

**OKLAHOMA COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SYSTEM OVERSIGHT**

Name and Location of Facility: Thunderbird Youth Academy, Alpha Company
Pryor, Oklahoma

Dates of Visit: November 9, 2010

Oversight Reviewer: Harold Jergenson, Oversight Specialist

Focus of Visit: Unannounced Visit, 2010

Date: January 25, 2011

Introduction

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) conducted an unannounced visit on November 9, 2010, to Thunderbird Youth Academy (TYA), Alpha Company, located in Pryor, Oklahoma. The purpose of the visit was to assess compliance with established responsibilities and facility policy and procedures. Alpha Company is operated by the Oklahoma Department of the Military (OMD), and is exempt from the residential child care facility licensing by the Oklahoma Child Care Services of the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. Alpha Company accepts private placement of youths at least sixteen years of age who have dropped out of high school. On the day of the visit, the census was ninety-four.

Interviews Conducted

- Entry interview and exit conference conducted with the program director
- Head of maintenance
- Four cadre members
- Eight cadets

Documents Reviewed

- Alpha Company Cycle 30 (cadet roster) by platoon
- TYA post contact list (for names of cadre)
- Office of the Oklahoma State Fire Marshal report dated June 11, 2010
- Oklahoma State Department of Health Food Inspection report dated May 21, 2010
- TYA Operations Department Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) (revised December 2008)
- Twelve cadet files
- Four cadre files

Findings

Cadet Interviews

The OJSO interviewed eight cadets. The interview questions pertained to the cadets' perceptions regarding safety, program services, cadet rights, discipline practices, and other program issues. The OJSO noted:

- Six cadets reported that they witnessed cadres using curse words in their presence.
- One cadet reported that staff used curse words in conversations with them.

No other concerns were noted from the cadet interviews.

Cadre Interviews

Four cadres were interviewed. The interview questions pertained to the cadres' perceptions regarding cadet rights, discipline policies, and other program issues. No concerns were noted from the interviews.

Cadet File Review

Twelve cadet files were reviewed. No concerns were noted.

Cadre File Review

Four cadre files were reviewed. No concerns were noted.

Office of the Oklahoma State Fire Marshal Report

The Oklahoma State Fire Marshal's report dated June 11, 2010, documented that TYA has changed occupancy and is presently under federal requirements, and therefore, was not required to be inspected at the time of the fire marshal's visit. The OJSO spoke with the head of maintenance, who reported the facility was in the process of having the local fire marshal conduct the yearly fire inspections.

Areas of Concern

1. Six cadets reported that they witnessed cadre using curse words in their presence.
2. One cadet reported that staff used curse words in conversations with them.

Summary

The OJSO had concerns about the use of profanity directed to or within the hearing of the cadets. The use of profanity to or around cadets is prohibited by the facility's SOP. The issue regarding the use of profanity was discussed with the program director during the exit interview and they agreed to address it with the cadre.