |



2021 COMMISSIONER ACTIVITIES





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