

**An Assessment of the
Enhanced Ranch Program
Santa Clara County Probation Department**

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency

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Executive Summary

The Santa Clara County Probation Department implemented the Enhanced Ranch Program in August of 2006 at two sites, the James Boys Ranch and the Muriel Wright Center, both in Morgan Hill, CA. Programmatically, the Enhanced Ranch Program is an adaptation of the Missouri Model developed by the Missouri Division of Youth Service that incorporated the following elements:

- Home-like physical setting: bed covers, couches, arranged in pods of 12 so youth and counselors can sit and talk
- Youth wearing their own clothes
- A focus on changing thinking rather than on simply changing behavior
- Staff are counselors with specific training rather than correctional officers
- Therapeutic units focused on cognitive behavior treatment, personal development, and group processes

Significant changes in the Enhanced Ranch Program were stimulated by a number of factors including a 40% failure rate among wards in the ranches, a high number of incidents that occurred at the ranches, the feeling the old Ranch didn't promote the growth of detained youth, and a high recidivism rate upon return to their homes. Study groups formed in 2003-04 to explore model programs to improve outcomes for youth in custody, a 20-person delegation from Santa Clara County visited and endorsed the Missouri Model, and the Board of Supervisors approved \$3.2 million to implement the model.

Programmatically, the Enhanced Ranch Program decreased the population at the ranches, increased the ratio of staff to youth (1:6 for days and evenings and 1:12 at night; previously it was 1:15 for days and evenings and 1:30 at night), made physical improvements to the facilities to form pods of 12 and create a home-like setting, and delivered a cognitively based treatment of group counseling that focused upon changing the way the youth think in order to change the way they behaved.

The Enhanced Ranch Program serves high risk, high need youth with gang affiliations, substance abuse, and significant criminal histories. It is therapeutic using proactive models of rehabilitation, as well as emphasizing pro-social skills, critical thinking, self control, anti-criminal thought patterns, and positive relationships. The primary focus is to internalize learning

to *do what's right* rather than because the counselors enforce behavior. The program also provides comprehensive aftercare supervision and aftercare program services.

The participants are about 88% male, 80% are Hispanic, followed by Black (10%), White (5%), Asian (3%), and Other (2%) youth. As compared to an earlier cohort in the previous Ranch model, the Enhanced Ranch population has a higher percentage of 13 to 15 year olds and a small proportion of 16-18 year olds. The current population have a higher proportion with Felony violent crimes than the previous cohort.

Outcome measure show that while at the Ranch, the previous ranch participants had a higher percentage of violations and failures (47%) compared to Enhanced Ranch participants (25%), more probation violations (23% to 8%), and more new arrests (24% compared to 17%). Within 12 months of exiting the ranch previous ranch participants had more violations and failures(42%) compared to Enhanced Ranch youth (37%), more probation violations (11% to 9%), and new arrests (31% compared to 28%).

Examining behavioral incidents (fights, gang activity, disruptive conduct, possession of contraband) at the ranch facilities, previous ranch participants had a total of 4647 incidents over 24 months while the Enhanced Ranch youth had 1294 over 18 months. With 475 youth in the previous program and 262 in the Enhanced Ranch Program, the average number of incidents per individual is 9.8 for the former and 4.9 for the latter.

The probation department will continue collect data and evaluate outcomes for youth in the Enhanced Ranch program.

The average cost per day for minors in the Enhanced Ranch Program is \$361.29, with 88.5% going towards staff salaries and benefits and 11.5% to services and supplies. The cost reflects a change in the staffing ratio from 1:15 for day/swing shift and 1:30 for graveyard shift prior to implementation of the Enhanced Ranch Program to 1:6 for day/swing shift and 1:12 for the graveyard shift with the Enhanced Ranch Program.

The ranch programs have been used in lieu of sending minors to the state Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) system. According to the Little Hoover Commissionⁱ, during 2008-09, DJJ's annual cost was projected at \$252,000 a youth per year, or \$690.41 per day.

INTRODUCTION

Since 2006, the Santa Clara County Probation Department (SCCPD) has implemented structural and philosophical changes to its approach to youth impacted by the juvenile justice system. The recent adoption of an evidence-based, cognitive-behavioral model at William F. James Boys' Ranch (James Ranch) and the Muriel Wright Center (Wright Center) exemplifies SCCPD's approach. The new model, entitled the Enhanced Ranch Program, is an adaptation of the evidenced-based program developed by the Missouri Division of Youth Services. The program targets youth heavily entrenched in the juvenile justice system, and emphasizes both positive peer-based group interactions and a holistic approach towards developing individual case plans for youth committed to its facilities. It emphasizes the use of teams of specially trained staff that work with small groups of youth offenders. Teams function as therapeutic units that share the daily activities of life focus on cognitive behavior, personal development, and group processes of youth offenders.

Providing specific therapeutic services to youth and families while simultaneously maintaining a commitment to public safety is the overarching objective of the changes to the County's juvenile rehabilitation programs. To this end, SCCPD was particularly interested in providing superlative targeted services to ensure successful reentry for youth with high risk criminal histories. Prior to 2005, neither James Ranch nor the Wright Center incorporated a behavioral model of intervention or a selective admittance process—two programming pieces widely considered best practices by juvenile justice experts. This coupled with the shared belief that SCCPD was failing to best serve at-risk youth and those impacted by crime throughout the county, led SCCPD to radically transform how its programming approaches youth affected by substance abuse, gang violence, and other significant issues of incarceration.

The Enhanced Ranch Program is intended to increase personal achievement levels among high risk youth by ensuring that they receive the most appropriate and purposeful services while at the ranch facilities. Outcomes specified by SCCPD focus on improving successes for youth confined to ranch facilities and lowering recidivism rates for those who successfully complete the program. An important objective within this scope is the program's focus on changing cognitive patterns, or the way in which youth think, rather than just physical behavior. To accomplish these goals, youth are assessed and then provided with a variety of programs and

services designed to develop skills that will enable them to lead more productive lives and to successfully reintegrate back into their families and communities upon release. To this end, programming focuses on developing:

- Critical thinking and reasoning skills, independent living skills, self control, and self management and structure.
- Anger management/conflict resolution abilities, skills to avoid drugs and gang intervention, life/communication/decision-making skills, and anti-criminal thinking patterns.
- Individual understanding and maturity to effectively utilize drug, alcohol, and relapse prevention counseling.
- Enhanced reading, writing, math, health and science skills, with the intention to increase academic performance by one to two grade levels while confined.
- Vocational skills to obtain an apprenticeship or entry level employment in construction, auto mechanics, welding, landscaping, horticultural, and/or computer literacy programs.
- Personal growth and family reunification skills.

SCCPD works collaboratively with a variety of agencies, including the County Office of Education, Mental and Public Health Departments, local community-based organizations, and trade unions and associations, to provide the aforementioned services, and to ensure that the overall needs of youth in the ranch facilities are met.

Methods

In November 2008, Sheila Mitchell, Santa Clara County Chief Probation Officer commissioned the National Council on Crime and Delinquency (NCCD) to evaluate the implementation of the Enhanced Ranch Program. As a non-profit research organization specializing in adult and juvenile justice research, NCCD has a rich history of conducting this type of assessment and has collaborated with a variety of criminal and juvenile justice agencies.

NCCD engaged in a variety of data collection strategies to address the questions related to this evaluation, including multiple site visits, interviews, document review, and focus groups with youth committed to the Enhanced Ranch Program facilities. Subjects of NCCD's interviews included the Chief Probation Officer and Deputy Chief of Santa Clara County, managers, supervisors, and counselors from James Ranch and the Wright Center, representatives from the

courts, Board of Supervisors, District Attorney's and Public Defender's offices, and individuals representing community-based organizations that provide services to youth at both facilities. In addition an extract of probation data was obtained and analyzed to examine the characteristics of the Enhanced Ranch Program participants as compared to those in the old Ranch Program.

NCCD assessed the overall operation of the Enhanced Ranch Program, documented SCCPD's fidelity to the new model, and gauged the extent to which the program is operating as intended. Residents at both facilities were also examined to determine whether the program is effectively serving the targeted population. Additional topics and questions addressed, for the purposes of the evaluation report, include:

- The components of the Enhanced Ranch Program.
- The distinctions between the Enhanced Ranch Program and the Missouri Model.
- Is the program operating as planned?
- Is the specified target population served?
- Are youth participating in the prescribed programs and services?
- Are the programs and services effective?
- Are program goals well defined and understood by relevant parties (i.e., youth, Enhanced Ranch Program staff, community based service agencies, and interagency partners)?
- What changes have taken place as a result of the implementation of the Enhanced Ranch Program?
- Are the established program goals and objectives being met?

An analytical model was used to structure the collection and analysis of data for this multidimensional program. The five components of this model, which are highlighted below, include context, goals, identification, intervention, and linkages.

Context encompasses the set of environmental forces, organizational issues, and policy assumptions that conceptually define the mission and distinctive features of the Enhanced Ranch Program. The implementation of this model was shaped by many contingencies, events, and external forces, as well as by explicit policy and program changes encouraged by the Board of Supervisors, planning committees, SCCPD, community-based organizations providing services, and others. It explains answers to why this specific model was selected as opposed to others.

Goals are the criteria for determining the effectiveness of the Enhanced Ranch Program. This model is designed to improve outcomes for youth with extensive criminal histories by ensuring that they receive the most appropriate and purposeful services. The process evaluation explores the extent to which program goals are clearly formulated, shared and understood by relevant players, and capable of objective assessment.

Identification is the combination of techniques, procedures, and criteria used to identify, screen, assess, admit, refer to services, and terminate services to the youth. For example, programs at James Ranch and the Wright Center are designated for high-risk youth (e.g., those with extensive criminal histories) for whom community-based levels of rehabilitation have been exhausted.

