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Director, Evaluation Unit  
June 1977

Department of Youth Services  
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GENERAL INFORMATION:

Name of Program: Schoolyards for Kids, Inc.  
(SYK Ranch)

Region: IV

Regions Served: All

In Operation Since:

Parent Agency: D.A.R.E. Inc.

Capacity: 6 residents (in accordance with  
city occupancy permit)

Present Population: 10 residents (8 program youth and  
2 children of staff)

Client Served: Males, ages 13-17

OFC License: Provisional

DYS Contract: None

Cost Per Child/Week: \$ 196.07

Period of Evaluation: March 24, 1977 through April 5, 1977

Date Report Submitted  
to Commissioner: May 18, 1977

Date Feedback Held:  
(Program chose to  
not attend) May 20, 1977

Date Written Statements  
from Program Due for  
Attachment to Report: June 6, 1977  
(No rebuttal or  
addendum received)

Report Public as of: June 6, 1977  
SYK Ranch

PUBLICATION: #9887 - 76 - 50 - 8 - 77 - CR  
APPROVED by Alfred C. Holland, State Purchasing Agent

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SPECIAL NOTE

In the process of conducting this evaluation, the ET became aware of allegations of abuse made by program residents. On April 15, 1977, the Evaluation Unit submitted a memorandum to the Assistant Commissioner for Aftercare requesting, in part, an immediate investigation of these allegations by the DYS Central Office Investigator.

On April 25, 1977, at the request of the Assistant Commissioner, the DYS Central Office Investigator began an investigation of the allegations.

As a result of that investigation, the Department of Youth Services decided to terminate involvement with the Ranch and on April 28, 1977, all DYS youth in the program were removed and placed elsewhere.

## METHODOLOGY

The following report is based on data collected through interviews with administration, staff, clients, relevant members of the community, OFC personnel and Regional and Central DYS staff; examination of the facility and client records; and observation of staff-staff, staff-client and client-client interactions in the program. Two staff, one former staff and four residents were interviewed at length.

The following evaluation report includes a description of all major components of the SYK Ranch program as well as the ET's assessment of each component's effectiveness.

The ET has also attempted to present a historical perspective on the program. It should be noted that there may be gaps in this chronological accounting of events due to the possible incompleteness of DYS files.

It is the program's right to provide the DYS Evaluation Unit with a written rebuttal and/or addendum of facts, errors or omissions which may appear in this report. If such a written rebuttal or addendum is received by the Unit within two weeks of the feedback meeting it will be attached to the report.

TIME IN PROGRAM\*

March 24, 1977	10:00am - 1:30pm = 3½	hours X 4	ET = 14
March 28, 1977	10:00am - 5:00pm = 7	hours X 3	ET = 21
	12:00pm - 5:00pm = 5	hours X 1	ET = 5
March 29, 1977	10:30pm - 12:00am = 13½	hours X 4	ET = 54
March 30, 1977	12:00am - 11:00am = 11	hours X 4	ET = 44
March 31, 1977	12:30pm - 2:00pm = 1½	hours X 4	ET = 6
April 1, 1977	1:00pm - 4:00pm = 3	hours X 4	ET = 12
April 4, 1977	11:00am - 10:00pm = 11	hours X 3	ET = 33
	3:00pm - 10:00pm = 7	hours X 1	ET = 7
April 5, 1977	10:00am - 2:00pm = 4	hours X 4	ET = 16
			<u>212</u> Hours

\*Includes time spent interviewing members of the community and DYS personnel.

## HISTORY

Schoolyards For Kids (SYK), originally based in East Boston, began in 1970 under the direction of the present SYK Ranch Program Director as a community oriented attempt at upgrading the local schoolyards through clean up campaigns and heightened citizen awareness and communication. In late 1973, SYK incorporated and moved its base of operations to Rowley, Massachusetts. The Ranch at that time was located on the land in back of the program's present residence, with youth sleeping in cabins and trailers, and was designed to provide an ~~alternative setting to troubled inner city youth.~~ Shortly thereafter, the SYK Ranch began taking individual referrals from the Office of Social Services (OSS) and then the Department of Youth Services. In November 1974, it was incorporated into the D.A.R.E. foster care program.

