

Sweeney Youth Homes

Providing Care in Santa Barbara County

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Sweeney Youth Homes operates three homes for adolescent boys in Santa Barbara, one home in Lompoc and one home for girls in Santa Maria. We have also been licensed by Community Care Licensing to operate a Foster Family Agency.

We provide 53 jobs for professional child care workers and therapists in Santa Barbara County. Our staff consists of 23 people with Bachelor of Arts Degrees, 6 Master's Degrees, 3 PhDs

We concentrate our staff to be on line with the residents. We have very limited administrative costs.

We hire only staff members who are eligible to work as managers according to licensing regulations. We are ensuring top quality for these residents by requiring high standards.

The level 12 affords us the opportunity to have 2 staff members minimum on during the hours the residents are awake. We have one awake overnight staff. We are also able to provide individual assistance for each child to become interested in one hobby, project, class, meeting, sport, or job that enables him/her to leave the past endeavors behind and create a constructive future. Our residents have been involved in continual rock climbing classes for instance. They just participated in the **Sweeney Olympics** in which staff and residents competed in basketball, track, soccer and baseball. Each child won a medal for individual achievement. We will be concentrating further on independent living by creating a profit making business for the resident's to own and operate. Each child is able to have a staff member go to school with them if necessary to get through the difficult school issues faced by most of these residents.

Our programs are consistent with the **Multi Agency Integrated Systems of Care**. The advantage of having our program in the county is multi-fold:

Reunification and permanency planning can actually take place right away. Sweeney Youth Homes can work in conjunction with all workers immediately to coordinate after care and permanency planning. The resident can understand how he/she "fits" in the community, can utilize all the services it has to offer and develop relationships with the people who will help him in the long run.

The resident can work with the school where he developed his problem. He does not have to change everything-schools, counties, doctors, significant relationships.

The resident can maintain significant relationships with his own doctors.

"MISC" employees can actually work with their clients in a far more quick and less costly

fashion by having the residents in county. The goal of the program is family reunification. If a child stays in the county, the family stays involved. They begin family therapy right away. The child remains a part of the **family system**. If the child leaves the family for 6 months or a year without family contact which is the case out of county the whole family system is broken. Integration and family reunification becomes very difficult. The reality is that the family has learned how to get along without this family member who represents lots of work to them and they don't always want to reintegrate the child into the family.

Sweeney Youth Homes has had residents who have been placed in out of county situations. The child is immediately cut off from his home, his friends, his family, his school. He learns the rules at the new place and perhaps integrates the lessons he is being taught, perhaps not. Without the feedback of family, friends, Probation officers and school teachers who know the child intimately the total progress is sometimes just superficial. When the child gets back to the community he is at last surrounded by the actual problems that got him into trouble in the first place. Then his progress can actually begin. It becomes a real struggle for the child to reintegrate into his society and begin family therapy at last. He at last begins to be able to deal with his real issues. It is cost effective to keep the child in the county and start to deal with all these issues immediately rather than waste a 6 months to a year. Young people who have graduated from group homes continually remark at conferences that they were successful because they found at least one person they could model or relate to and keep in touch with. Statistics also show that kids will go home, at age 18 or whenever, to some family member. It is crucial to start working with any family member right away in terms of any type of permanency planning.

No expensive transportation costs to other counties.

Make a suggestion and get to see what happens.

Get to see who is really working with your referral.

Ability to visit group homes without increased revenue.

Phone calls, faxes, and communications are less costly.

Revenue paid stays in the county. Money for all living expenses gets funneled back into the County.

Tax payers benefit from their own output.

Sweeney Youth Homes is responsive to the needs of this County. We are deeply concerned about the youth of this County and want to cooperate with Children's Services and Probation to create the best possible services for troubled youth.