Intervention is the full range of programs and services utilized to meet program objectives for the Enhanced Ranch Program. For example, the programs and services provided to help a minor develop cognitive skills that enable him or her to successfully reintegrate back into his or her family and community.

Linkages refer to the formal and informal relationships and agreements that hindered or helped the establishment and implementation of the program. Linkages include cooperative and conflicting relationships among the lead implementing agency, law enforcement, prosecutors, public defenders, court officials, probation officers, youth service providers, parents, state or county juvenile justice officials, and community leaders.

In the analysis of these five components, NCCD looked for a high level of internal consistency. For example, methods of client selection for participation in the program (identification) should be logically related to core assumptions about the purpose of the Enhanced Ranch Program (context) and the services that are provided (intervention). Contextual factors reflect on the program's image, which, in turn, affects client recruitment (identification) and service (intervention) strategies and cooperative agreements with other organizations (linkages).

CONTEXT

We were proud of some of the good things that we were doing out there [at the ranches] but we felt that maybe it wasn't enough, and maybe we needed to look at another model.
(Kathy Duque, Deputy Chief, Santa Clara County)

Since 2003, Santa Clara County and its community partners have engaged in Juvenile Detention Reform (JDR) through a working partnership with the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Chief goals of this reform measure include reducing 1) unnecessary incarceration among youth and 2) the disproportionate numbers of youth of color in the system. Key components for accomplishing this goal include using relevant data to make detention decisions, and encouraging collaborations and partnerships among juvenile justice agencies, community-based organizations, and other governmental groups. As part of the JDR measure, SCCPD and its

partners began to closely examine the youth in their own juvenile facilities (e.g., to collect data on failure and success rates), and to assess programs and services being offered as rehabilitation tools. Through this assessment, SCCPD recognized some accomplishments of their programming. For example, services to meet the basic needs of youth were in place at the respective rehabilitation facilities. In addition, there were a variety of programs oriented around personal growth, including vocational training, drug treatment, and Alcoholics Anonymous. Yet there was also the acknowledgement that the current level of programming at these facilities failed to produce significant growth in youth—in fact, the program was not structured to do so. While incarcerated and later when returning home, youth were still displaying the same destructive behavioral patterns that lead them into the system. Youth routinely admitted that they were simply focusing on *doing their time* and not on making changes. This was evidenced by the high rates of recidivism, failures, and behavioral incidences among the Ranch population. As reported by multiple staff interviewees, *most minors' mindsets consisted of just doing their time and then go home. They were willing to do and say whatever was necessary to get them through the Ranch.* And many did make it through the programs, but again, there was no internalized change, so large numbers repeatedly filtered in and out of the system.

Why This Model

We used to say that 4 out of 10 youth were failing our program, but we had to kind of shift that focus because it really was our program—the way it was designed that was actually failing 4 out of 10 youth. (Sheila Mitchell, Chief Probation Officer, Santa Clara County)

Before the implementation of Enhanced Ranch Program on August, 28, 2006, approximately 40% of youth placed at both James Ranch and the Wright Center did not successfully complete the program and many were recidivating within six months of graduating from the program.ⁱⁱ There were also concerns surrounding recurring escapes from the facilities and behavioral issues displayed from youth in confinement: these incidents included fighting and even a riot that occurred at James Ranch.

The issues faced by SCCPD were not atypical. And in fact, their 60% success rate was better than what many probation departments within the U.S. could claim. Nonetheless, there was a consensus that outcomes needed to be improved for youth assigned to these facilities.

For example, former Supervisor Blanca Alvarado (District 2), who later advocated for the implementation of the New Enhanced Ranch Program, charged SCCPD with the task of addressing the disproportionately large numbers of minority youth committed to the County's juvenile rehabilitation facilities. Three out of four were of Latino descent and resided in the Supervisor's district. While highly critical of the disproportionate numbers of incarcerated Latino youth, Supervisor Alvarado also recognized, and helped transform, the County's lack of the financial resources, which were needed to fully execute components of the JDR initiative and meet the specific goal of reducing disproportionality.

Prior to SCCPD involvement with the Missouri Service Youth Institute (MSYI), they had obtained empirical information from several best-practice models as well as information from juvenile justice expert, Dr. Edward Latessa. Among the information received, the Missouri Model was most cited as having the best results in reducing juvenile recidivism.

In 2006, a 20-person delegation conducted a site visit to the rehabilitation facilities of Missouri to determine which aspects of this state model could be incorporated into Santa Clara County's Ranch Program. The delegation included representatives from the Public Defender's office, District Attorney's office, the Board of Supervisors, Mental Health division, the presiding Juvenile Court Judge, local community-based organizations, and seven employees of the Probation Department (managers, supervisors, and line staff). This initial visit set the platform for the philosophical and programmatic changes that were later put into effect at James Ranch and the Wright Center.

IDENTIFICATION

Criteria for admissions to the Enhanced Ranch program are clearly defined. This program is geared toward youth with significant criminal histories for which other alternatives were tried and failed, including community-based levels of rehabilitation. These youth can have multiple felony and/or misdemeanor offenses, but must be able to be housed in an open setting. The program does not accept youth with serious sex offenses or have a history of severe violence (i.e., 707b W&I offenses resulting in Great Bodily Injury). The program also prohibits youth who require residential treatment for high level mental health problems or drug and alcohol addictions.

To ensure that the program is serving the specified target population, managers from the County’s Juvenile Probation Services Department serve as gatekeepers. These gatekeepers review each case that the court probation officer recommends for the Enhanced Ranch Program. Specifically, before a minor can be approved for placement at a ranch facility, the advising probation officer must be able to justify the recommendation. This means that for each youth, the officer must demonstrate that all other placement options have been completely exhausted, and show the range and degree of services. For example, there should be a documented history that shows reoccurring probation and group home failures, as well as attempts and failures of programs, like the County’s Alternative Placement Academy—an alternative to the Enhanced Ranch Program. Minors who fail to meet the high-risk and high-need criteria will not be admitted to the Enhanced Ranch Program; however, they will receive referrals to other services, such as the aforementioned Alternative Placement Academy.

The screening process has not only helped to ensure that the correct youth are admitted to the program, but it has also helped the County resolve a more effective way to deal with the delay for entrance as a result of the large applicant pool. The Enhanced Ranch Program is a very costly undertaking, mostly due to the amount of money required to train staff, lower the staff to youth ratio, and make structural changes to facilities. For this reason, SCCPD has taken significant steps to ensure that only youth with high-risk and high-need levels are admitted into the program. In fact, the County now admits many of the high-risk offenders who would have formally been confined to Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) prior to SB81 legislation.ⁱⁱⁱ

As shown in Table 1, James Ranch limits its population to males between the ages of 16 to 18 years old. The Wright Center, on the other hand, admits females between the ages of 12 to 18 years old, and younger males from 12 to 16 years old.

Table 1: Enhanced Ranch Program Admittance Criteria

James Ranch	Wright Center
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Only Males	Males and Females
16-18 years	12 to15.5 years (Male) 12 to18 years (Female)
Can have felony or multiple misdemeanor charges	Can have felony or multiple misdemeanor charges
Must be appropriate for open housing setting	Must be appropriate for open housing setting
Parental/caretaker Involvement required	Parental/caretaker Involvement required

GOALS

The Probation Department’s primary goal for the Enhanced Ranch Program is to help youth identify and replace pro-criminal thinking and behavior with those that are pro-social through the active participation and successful completion of rehabilitative programming.

These changes are expected to decrease rule violations (i.e., fights and escapes) and criminal behaviors exhibited in institutional and community settings. Program participants are also expected to increase their impulse control and problem solving skills and reduce the severity of offenses and readmissions to correctional facilities. The program design was developed around three primary objectives:

1. Provide an appropriate assessment and re-assessment of youths’ risks and needs.
2. Provide a behavior management program that is cognitively based.
3. Provide comprehensive aftercare supervision and aftercare program services as youth transition back into their homes and communities.

INTERVENTION

One of the things about the old program is staff were the boundaries, so when they weren’t around or when the youth left the Ranch, their boundaries remained behind. With this program, our minors are able to internalize their own boundaries and do the right thing because it’s the right thing to do, not because they are avoiding punishment – I think this is critical. (Mike Simms, Manager James Ranch)

The Enhanced Ranch Program is therapeutic and concentrates on proactive models of rehabilitation rather than reactive models of correction. The structure of the Enhanced Ranch Program is holistic, in that youth are provided with a range of services that focus on developing pro-social skills, critical thinking, self control, anti-criminal thought patterns, and positive relationships.

There are clear-cut rules and a great amount of structure offered via this program model; however, the primary focus is on readying youth so that they internalize their own boundaries, and eventually learn to *do what is right* and follow facility protocol because it is the correct thing to do, and not because their counselors are constant enforcers.