As a result of allegations of client abuse and a subsequent DYS investigation which uncovered improper living conditions at the Ranch, the Commissioner of DYS, on July 2, 1975, closed intake at the program until such time as the Ranch could demonstrate that it was in compliance with Office for Children (OFC) regulations. On September 26, 1975, OFC's Licensing Specialist completed his licensing report on the Ranch, citing one hundred and ten violations, and on October 20, 1975, the SYK Ranch was awarded a "provisional group care license." The program remained under D.A.R.E. and began receiving the standard D.A.R.E. group care rate of \$26.36 per day per child.

As a result of a new alleged incident of abuse reported by a program resident on January 13, 1976, another investigation (requested by the Lawrence District Court) was initiated by DYS and the Attorney General's Office. On January 19, 1976, the Ranch was issued orders to vacate the premises by 6:00 pm the following day as a result of the Rowley Board of Health's findings that "...the SYK Ranch is not a fit place for heat, electricity, sewage disposal and ventilation..." Immediately after vacating the premises, the Program Director relocated in East Boston and DYS paid him the standard foster care rate of \$45.00 per week for each of the three DYS youth in his care. On February 6, 1976, DYS was informed by the Attorney General's Office that an investigation report of the allegations would be forthcoming. Eleven days later, the DYS investigation report was submitted to the Assistant Commissioner. As with the investigation of June, 1975, DYS was unable to verify any of the specific allegations of physical abuse; however, many questions regarding the program operation were raised and the report concluded that "There should be no consideration for DYS placements at the SYK Ranch unless or until the authorities who are responsible for such ranch: 1) take measures to meet and conform to the necessary safety and health codes prescribed by law for habitation;

2) obtain a proper license for whatever services the placement would offer children; 3) agree to adhere to policies, procedures, and standards established by DYS before any placement could be effected."

On March 9, 1976, at the request of the Assistant Commissioner of DYS, an agreement was reached between the Region IV Director and the Program Director, specifically outlining those practices which the program could not indulge in. On April 18, 1976, the SYK Ranch, having leased the front house on the original Rowley site, reopened and on May 8, 1976, was re-incorporated under D.A.R.E. Foster Care. In early June 1976, DYS was informed by the Attorney General's Office that "there is no basis for this Department to initiate criminal proceedings at this time" and of that Office's intention to bring to the attention of the Commissioner of DYS "certain problems relating to the program's facilities and administration which we believe should be remedied as a condition of reopening that program for placement of youths committed to his jurisdiction." On June 30, 1976, OFC's Licensing Specialist completed his licensing re-study, citing ninety violations. As a result of this study, the program received its second provisional group care license.

On August 17, 1976, the DYS Assistant Commissioner for After-care sent a memorandum to the Program Director and the Director of Region IV outlining the three following contingencies by which DYS would consider SYK a "group care facility."

- "1) The ranch must have qualified staff, who either have education or experience in group care, preferably both.
- 2) The regional office should review their resumes and approve the hirings.
- 3) If we are to pay group rates, I want to see, in writing what the ed(vocational) program is to be, what the treatment program is to be and what records will be kept."

On September 30, 1976, a meeting was held between the Assistant Commissioner and interested others (the Program Director was not in attendance) to discuss the SYK situation, to resolve any outstanding concerns and to decide whether the program should receive the status and payment of a "group care" facility. Although there were no minutes kept of this meeting, the result was, according to the Assistant Commissioner: 1) that the program would be re-opened with the understanding that DYS would place

no more than four youth there at any given time during the next six months; 2) that the program would report all admissions and terminations to the Rowley Chief of Police; and 3) that in six months time, the situation would be reassessed. Essentially, according to the Assistant Commissioner, this six month trial period was devised to see if the program could stabilize in the community, calm community concern and "play ball" with DYS.

On October 4, 1976, SYK re-opened as a DYS group home at the standard D.A.R.E. rate of \$28.01 per day. At the time of this evaluation, March 24 thru April 5, 1977, there were eight youths in the program - five from DYS, two from OSS and one private referral.

## FACILITY

Schoolyards for Kids, Inc. has operated at its present site in Rowley, Massachusetts since 1973, when the program first began to provide residential care. Initially, the SYK facility consisted of approximately two acres of land located immediately behind the currently-used program residence. At that time, staff and youth lived in trailers and cabins, and the owner of the property occupied the "front house" and yard now used by the program.

