

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

Name of Facility: Thunderbird Youth Academy
Bravo Company

Date of Visit: October 14, 2005

Oversight Reviewer: Cliff A. Aldridge, Oversight Specialist

Purposes of Visit: 2005 Unannounced Oversight Visit and Complaint Investigations

Date: April 7, 2006

General Information

The Office of Juvenile System Oversight (OJSO) conducted an unannounced visit on October 14, 2005, of Bravo Company, also known as the Thunderbird Regimented Training Program, of the Thunderbird Youth Academy, located in Pryor, Oklahoma. The purposes of the visit were to conduct routine oversight and to investigate complaints involving the mistreatment of residents and the use of residents as employees. The Bravo Company operates through a contract between the Oklahoma Military Department (OMD) and the Office of Juvenile Affairs (OJA) to provide residential placements and treatment for OJA-custody juveniles. The facility is licensed by the Division of Child Care of the Department of Human Services (DHS). On the day of the OJSO visit, the census for Bravo Company was twenty-eight.

Persons Interviewed

- An entry interview with the director of Bravo Company
- A sample of six residents
- Three direct care staff members
- An exit conference with the director and the liaison officer to the OJA

Documentation Reviewed

- Case records on two residents
- Training records and personnel files of two direct care staff members
- Cadet roster
- Inspection report, dated August 4, 2005, by the DHS Division of Child Care
- Inspection report, dated February 2, 2005, by the Office of the State Fire Marshal
- DHS Residential Child Care Facility License

- Oklahoma Military Department Special Audit, July 1, 2000, through December 31, 2004, issued by the Office of the State Auditor and Inspector
- DHS Office of Client Advocacy referral logs
- OMD records of disciplinary actions

Areas Toured

- Female residential area
- Male residential area

Overview

Interviews

Six residents were interviewed relative to their participation in program activities, perception of the staff, and residential care. Overall, the residents were favorable in their responses. There were a few minor complaints; however, no consistent themes of concern were identified from the resident interviews.

The three staff members interviewed indicated they were familiar with facility policies and reported receiving training in compliance with the OJA Regimented Juvenile Training Program and DHS licensing standards. They gave appropriate responses to the interview questions pertaining to participation by the residents in program activities and their interactions with the residents. The OJSO reviewer was told by the administration that Bravo Company had been re-accredited by the American Correctional Association in May 2005.

File Reviews

One of the resident case records was complete for all of the items reviewed. The other file did not document the participation of the custodian or the reason for the custodian's non-participation in the service plan of the resident.

The personnel files and training records of two staff members were reviewed for compliance with DHS licensing standards and OJA Regimented Juvenile Training Program standards. Both files were current for the items reviewed.

The DHS Division of Child Care's inspection report of August 4, 2005, noted that a showerhead was missing in one of the residential buildings. A loose ceiling vent and a missing handle for the hot water sink in the gymnasium were noted. Work orders were to be submitted for the repairs. The report stated that all areas of non-compliance from the previous visit had been completed.

Facility Inspection

The male and female residential quarters were toured. The quasi-military arrangements were clean and adequately maintained. No issues were identified from the tour.

Complaint Investigation

One complaint allegation was that some staff members had verbally abused or mistreated one or more of the residents of the program. During the visit, the OJSO reviewer requested the outcomes of an internal investigation. The facility had documented corrective actions for the employees involved in the complaint. The OJSO complaint was closed with the issuance of this report.

The other complaint alleged that residents were used as employees and that monies from fund-raising activities were misused. The Oklahoma Military Department Special Audit, July 1, 2000, through December 31, 2004, issued by the Office of the State Auditor and Inspector, was reviewed prior to the oversight visit. The allegations included the use of OJA-custody cadets for the personal benefit of two staff members and the use of Bravo Company and Alpha Company cadets in fund-raising activities for a non-profit corporation that provided services or support to both of the companies. The Special Audit Report identified concerns and made recommendations. The complete audit can be reviewed on the internet at www.sai.state.ok.us. The OJSO will review the changes in policy and other steps taken in response to the audit recommendations.

The OJSO made no additional findings regarding the use of funds. At the time of the OJSO visit, one of the individuals involved in the allegations was no longer in his/her position at the TYA. The OJSO complaint was closed with the issuance of this report.

Finding

1. The participation of the parent or custodian in the development of the service plan or the reason for non-participation was not documented in the service plan of one of the residents. DHS Residential Child Care Facility standard, OAC 340:110-3-154, (b), Service planning, (1), Comprehensive service plan, (A), states, "The facility involves the resident and parents or custodian in the development of the service plan. If the parents or custodian do not participate in the development of the service plan, the reason for non-participation is documented in the service plan."

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