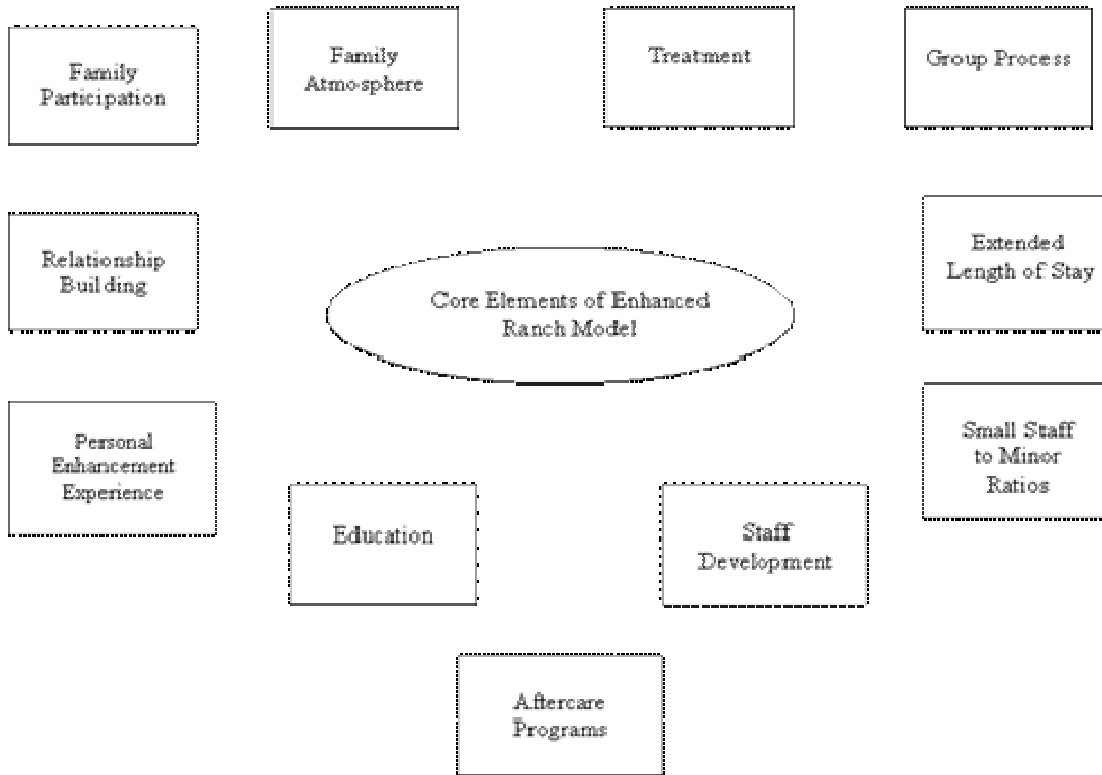
Community and interagency partnerships are also important components of the program model and enhance the delivery of services to affiliated youth and families. However, it is the youth relationships with institutional staff (e.g., counselors, supervisors, and managers) that is the most vital component. Line staff are expected to engage and develop one-on-one relationships with youth in their care. The small staff-to-youth ratios and cognitive program modality – also important elements of this therapeutic model – facilitate these relationships and processes.

Table 2: Correctional vs. Rehabilitation Model	
<i>Correctional Model</i>	<i>Rehabilitative Model</i>
Locked facility with external controls	➡ Open facility with only those controls necessary to ensure public safety
Limited services	➡ Continuum of services
Relationship between staff and youth is limited and often non-existent	➡ Staff relationship with youth is encouraged and expected
Staff are correctional or institutional officers	➡ Staff are counselors
Family and community often seen as the problem	➡ Family and community considered partners and part of the solution
Program has many rules and regulations	➡ Program has rules, regulations, and structure
Program staff force youth to comply and follow rules and regulations	➡ Program staff help youth internalize their own boundaries
Rules and boundaries reinforced by staff	➡ Rules and boundaries reinforced by youth and peers
Result is behavior compliance	➡ Result is cognitive change and development
A youth's behavior improves because of correctional structure, restrictions, and limitations	➡ A youth's behavior improves because of internalized boundaries and cognitive change

The Core Elements

There are eleven interlocking and complementary core elements which frame Santa Clara County's Enhanced Ranch Program. The core elements include a focus on (a) staff development and coaching, (b) treatment, (c) family atmosphere, (d) group process, (e) small staff-to-youth ratios, (f) family participation, (g) personal enhancement opportunities, (h) extended lengths of stay for youth, (i) relationship building, (j) education, and (k) aftercare programs. These core elements together provide a framework through which institutional staff reinforce pro-social thought patterns and behaviors in the youth who enter the Enhanced Ranch Program.

Enhanced Ranch Program Core Elements



Implementation of the Core Program Elements

All the elements of the treatment model are important and it is evident that SCCPD managers see utility in the programming, and as consequence, expects all of their staff to follow the program modules. As Deputy Chief Duque noted,

All of our ranch counselors are highly skilled and have college degrees. Most became counselors for the simple fact that they wanted to make a difference in the lives of youth. This new program model will empower them to make that difference. The program will allow them to put their education and training to use – it will allow them (to) provide programming that can change the life direction of our youth, which in turn will change their lives.

a. Staff Development and Coaching

From the onset, Deputy Chief Duque had confidence in the County's capacity to implement the components of the Enhanced Ranch Program. An assessment by Mark Steward, Director of MYSI, later provided credence to Deputy Chief Duque's stance. Mr. Steward's assessment highlighted the quality of SCCPD staff – that they were well educated – but also confirmed that all would need intensive training. SCCPD staff had to learn how to implement the foundational components of the program, work more effectively with youth, and conduct groups. This factor was not seen as a deterrent, but rather as an acknowledgement of the training that was needed to ensure the desired outcomes and paradigm shift.

The intensive training that staff received built the foundation for the Enhanced Ranch Program. All full-time staff members received 96 hours of instruction from MYSI trainers in the Cognitive Based Treatment (CBT) model of group counseling, followed by ongoing mentoring/coaching. The staff training was conducted in two parts that ran simultaneously. The 96-hours of instruction were presented in a classroom format and included a curriculum that provided instruction in specific areas.

Table 2 provides an overview of the areas of learning covered through the curriculum and coaching provided by MYSI trainers. The MYSI curriculum is designed to provide insight into the key elements of CBT program model and to provide details and instructions on how other counties and states may execute these dynamic modules in their respective juvenile rehabilitation facilities.

Table 3: Missouri Youth Services Institute Program Modules

<i>Circle of Treatment, Effective Programs</i>	Assist staff in defining what constitutes appropriate treatment in youth facilities. Identifies harmful and therapeutic aspects, juvenile rights, and the process of executing an effective treatment plan.
<i>Treatment House vs. Traditional House</i>	Examines the evolution of youth care and how to move from a reactive-correctional approach to a proactive- rehabilitative approach. Also defines the components of creating safe spaces for youth to learn, grow, and make positive decisions in the future.
<i>Group Dynamics</i>	Targets understanding the interactions expected to occur with groups in youth facilities. Emphasizes how staff can facilitate safe and positive relationships and encourage emotional growth, effective decision making, and behavioral changes.
<i>Problems versus Symptoms</i>	Instructs staff in understanding youth behavior by looking at factors that influence youth to subscribe to unhealthy habits. Explores emotional and cognitive aspects of behavior, and intervention methods to help youth make better choices.
<i>Beliefs & Philosophy</i>	Comprehensively observes how organizational beliefs and philosophy guide all aspects of staff work.
<i>Introduction to Systems</i>	Introduces family system's theory. Goals include creating staff awareness of youth behavior and needs in the context of family, and to understand the importance of family involvement in programming and treatment plans.
<i>Crisis Management</i>	Emphasizes proactive perspectives to avert crisis situations in programs. Staff learns constructive methods to diffuse crises and address conflict.
<i>Assessing and Moving Groups</i>	Examines ways to guide and support youth through group development. Staff learns to identify and foster trust, safety, support, and healthy camaraderie between youth.
<i>Professional Boundaries</i>	Defines professional boundaries in relation to leadership, staff, and youth. Topics include appropriate dress, language, and interactions.
<i>Human Dignity</i>	Explores ways to create an environment that respects family, youth, and staff, and how, in turn, that motivates youth and families to successfully address issues and challenges.
<i>In-service Training: Coaching</i>	Missouri coaches work with staff to implement learning from the training modules by facilitating the transition from theory to practice.

* The information presented in this table was derived from *MYSI Training Module Description (2009)*.

The second training component consisted of on-site coaching and mentoring. As noted by Deputy Chief Duque and validated by ranch counselors, the classroom training was important but it was the on-site coaching and mentoring provided by MYSI that made the difference for SCCPD staff. MYSI trainers traveled to both James Ranch and the Wright Center and provided hands-on coaching/training to staff. While in their true work environment, SCCPD staff had the opportunity to learn while working with confined youth. Under MYSI coaches' supervision,

counselors learned group facilitation, and how to address youth who had problems adjusting to the program modules. They also learned behavioral interventions, strategies to support youth in their personal development, and how to help youth identify factors that produce negative consequences. When asked if this training was useful and/or relevant in enhancing their professional growth, all staff agreed that the MYSI training was purposeful and beneficial to their work experience. One Counselor was quoted as saying, *the training process is ongoing and constant and one of the best training programs around.* (Probation Counselor, Wright Center)

SCCPD sponsored a one day training class to ensure that partner agencies had a thorough understanding regarding the changes being implemented at the Enhanced Ranch Program facilities. Those required to attend the training class included the teachers and staff from the County Office of Education, medical staff, and community based organizations that work and provide services to youth affiliated with Enhanced Ranch Program.

An internal trainers (i.e., *staff who serve to prepare the trainers*) component is currently being developed within this program element. In lieu of MYSI, five staff members from each facility are currently being instructed on how to provide training and coaching to the SCCPD Enhanced Ranch Program staff. These internal trainers will face an important and challenging task: not only will they be required to learn the curriculum thoroughly, but also to conduct the on-site coaching. Again the on-site coaching is the medium by which staff learn how to put theory into practice. As Deputy Chief Duque stated, *it's different than just teaching classroom role playing.*

b. Treatment

Within three weeks of entering one of the ranch facilities, all youth are assessed, and an individual case plan is developed by the Multidisciplinary Team (MDT). The MDT is comprised of probation counselors, mental health staff, substance abuse counselors, school counselors, parents, and minors. Together these parties evaluate relevant case information and develop the treatment plan, which frames the programs and services that will most benefit the minor. Adherence to the treatment plan is mandatory; thus, minors are required to participate in all the specified programming. Programming emphasizes a cognitive-behavioral, therapeutic approach and focuses on helping youth to minimize anti-social behaviors and increase positive choices. It

includes participation in substance abuse counseling, as well as group, individual, family, psychiatric, and other special therapies.