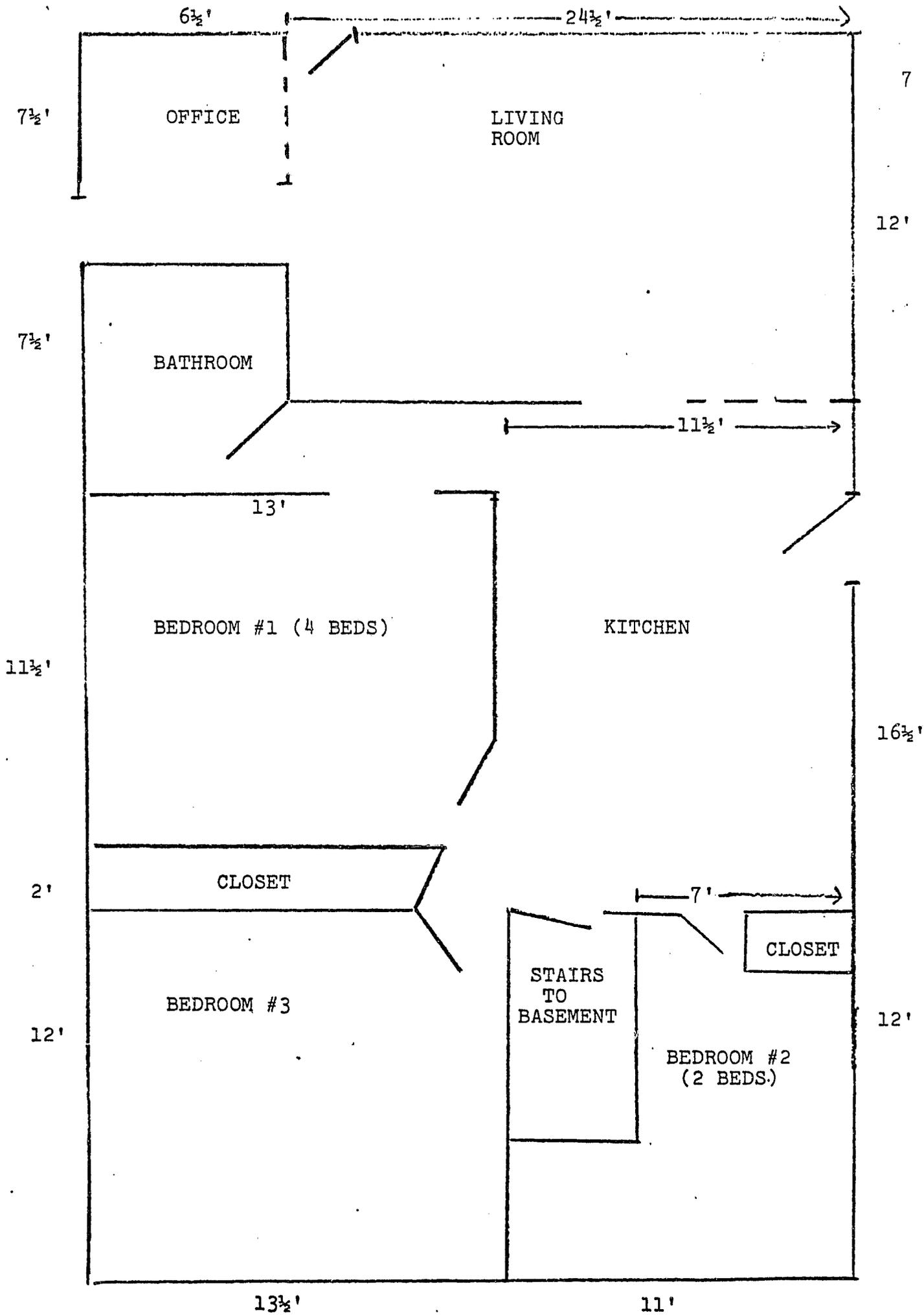
In May, 1976, the program leased the front house and surrounding grounds, and in June of that year obtained both an OFC Provisional License and a Town of Rowley occupancy permit. The occupancy permit was reportedly granted on the condition that no more than eight persons occupy the house, since the local health inspector had determined that the sewage disposal system was adequate only for that number of residents.