The Enhanced Ranch Program serves youth with high-risks and high-needs—in other words, those deeply entrenched in the juvenile justice system, with histories of trauma, substance abuse, and/or gang involvement. SCCPD’s treatment plan aligns with best practice research, which indicates that programming geared toward youth exhibiting such high-risk and high-need levels must be comprehensive and include at a minimum 400 to 500 hours of intensive work in order to accomplish real impact. The Enhanced Ranch Program is designed to afford all youth a minimum of 400 hours of intensive services, including, daily group and individual counseling, circle interventions (led by ranch counselors, as needed), and participation in group work that focuses on developing anger management, life and moral reasoning skills, and discontinuing harmful behaviors and addictions.

c. Family Atmosphere

To facilitate a home-like atmosphere, structural changes were made at both James Ranch and the Wright Center. Specifically, smaller, personalized living units (i.e., treatment pods) were created in lieu of traditional dormitory structures. For example, the 96-bed dormitory style facility at James Ranch was reduced to a 60-bed capacity that includes five treatment units for 10 to 12 minors. The Wright Center was separated into four treatment units for 10-12 minors, with a total capacity of 48 youth; their previous capacity was 64.

These treatment pods create smaller personalized living space for youth, and support the level of privacy and safe space that are ideal for group interaction. The treatment pods have furnishings (i.e., beds with comforters, colorful paintings, couches, chairs, and curtains) that are reminiscent of home, and conducive to group interaction and communication. For example, each pod has a central meeting area that is fashioned like a large version of a family room. This area is carpeted, decorated with pictures, positive mantras, and art work that youth have completed. There is also a television, and couches and chairs that can easily be fashioned into a circle for group sessions in this central meeting area.

d. Group Process

The group process emphasizes the personal development of each youth through regular group interactions and counseling. Each treatment pod has staff assigned to work with specific youth. These counselors continue with their assigned youth throughout their confinement. As previously stated, ranch counselors received intensive training and coaching from MYSI in order to effectively implement the group work, which is another key component of this new program.

Youth are encouraged to actively *talk out* personal problems within a group-oriented environment and, thus, there is consistent communication among pod members and counselors concerning both collective and individual issues daily. Counselors refer to this active form of discourse as *circling up*. When compared to the previous Ranch Program, staff and managers have noted the increased frequency of these group interactions. Laura Wegl, Manager of the Wright Center verified that the Enhanced Ranch Program requires counselors to run a lot of groups, and even more so for the girls. Manager Wegl reported that, *the boys seem to have ways to work out their aggression through the physical activities like playing basketball, but the girls seem to need to discuss, blame, point fingers and then work through it*. An example of this process is summed up by the statement of a female ranch resident:

They don't let you just go to your room and say forget it, I don't want to deal with you. You got to work on it until you work it out and that means you can be in group for two hours.

Although challenging and time consuming, both counselors and youth residents interviewed for this evaluation agreed that the process of *circling up* helps youth to deal with the variety of personal, group, and external issues that they encounter. This process requires youth to develop communication skills, and teaches them how to resolve issues non-violently. Another participant supported the positive effect of group process on bridging positive interaction and communication skills between youth by stating

We learn stuff from each other. We'll have groups and we'll sit and talk about things and it's like we are becoming better people. We're communicating better with people and can talk about some of the problems that we have with them. We learn that we don't have to go and fight people or do anything physically. (Wright Center focus group participant)

In addition, the group dynamics practiced at both facilities also help pod members bridge gaps and form better relationships. Members of rival gangs are often placed in the same pods and made to work as a team. As one focus group participant noted,

We learn how to communicate with others and learn how to respect each other—like respect each other’s space. You are in a pod with 12 people, and it may be people you don’t like or people you don’t know, but you learn how to work together. It’s not necessarily talking, but learning how to work with them. Like when you get a job when you get out, you might not like the person, but you will still have to work with him. (James Ranch focus group participant)

e. Small Staff to Youth Ratios:

To implement this specific program element, SCCPD secured funding to increase the number of staff positions. The staff ratio is now 1:6 for the day and evening shifts (i.e., when youth are awake and active), and 1:12 for night shift. Previously, the ratio was 1:15 for the day and evening shifts, and 1:30 at night. The small staff-to-youth ratio at the ranch facilities helps the counselors bond with youth, and to get to know each one on an individual basis. As one interviewee noted, the staff ratio now allows staff to actually supervise and counsel youth rather than just monitor their behavior.

f. Family Participation:

Family participation is an important component of the Enhanced Ranch Program model, with some SCCPD staff describing it as vital. Before admittance into the Ranch Program, youth are actually pre-screened to ensure that a family advocate – in the form of a relative, caretaker, or legal guardian – is willing and available to participate in the subsequent rehabilitation of the minor. If an appropriate family connection is not identified, SCCPD will search for an alternative person/placement. Because family engagement and participation is an essential element of the Enhanced Ranch Program model, if the search for an alternative placement or family connection proves fruitless, the youth will not be admitted to the program.

The program engages youths’ families from the time of admittance. Parents or guardians participate in orientations and are required to sign-off on their youth’s treatment plan, of which family therapy is often a requirement of this plan. Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT) represents one of the specific family therapy modalities that may be included in the treatment place. The goal of BSFT is to improve youth behavior by improving family relationships that are

presumed to be directly related to youth behavioral problems, and improving relationships between the family and other important systems that influence the youth (e.g., school, peers). In addition, family members must interact with staff before youth can receive home furloughs.

Interviewees noted that SCCPD and partners go out of their way to find a relative caregiver for youth but that it does not always work out. For example, one interviewee noted a situation in which a minor involved with both probation and social services only had a 92 year old grandparent available to be the relative caretaker. The Probation Department did allow the grandparent to act as the caretaker but also required special visits from the Enhanced Ranch Program staff that was supplemented with support from social services.

g. Personal Enhancement Opportunities:

All youth have opportunities to participate in a variety of activities including recreational activities, such as competitive sports, and vocational and employment training. Resident boys can participate in the sports activities through the Central Coast Ranch Athletics League, while female residents can participate in sports via the Probation Community Athletic League. These activities all contribute to enhancing cognitive skills through intrapersonal and interpersonal development. The recreational activities, in particular, give youth opportunities to hone their communication, leadership, and teamwork skills. The vocational and employment training, on the other hand, afford opportunities for older youth to gain exposure to professional etiquette and responsibilities.

All of these activities strengthen individual will power and perspectives on what it means to commit oneself to new and positive learning experiences. For example, a focus group participant at the Wright Center noted that programs were teaching her how to deal with her emotions in a positive way, and also spoke highly of the athletic programs:

I never really experienced a lot of the programs that are here, like the yoga and Zumba. This is a whole new experience for me, but at the same time, it gets me thinking that there are other things out there that I can try and do instead of just the same thing all day.
(Wright Center, focus group participant)

h. Extended Length of Stay:

To ensure that youth are allotted the time to develop the necessary tools to reintegrate back into the family and community, the program length was extended to a six to eight month stay in custody with a six month aftercare component. If warranted, this commitment time can be extended by program staff.

Prior to the implementation of the new model, commitment time was only four to five months and there were no incentives for success. The extended time period offered by the current program model not only allows time for youth to acclimate to the program objectives and environment, it enables staff to better address the distinct needs of each youth participant.

Judges, parents, community based organizations and representatives from the Offices of the Public Defender and District Attorney all had concerns regarding the increased program length and the cost associated with it. To counter these concerns, SCCPD first emphasized the inadequacies of the old Ranch Program. Secondly, they highlighted that partner agencies had put enormous pressure on the SCCPD to do something to make the Ranch program work better. Third and foremost, SCCPD demonstrated that the program's length was patterned after the MYSI model and best practice work of Dr. Latessa.

As one manager expressed, this change was about SCCPD's desire to do a better job and to work with the youth who get caught up in the system. The Department did not have the intention or desire to lock up more youth but rather to reduce recidivism. It was a shared goal that would eventually benefit all parties and result in less work for everyone. There will be less cases going in and out of the system, fewer youth in detention. This again is the outcome that everyone wants.

i. Relationship Building:

To implement this program to its fullest capacity, the Department needed staff to work different hours. You can't build a relationship and bond with youth working ten days a month. (Manager, SCCPD).

The compulsory work hours for counselors are now better suited to providing the CBT model at the facilities. Experts note that the one-on-one relationship formed between youth and line staff, is one of the key elements in working with youthful offenders. The specialized cognitive program modality which is a key element of this program allows staff to get to know

the youth on an individual basis, thus impacting the latter's ability to acquire the pro-socializations skills needed to impact their lives in a positive manner.

As stated by one of the facilities managers, the consistent and frequent interaction builds a bond between staff and youth. This manager reported that all counselors know their youth—they know every single child that they are working with personally. When you are with a child for forty hours per week you get to know them and their habits, like who uses the bathroom when, who takes longer showers and even what they need for their hair (referring to the girls). It is the consistent interaction and trust that forms the bond between counselors and youth, and also helps youth to be more receptive to group discussions. This manager also noted that youth simply seem to work a little harder because they see that the counselors really do care.

To facilitate the relationship between staff and youth, SCCPD implemented a system in which counselors are assigned to work with a specific treatment pod and revised shift scheduling so that counselors are on-site more often and thus have more consistent and frequent contact with youth in their care. For example, counselors are no longer allowed to work a 16-hour shift schedule which meant they were only onsite for approximately ten days per month. As an SCCPD Manager stated, *you can't build a relationship and bond with youth by working ten days a month*. Although the vast majority of staff interviewed for this report were complimentary of the Enhanced Ranch Program, there was a certain level of contention over this specific change.

SCCPD has shown a commitment and drive to implementing the Enhanced Ranch Program to its fullest capacity. The Department acknowledged the concerns of program staff, but also recognized other more salient points, including the positive ramification that the program could have on youth and the added responsibility of honoring the large financial investment made by the County. Even though shift schedules were altered, which some employees did not like, the Department has made strides in addressing the concerns of these staff. Shift scheduling being determined by managers, rather than dictated from top probation management is an example of one such step. This concession is helping facilitate the transition.

As Deputy Chief Duque reported: *I gave the requirements to the managers and empowered them to figure out the shift schedules that they believed would well with the program and also take staff needs into consideration. And the schedule that they came up with better meets the needs of the youth, program and staff. It has increased communication between POD*

staff teams, improved the consistency of treatment approach for the youth, and enhanced our treatment team's ability to meet and discuss case plans in detail.

Ranch managers must ensure that their counselors are (a) onsite for 3 to 4 consecutive days per week, (b) work as a team at least 3 to 4 times per week, and (c) counselors who work in the same treatment pod must have overlapping work hours for a minimum of 5 days per week. The overlapping schedules allow staff to work as a team, check-in with each other and provide updates regarding the progress of their assigned youth. With the aforementioned prerequisite in mind, managers are free to determine the shift schedules for their staff.

Ranch managers are currently on their third shift schedule because the previous schedules were not working well. The fluidity of this process highlights a belief shared among staff regarding the Enhanced Ranch Program, and gives a direct example of SCCPD's implementation philosophy. The Enhanced Ranch Program is viewed foremost as a work in progress with room for improvements. Secondly, upon discovery of specific program elements and practices that fail to produce the intended results, SCCPD routinely makes revisions.

j. Education

Blue Ridge School is operated by the Santa Clara County Office of Education, and serves students at both ranch facilities. Committed youth are required to dedicate a portion of each day to their education and, unless a resident is sick or otherwise incapacitated, attendance is mandatory. The academic programs at the Ranches are based on the State of California's curriculum framework guidelines and include core courses in language arts, social studies, math, science, vocational education, GED preparation and special education services are also provided to those who need it. The Santa Clara Office of Education provides 300 minutes per day of classroom instruction while the state mandate is 240.

When interviewed, a teacher from the Santa Clara Office of Education spoke of the difficulty of working with students at the Ranch facilities. According to this interviewee, *most of the students at the Ranch have very high need levels – many are emotionally disturbed, and need special resources, and a lot of one on one time to do their work.* Despite residents' high-need levels and other difficulties, this respondent also confirmed that his/her students were making progress academically as many were earning good grades, completing their required

assignments, participating in discussions, and engrossing themselves in their whole learning environment.

k. Aftercare Programs

After youth have successfully served their in-custody commitment, they then move forward to the aftercare phase. The aftercare component shifts the program focus toward family involvement and reunification, and includes interim home visits by staff. There are two components of aftercare: pre-release and continued aftercare.

Program Levels

The treatment phase of the Enhanced Ranch Program can be divided into two key components: in-custody and aftercare. In-custody services include the first four levels of the program, wherein a resident's privileges and responsibilities increase as she or he progresses along the continuum. In-custody programming or treatment engages youth by mandating that they participate in services such as group, individual, and family therapy, as well as psychiatric, and substance abuse counseling, and other special therapies. Aftercare, on the other hand, refers to the out of custody stage, at which time youth transition back into their respective community and families. The level system primarily serves as a structure tool to quantify youth success and development throughout their in-custody stay. It provides a general outline of the resources, expectations, and experiences that SCCPD provides for youth at each stage in the program.

Table 4: Custodial and Aftercare Components

Custodial Components		
Level 1	➡ Orientation	➡ 1 month
Level 2	➡ Core Program Activities	➡ 2-3 months
Level 3	➡ Family Reunification Planning	➡ 2 months
Level 4	➡ Re-entry and Aftercare Preparation	➡ 1 month

Aftercare Components		
Weeks (1 - 10)	➡ Phase I - Pre-release	➡ 2.5 months
Weeks (11 – 24)	➡ Phase II – Continued Aftercare	➡ 3.5 months

Level 1: Youth are at Level 1, the orientation phase, for approximately one month. During this phase, youth residents and their respective family members are oriented to all aspects of the program, admittance and assessment tests to identify risk factors administered, and a case plan – guide for treatment – is also developed by the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) at this level. At this program stage youth are learning the rules of the program, readiness for change how to trust program counselors, and to feel safe in their new environment. As the focus is on program orientation, those minors at Level 1 have very limited privileges.

Level 2: Youth progress through Level 2 for approximately two to three months, and are required to participate in a variety of programs as specified in their respective case plans. As Level 3 offers youth the opportunity to take their first home visit (i.e., weekend furlough), Level 2 programming provides preparation by focusing on self-improvement and family dynamics. Level 2 goals include helping youth to develop an awareness of destructive patterns and to re-channel said patterns into more effective behaviors, assisting youth in identifying their own *red flags or other triggers* that impede proactive decision-making, and developing skills to control impulsive and hurtful behaviors. Youth accomplish this by developing short and long term objectives related to school, work, programs, and family, and also by receiving counseling that

focuses on specified issues (e.g., including gang involvement, substance abuse, lack of self-control, and family dysfunction). Although ineligible for weekend furloughs, Level 2 youth are able to participate in vocational training, recreational sports, and work crews at off-site locations. They can also make phone calls home, participate in field trips, and acquire basic canteen privileges.

Level 3: Youth remain at Level 3 for approximately two months. During this period, the primary focus is on family reunification. Weekend furloughs with family can begin at Level 3; however, before this can happen, the minor and family must participate in three or more family counseling sessions with Probation Counselors. Additionally, Probation Counselors must deem the home environment and family structure acceptable for visitation. The goals of Level 3 include continuing to help youth break destructive cycles, moving toward more productive actions and responses, developing appropriate boundaries, learning to take care of themselves, forming healthy relationships, and setting personal goals that are congruent with a proactive way of thinking. Youth accomplish these objectives through counseling sessions that focus on self-reflection, alternative behavioral strategies and how past and current thought patterns affect one's family. Based on individual behavior and treatment plans, youth may receive privileges such as phone calls, field trips, sports programs, enhanced canteen, special jobs and weekend furlough eligibility.

Level 4: The final stage of the in-custody component of the Enhanced Ranch Program, Level 4, prepares youth for the transition to aftercare service and family reunification or placement. Level 4 minors are expected to have developed leadership skills and to be role models to their lower level peers. They are preparing for family reunification or placement, and, with that, are learning to move away from dependence on staff to a healthy understanding and practice of interdependence. This is accomplished through allowing the youth to offer peer guidance and build confidence through strategy-sharing, identifying and developing supportive resources outside of the facility, and counseling that focuses on reintegrating into home, work, school, and community environments. The emphasis on youth developing healthy networks outside the program and learning about the variety of resources, support, counseling and training available in the community represents a key element of success beyond the program. Each resident receives a post test, a Risk Avoidance, Protective, and Resiliency Asset assessment, and a review of his treatment plan goals to determine advancement to aftercare. At this time, staff

completes an appropriate MDT plan and identify referrals for the essential services needed during aftercare.

Aftercare: After successful completion of the in-custody portion of the Enhanced Ranch Program, youth progress to the six month aftercare stage. Aftercare incorporates two components: (1) pre-release and (2) continued aftercare. During the aftercare period, youth must comply with all court orders, attend programs (e.g., drug and alcohol treatment, mental health counseling, and/or mentoring programs), as specified by the MDT, and engage with counselors and a therapist. Youth that do not comply with aftercare regulations, can receive penalties that include additional weeks of supervision, a 30 day in-custody stay at the Ranch, and if warranted, be returned back to the Juvenile Hall facility as an aftercare failure.

Phase I – Pre-release: The first phase of this component is a 10-week pre-release program in which youth are monitored by the aftercare counselor. Youth must comply with a stringent curfew, check in with the aftercare counselor by phone nightly, and physically meet with him or her at a minimum of once per week. Pre-release is intended to be a gradual process that still provides youth much structure and supervision.

Phase II – Continued Aftercare: After completing the pre-release program, youth move to second phase of aftercare. Upon entry to James Ranch or the Wright Center, all youth are assigned a probation officer whose caseload consists of ranch affiliated youth. Youth confined to specialized program unit and placement units (i.e. gang, domestic violence or family violence units) do not transition to ranch affiliated probation officer; instead they remain with their original court assigned probation officers. After 10 weeks of supervision with the aftercare counselor, youth who have been confined to the Enhanced Ranch Program are reconnected with their probation officer, who continues to monitor the youth in lieu of the aftercare counselor. As in pre-release, minors are still obligated to attend programs (e.g., drug and alcohol treatment, mental health counseling, and/or mentoring programs), and engage with counselors and a therapist for the duration of aftercare. A noteworthy point about aftercare was shared by one of the aftercare counselor who noted that many youth don't realize that aftercare is the second component of their ranch commitment.

This interviewee also acknowledged that returning home is often proves to be a very difficult transition for many of the youth under his/her supervision. Many are returning to tough neighborhoods and challenging family structures, and emphasized the importance of limiting the

supervision of aftercare youth to only those parents or legal guardians that have been approved by staff. This interviewee reported that when youth get released to pre-release, we tell them that:

The first 30 days of aftercare is like being on house arrest. You cannot leave your parents' supervision. You can go to school, work and programs by yourself but when it comes to free time, or social outings, you need to be with your mom or dad or legal guardian.

Missouri Model vs. Enhanced Ranch Model

Although much of Santa Clara County's New Enhanced Ranch model is patterned after the evidence-based, cognitive-behavioral model, developed by the Missouri Department of Youth Services, it is not an exact replica. Rather the program is a balanced blend of the core components of the Missouri model and other evidence-based best practices that the Probation team believed would work effectively with the population in Santa Clara County. An assessment conducted by Mark Steward and the MYSI team also helped the county make this determination.

The core elements of the Missouri model are in operation at the SCCPD's ranch facilities; however, there are some visible differences between the programs. On a structural level, the Missouri Division of Youth Services operates a spectrum of residential care on a statewide basis. There are forty-five sites throughout the State of Missouri that share their philosophical and programming approaches. With this said, a key difference between Missouri's model and Santa Clara County is one of institutional framework. As a state model, Missouri operates various multilevel facilities with different regulations and requirements, while Santa Clara County has two in which the Enhanced Ranch Program is operating. Thus, Santa Clara has worked toward implementing the key components of the Missouri Model within the parameters of operating on a county level.

On a programmatic level, that youth residents wear uniforms, as opposed to their own clothing, is a minor difference between the Enhanced Ranch Program and the Missouri Model. In addition, Wright Center youth wear colored belts as an indication of their level within the four-stages of the in-custody program. Having youth wear their own clothes and eliminating colored belts are two aspects of the program that SCCPD is working to implement.

LINKAGES

The cooperative and conflicting relationships that exist can affect the implementation of a program, and contribute to its success or failure. SCCPD partners with a variety of agencies and community based allies to provide a diverse group of programs to youth at James Ranch and the Wright Center. Overall, the program's linkages appear to support the smooth operation of the Enhanced Ranch Program's philosophical basis.

Linkages that Support the Program

Three aspects are particularly notable regarding the success of the program:

- General agreement on the program's purpose and resulting ability to target appropriate clients
- Staff-youth bonding
- Youth-to-youth interpersonal relationships.

One of the key assets of the Enhanced Ranch Program is that it possesses strong relationships between the staff, courts, community based organization and groups, schools, and youth. Participants in the courts have established a collective understanding of who qualifies as an appropriate client for the program. One Santa Clara County Judge added that interagency communication and cooperation strengthens and assists in identifying which youth should receive admission to the program: *We have worked very hard to understand the kind of minor that is being recommended for the Ranch and a lot of times we are in sync with Probation on that.* A Defense Attorney indicated that her main goal was to make sure that the appropriate youth are being placed in the program so that they can receive the best services to aid in reaching their maximum potential. Overall, persons interviewed emphasized that a high level of interaction exists between representatives from Probation, Mental Health, CBOs and the Courts in discussing system issues. The institutional support that the Enhanced Ranch Program receives at all levels reflects positively on the program, and allows it to continue to move forward with a proactive focus on modifying antisocial thought patterns in youth.

Interviews with individuals who were not a part of the staff noted the overall support demonstrated by staff toward youth, and by youth to one another. Staff show a commitment to the Enhanced Ranch Program in that everyone is both willing to adjust to the new model and

actively invest in the youth they serve. Interviews with both internal and external program participants expressed the perception that staff really care about the youth and provide more one-on-one support than in other programs they had experienced. A Santa Clara County Judge conveyed that staff seemed to have a genuine investment in the youth who participate in the program, and reported *you really get the feeling when you go out there that the people who work there like the kids*. Of the Probation Counselors, another Judge agreed *I think they really care and I think they're working hard to make those programs work*. Santa Clara County, Board of Supervisors President Kniss noted that

Some of them have wanted to stay and some of their parents have wanted them to stay and said this is a better situation for you while you are growing in this situation than it is to be back out again and tempted. But probably more than anything it gives them a sense of self worth. And the kids tell me that as well.

This abovementioned reported sentiment is not only shared by the adult actors affiliated with the program, but also by the youth. In focus groups conducted at both James Ranch and the Wright Center, youth indicated that they feel that the level of care and support displayed by their counselors is more obvious than they have experienced in other programs. One minor at the Wright Center stated the *counselors are there for you. I've never had that*. Another reported that the key difference between the Enhanced Ranch Program the amount of services provided and that staff devotes more individual time to assess the needs and progress of each youth in the program.

The interviews also revealed positive relationships among youth in the Enhanced Ranch Program, and some felt that the pod system supported these relationships. An aftercare specialist, explained that the pods act as family units: *"I like the idea of the pod, the ranch moving as a unit...[I]f someone's having a bad day, doesn't mean we're all going to have a bad day, but we're all going to help out to move this young woman along*. One young man at James Ranch corroborated this observation by saying that youth at higher levels in the program tend to watch over the lower level participants; moreover, he explained that level four participants act as "junior staff" through their leadership and experience in the program. A probation counselor also supported this statement, saying *I think they really are able to lean on each other and since everybody's goal is to succeed in this program they are kind of able to lean on each other in a positive way*. Thus, the mutual support offered by all individuals and divisions in contact with

the Enhanced Ranch Program work to effectively facilitate the implementation of the program, overall.

Challenges in Implementing the Enhanced Ranch Program

From the outset of the planning process, differences of opinion were expressed about the length of the Enhanced Ranch Program, reflecting the different philosophical positions of the participants. For example, one ranch counselor expressed doubts that a stay of six months could really impact a youth's life. Conversely, a defense attorney expressed concern that the length of the program was excessive. This attorney stated *I just have concerns about that length when we're talking about a teenager being sent away from home for such a long period of time. I wonder if perhaps the aftercare component could be longer or could be structured differently to accommodate some of the needs that they seem to be getting on the tail end of the program.*"

Implementation of the Enhanced Ranch Program initially resulted in a growing number of youth on the waitlist to enter the ranch. The intervention was longer, fewer youth were in the program than before, and spaces at the facilities did not open up at the same pace as in the past. This resulted in a waitlist for the facilities of 75 youth at one time. However, by March 23, 2009, the waitlist for the two facilities was only 16 youth. This included 10 youth in wait for James Ranch and three boys and three girls in wait for the Wright Center. Currently, the average wait-time for placement at James Ranch is 21 days, and 20 for Wright Center. Youth waiting for placement receive their Ranch Orientation while in juvenile hall.

Despite the overall improvement of time spent awaiting admittance, many people still described the waitlist as problematic. One Judge indicated that it presented a hindrance toward youths' capacities to progress in the program and stated,

That's been my biggest frustration, is the wait to get kids out there. By the time they get out there you know they're pretty burned from having been in the Hall for a long time. And I think that it's sort of hardened that position that you know, nobody can fix me."

This abovementioned Judge also noted that there is less physical space for girls at the Wright Center, and therefore they have a longer waiting period than the boys. Another Judge felt that adding more beds would help resolve this issue. On the other hand, the Defense Attorney interviewed believes that increasing the number of beds is unnecessary, because it displaces a focus on other opportunities and alternatives and stated *that more beds discourages all of us from really focusing on the other programs in the community and all the other alternatives that are*

out there. While this understood impediment may continue to present equal challenges to programming in relation to time and space, the real hindrance is the lack of institutional harmony on such issues.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS

Although the Court began committing youth to Enhanced Ranch Program in August 2006, the official start date for the program was not until August 2007. Much of the initial groundwork for the program occurred during the first year of the program (from 8/2006 to 8/2007). It was during this time that staff received their training and coaching from MYSI; additionally, many of the structural and other physical changes were made at the facilities.

For this report two cohorts of data were analyzed. The first cohort (Cohort 1) consists of youth committed to the Old Ranch Program between April, 2005 and March, 2007. While the second cohort (Cohort 2), consists the youth committed to the new Enhanced Ranch Program between September, 2007 and February, 2009. Because the Enhanced Ranch Program model required that bed-capacity be significantly reduced, the population in Cohort 1 is somewhat greater in number than Cohort 2.

Gender and Ethnicity

As shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2, a majority of the Enhanced Ranch participants are Hispanic and male.

Figure 1

Gender of Enhanced Ranch Participants
(Cohort 2)

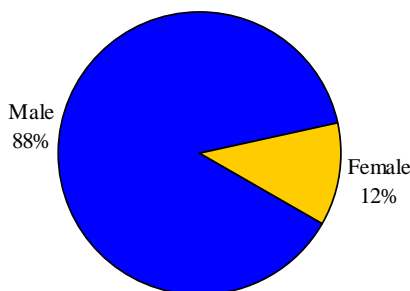
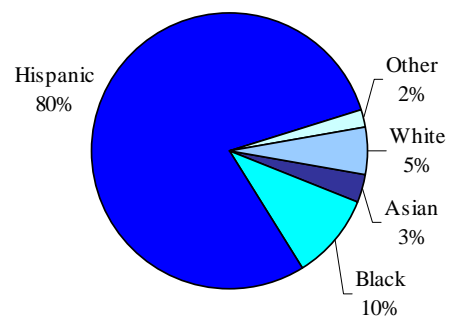


Figure 2

Race/Ethnicity of Enhanced Ranch Participants
(Cohort 2)

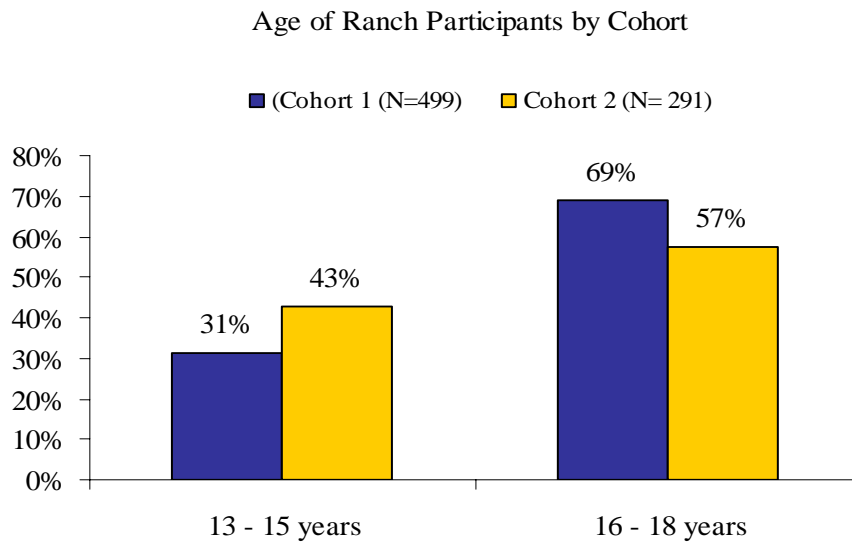


Data Source: Santa Clara County Probation Department

Age

In comparison to the Old Program (Cohort 1), the New Enhanced Ranch Program (Cohort 2) served a greater proportion of younger youth (thirteen to fifteen years old) and a smaller proportion of older youth (sixteen to eighteen years old). Although the bed-capacity was reduced at both facilities, the Wright Center which housed girls and younger boys ages thirteen to fifteen experienced a smaller reduction than James Ranch.^{iv} This factor most likely contributed to this demographic change. While James Ranch lost approximately one-third of its capacity to house older boys, the Wright Center, on the other hand, still maintains much of its capacity to house the younger boys.

Figure 3

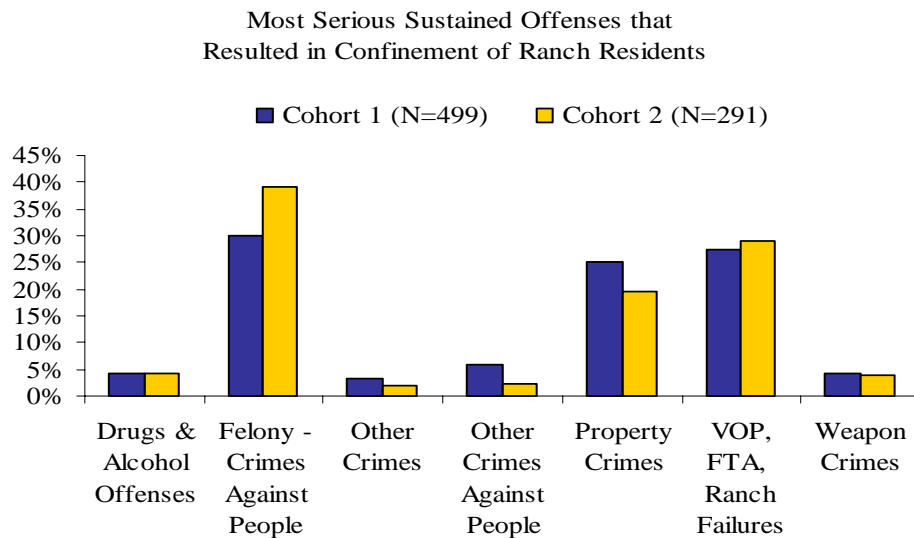


Data Source: Santa Clara County Probation Department

Most Serious Sustained Offense Type

The Enhanced Ranch Program is serving youth with very serious charges. As shown in Figure 4, approximately 40% of Cohort 2 youth, the Enhanced Ranch Participants, were committed to a facility due to of a felony crime against a person, which include robbery, first degree burglary, felony threat, felony assault, kidnapping, and felony sex offenses. In comparison, only 30% of Cohort 1 was committed to the Ranch for this offense. As noted earlier, the Enhanced Ranch Program currently admits many of the high risk offenders who prior to SB1 legislation would have been confined to Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ).

Figure 4



-This diagram highlights a minor's most serious sustained charge-
It should be noted that most youth had multiple offenses

Data Source: Santa Clara County Probation Department

<i>Offense Category</i>	<i>Offense Sub-category</i>
Drug and Alcohol Related Offenses	➤ Driving under the influence, and drug possession and sales
Crimes Against People – Felony	➤ Robbery, first degree burglary, felony threat, felony assault, felony domestic violence, kidnapping, and felony sex offense
Crimes Against People – Other	➤ Misdemeanor assault, fighting, misdemeanor domestic violence, misdemeanor sex offenses, other misdemeanor against people
Other Crimes	➤ Escapes, traffic violations and other felonies
Property Crimes	➤ Second degree burglary, possession of stolen property, auto theft, grand theft, arson, vandalism, and possession of theft and burglary tools
VOP, FTO	➤ Violation of probation, failure to obey order, and Ranch failures

OUTCOMES

One of the primary questions related to this evaluation is simply did the program make a difference or result in better outcomes for youth confined to the Enhanced Ranch Program. For this portion of the report, the following variables were examined and compared for each Cohort group:

- Minors with new probation violations while in the Ranch Program
- Minors with new arrest while in Ranch Program
- Minors with new probation violations within twelve months of exiting the Ranch Program
- Minors with new arrest within twelve months of exiting the Ranch Program

Table 5 illustrates that while at the Ranch, the outcomes for Cohort 2 youth were conclusively better than their predecessor (Cohort 1), especially when taken in conjunction with the large reduction in behavioral incidences highlighted later in Table 6. Among Cohort 2, only one-in-four acquired new probation violations (8%) and new arrest (17%) while in the Ranch program. This ratio is almost one-half of that reported for previous Ranch participants (Cohort 1).

The analysis, on the other hand, is less conclusive for Cohort 2 youth 12 months after exiting the Ranch program. As illustrated in Table 5 during the twelve month period, there was

only a small variation between the two Cohorts regarding new probation violations and arrest. Even though the results are not definitive; the findings are encouraging and suggest a positive trajectory that may improve over time.

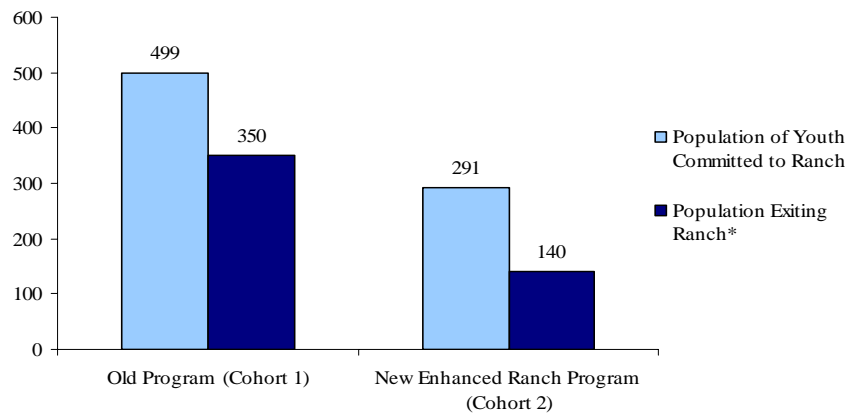
Table 5: Outcome Measures Identified by SCCPD

		Old Ranch Participants (Cohort 1)	Enhanced Ranch Participants (Cohort 2)
While at Ranch Facilities	<i>Violations & Failures</i>	47%	25%
	Probation violation	23%	8%
	New Arrest	24%	17%
Within 12-Months of Exiting Ranch	<i>Violations & Failures</i>	42%	37%
	Probation violation	11%	9%
	New Arrest	31%	28%

Data Source: Santa Clara County Probation Department

Figure 5

Number of Youth Committed to Ranch Programs and Exiting Ranch Program



Population of youth at Ranch = youth committed to Ranch program during specified time. For Cohort 1 (April 2005 to March 2007, N=499) and for Cohort 2 (September 2007 to February 2009, N=291).

*Population exiting Ranch = youth has a date indicating that he/she "exited the ranch to aftercare"

The reduction in the number of behavioral incidents (such as gang-related fights, gang activity, disruptive conduct, and possession of contraband) at the Ranch facilities is another outcome of interest identified by SCCPD. As Table 6 shows, Cohort 1 had twice the number of incidents as the Enhanced Ranch participants (Cohort 2). Cohort 1 had an average of 9.8 incidents during the 24 month time period, while Cohort 2 had an average of 4.9 over 18 months. The Deputy Chief has noted a significant reduction in gang related incidents at both facilities.

The probation department will continue to collect data and evaluate outcomes from the Enhanced Ranch participants.

Table 6: Reported Incidents at Ranch Facilities by Cohort

	Old Ranch Participants (Cohort 1)	Enhanced Ranch Participants (Cohort 2)
Total number of incidents	4647	1294
Number of unique Individuals	475	262
Average number of incidents per individual	9.8	4.9
Range per individual	1 - 65	1 – 46

COSTS

The average cost per day for minors in the Enhanced Ranch Program is \$361.29, with 88.5% going towards staff salaries and benefits and 11.5% to services and supplies. The cost reflects a change in the staffing ratio from 1:15 for day/swing shift and 1:30 for graveyard shift prior to implementation of the Enhanced Ranch Program to 1:6 for day/swing shift and 1:12 for the graveyard shift with the Enhanced Ranch Program.

The ranch programs have been used in lieu of sending minors to the state Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) system. According to the Little Hoover Commission^v, during 2008-09, DJJ’s annual cost was projected at \$252,000 a youth per year, or \$690.41 per day.

ⁱ Little Hoover Commission. (2008). Press Release: Commission Calls on State to eliminate its Juvenile Justice Operations by 2011.

ⁱⁱ Report on Enhanced Ranch Program at Muriel Wright Center and William F. James Ranch, February 14, 2008.

ⁱⁱⁱ SB81 legislation banned the future commitment of non-violent juvenile offenders.

^{iv} The bed capacity at James Ranch was reduced from 96 to 64 and Wright Center from 64 to 48.

^v Little Hoover Commission. (2008). Press Release: Commission Calls on State to eliminate its Juvenile Justice Operations by 2011.

APPENDIX
Intervention Services Provided at Ranch Facilities

- ◆ **3 PRINCIPLES:** Made possible by the Department of Alcohol and Drug Services, this 10 session course focuses on health rather than disease. 3 principles identify the mind, thought, and consciousness as the basis of maintaining one's health and well being. According to the program, these principles acknowledge that physical and emotional health is inherent in all individuals and is accessible at any moment in one's life.
- ◆ **ADOLESCENT FAMILY LIFE PROGRAM:** This service is provided by on site nurses for pregnant and parenting teens.
- ◆ **ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS:** This once a week program is offered to all youth at both facilities (currently on hold at the James Ranch/Wright Center boys). It relies on the twelve-step method of recovery in meetings, and explores issues of dependency and abuse and breaking through the denial of addiction.
- ◆ **ART OF YOGA:** This program is open to female youth at the Wright Center from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on Tuesdays and Fridays. The curriculum undergoes slight shifts in focus and programming on a trimester basis (fall, winter, spring). The practice of yoga promotes control of the body and mind through self expression and class journaling. This program aims to create an environment for the girls to reflect on their strengths and challenges in order to change and negate the habits of excess drugs and alcohol use, unhealthy dieting, self mutilation, depression, and anxiety.
- ◆ **AQUARIUS:** This mentoring program specializes in youth gang violence, prevention, intervention, and suppression. An objective is to help protect youth from negative lifestyle choices, while focusing on safety, health, socialization, leadership capacity, and self-sufficiency, self worth, as well as school, family, career and community. This program is geared toward African American youth.
- ◆ **CAREER EDUCATION SERVICES:** This program focuses on career development at James Ranch. The course encompasses four sessions and guidance from an Education Service Specialist. Topics include career exploration, job searching skills, job holding skills, life skills related to work, and presentations by outside agencies.
- ◆ **CERAMICS:** This program operates on a 6-8 week rotational basis among 4 pods, and is offered on Wednesdays from 6:00pm-8:00pm. Male and female youth are encouraged by a professional instructor to develop their artistic talents through the use of clay pottery making.
- ◆ **CHEMICAL DEPENDENCY TREATMENT:** Provided by the Pathway Society, Inc., this program offers one hour of individual and one hour of group counseling and/or pod group counseling on a weekly basis. Pathway counselors focus on helping youth to understand the consequences and severity of drug and/or alcohol usage. Counselors help youth to recognize the impact of drug and/or alcohol on life arenas, such as school,

friends, employment, and family. Resources and techniques for staying clean and sober are emphasized.

- ◆ **COSMETOLOGY:** Taught by a Cosmetology Instructor and students from San Jose City College, this program is open to female youth at the Wright Center. The program teaches techniques such as, skin care, make up, eyebrow maintenance, and scalp and hair care. Classes are offered every other Monday from 5:30pm-7:00pm.
- ◆ **ENTERPRISE PROGRAM:** This program currently offers four vocational programs that youth enroll in during their commitment at James Ranch. Participants can learn welding, construction technology, computer technology and auto mechanics. A culinary art program is currently being developed and will be implemented in the near future. Regional Occupation Program of the County Office of Education provides instructors for the programs, wherein youth receive education on entry-level job skills in these career fields in order to facilitate employment opportunities upon release. During the course of their training, youth generate revenue from self-manufactured products that is used to sustain and expand the vocational program as well as awarding themselves a stipend.
- ◆ **FLY (Fresh Lifelines for Youth):** This program offers legal education, mentoring and leadership training to youth, and has also served the James Ranch insofar as providing focus groups on why youth were running away from the Enhanced Ranch Program.
- ◆ **GANG REDIRECT/REFUSAL SKILLS:** This service is offered as an on-site 10 session course by California Youth Outreach. The curriculum focuses on gang-related topics, including awareness, intervention, anger management and conflict resolution, choices and consequences, responsibility through problem solving and decision making, critical thinking skills, correlations between gang involvement and drugs, cultural diversity, identity, and dealing with authority.
- ◆ **GED PROGRAM:** The GED program is open to youth, age seventeen and older, who are significantly behind in academic credits, demonstrate literacy and innumeracy skills of, at least, an eighth grade level, and score 80% or higher in the pre-test qualify for the program. The exam is administered by a certified Probation Counselor, who administers the exam at the Juvenile Rehabilitation facilities as needed.
- ◆ **GIRL SCOUTS:** This program offers on and half hours weekly to female youth at the Wright Center in order to enhance self-image, as well as teamwork, leadership, and anger management skills.
- ◆ **MASTER GARDENERS PROGRAM:** Offered at the Wright Center, volunteers from the Master Gardeners Program— teach youth basic gardening skills through both lectures and hands-on activities. The program aims to teach adolescents home gardening techniques to grow their own vegetables. Discussion topics include: botany, soils, propagation by seeding, propagation by cuttings, shrubs and trees, dividing/pruning/transplanting, garden design, plant selection/sunset zone, garden pest and beneficial, herbs, and cooking. The classes range from 45 minutes to one hour, and

are held on Monday afternoons in conjunction with the Santa Clara Education Department.

- ◆ **MEDICAL:** A registered nurse must be on site seven days a week. The nurse arranges and approves medical and dental appointments.
- ◆ **MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM:** Mental Health therapists provide treatment and care to youth referred by the court and/or their assigned probation counselor at the ranches on a full-time basis. Services include individual, family, and group counseling, as well as assistance in making appropriate referrals for the aftercare program. All youth are eligible for this service. Additionally, an assigned psychiatrist provides treatment and care to youth on psych-medication twice a month or as needed.
- ◆ **SANTA TERESA CLUSTER SCHOOL:** A maximum of six female youth from the Wright Center are entitled to volunteer for the Santa Teresa Cluster School (for K-6 children who are severely disabled). This program takes place on Wednesdays from 10:45am-2:15pm, and allows youth to assist and learn to care for children with special needs. Youth are taught sign language during this volunteer experience.
- ◆ **SEXUAL ABUSE TREATMENT:** This service is provided by Gardner Family Care to youth who have been identified as victims of sexual abuse. The program is continuous in length and aims to engage youth in the therapeutic process that can continue upon release. Participants receive one hour of individual counseling and 1.5 hours of group counseling during their stay at the Muriel Wright Center. Counselors also provide instruction that highlights the effects of sexual abuse on self-esteem, interpersonal relationships and day-to-day functioning, as well as the social isolation associated with sexual abuse trauma.
- ◆ **SEXUAL OFFENDING COUNSELING:** This program is also made possible by Gardner Family Care. Gardner counselors provide 1 hour of individual and two hours of group counseling on a weekly basis, and focus on educating the development of non-deviant sexual behaviors. Other focuses include confronting denial in regard to sexually abusive behavior, promoting victim empathy, enhancing social and interpersonal skills, and teaching youth to recognize the patterns of sexual offending behavior. Court-ordered youth are referred to the program by their assigned probation counselors.
- ◆ **SPORTS:** Male youth at both the Wright Center and James Ranch participate in the Central Coast Ranch Athletics League, while the Wright Center female youth take part in the Probation Community Athletic League. The four sports played are basketball, volleyball, softball, and kickball (male youth only). This program focuses on teambuilding and leadership components that are integral to athletic competition.
- ◆ **RELIGIOUS COUNSELING:** Church Services and Bible Studies for youth are held once a week for two hours, and the Department Chaplain offers religious counseling to all youth. Additionally, individual and group religious guidance counselors visit youth regularly.

- ◆ **TEACHING PRO SOCIAL SKILLS:** This group program is facilitated by two probation staff. TPS focuses on helping youth accept, reduce and/or manage their anger by emphasizing pro-social rather than anti-social behaviors. This model consists of three components to replace aggressive tendencies (behavior, emotional, and moral reasoning). Each component is taught once a week, and this cycle continues for the length of the program. TPS uses role playing and group interaction to develop pro-social behaviors.
- ◆ **TATTOO REMOVAL PROGRAM:** This program is offered by Dr. Bruce Saal of Los Gatos. The youth must have a probation counselor's recommendation to be considered for this program. The process requires an application, in which youth explain why they want to remove their gang-related tattoos. If accepted, the fee is seventy-five dollars per session and three to five sessions is usually needed. The doctor will remove visible gang-related tattoos, i.e., hand face, front of neck, etc.
- ◆ **TUTORING:** Volunteers assist youth with their education and/or GED preparation.
- ◆ **VICTIM AWARENESS:** Victim Awareness workshops include an introduction with three additional crime subjects. The workshops incorporate victim speakers' stories and answers to questions, as well as group and individual exercises that emphasize the emotional, physical, financial, and long-term impacts of crime on victims. One goal of the program is to develop both empathy and accountability. Most facilitators have completed a minimum of 32 hours of training.
- ◆ **WORK EXPERIENCE:** The ranch facilities currently participate in off-ranch work crews with Santa Clara County Parks. Work crews are sent out Monday through Wednesdays, as needed, from the Wright Center. These programs help youth develop professional etiquette and experience in the community in a work environment.
- ◆ **ZUMBA:** This program offers physical educational aerobic exercise to female youth at the Wright Center from 8:30am-9:30am on Mondays. Participants are taught the art of both salsa and hip hop dance.