Currently, the SYK Ranch facility consists of the original land (as well as a small amount of additional property which has been leased over the past few years), the front house, a stable for horses, and a few outbuildings housing small farm animals. The property abuts a state forest preserve, which is available for such program activities as horseback riding and forestry work. A cabin built by former program youth is located in the state forest; the Program Director has been negotiating with Rowley officials for permission to use the cabin for summer camping.

The front house is a small, modern single-story dwelling fronting on Haverhill Street. There is a large front lawn equipped with a few well-worn lawn chairs. Behind the house is a corral for horses, a dog kennel, and a garage filled with equipment and tools. The house exterior and surrounding grounds are neat and well-maintained, and resemble neighboring residential property. There are no signs or other outward indications that the facility houses a program serving DYS youth.

The interior of the house, consisting of a living room, a kitchen-dining area, three bedrooms, a bathroom, and a full basement, is kept spotlessly clean and appears to be free of obvious fire and safety hazards. With the exception of the basement, all rooms seem to have adequate natural and artificial light. Comfortable, well-maintained furniture, carpeting, window curtains, plants, and wall decorations, as well as a notable absence of resident-inflicted damage, all contribute to the homelike appearance of the house interior; however, the compact layout of the living floor (see floor plan) and the absence of full partitions dividing common areas give rise to a hectic, crowded atmosphere when several persons are present.

The living room measures 11'8" X 18', and is furnished with



FACILITY (continued)

a sofa, an armchair, a footstool, a beanbag chair, end tables, and two television sets. This room is used for evening television-watching and socializing, group meetings, and meetings with visitors. (The living room also serves as an auxiliary bedroom; this function will be discussed in detail below). A tiny, partially-enclosed alcove adjoining the living room is used as an office. The office area is equipped with a desk, a typewriter, and unlocked file drawers holding program and client records.

The kitchen-dining area is spacious, modern, and well-equipped with a table and six chairs, refrigerator-freezer, stove, dishwasher, and ample cupboard and counter space. Staff and youth use the area for meetings and for socializing, as well as for meals and coffee breaks. The bathroom is also modern, well-lit, and well-ventilated, and is easily accessible to residents' bedrooms. The bathroom contains one sink, toilet, and bathtub, and is used by all youth and resident staff.

The basement can be entered through a door opening onto the kitchen and through an outside entrance. Residents usually enter and leave the house through the basement, where they store and change clothing and work boots. The basement area is humid, dimly-lit, low-ceilinged, and jammed with equipment, old furniture, etc. Water drips from ceiling pipes, and a film of water covers much of the floor. As a result, packages and cans of food stored in the basement were slightly damp to the touch, as was clothing kept in the one open client locker that was examined by the ET. Basement laundry facilities consist of a washing machine and dryer. According to the Director, the washing machine frequently breaks down from heavy use, necessitating trips to the local laundromat until the program's washer is repaired or replaced.

SYK residents sleep in two of the three bedrooms. (The Assistant Director and her child occupy the third). Bedroom #1 (see floor plan) measures 11' X 13', and is furnished with two sets of metal bunk beds, a television, a globe, a set of encyclopedias, and two foot lockers containing sheets and blankets. A closet in the room is apparently used for the Assistant Director's belongings. During the evaluation period, one of this room's two doors was removed to facilitate supervision of its occupants. Bedroom #2 is shared by the Director's son and one program resident. The room contains approximately 93 square feet, and contains a closet, one set of bunk beds, a desk, a chair, a dresser, bookshelves, a stereo set, and a C.B. radio. The desk, dresser, stereo and CB radio belong to the Director's son; program youth may use the stereo and CB with permission.

Neither of the bedrooms used by residents contains storage facilities for their clothing and personal possessions. Each resident stores his clothing in one of eight basement lockers measuring approximately 36" X 18" X 12". At the time of the evaluation, four of these lockers were equipped with padlocks, three were closed but not locked, and one had no door.

FACILITY (continued)

The ET observed that the number of youth living in the house exceeds the number of beds provided. During the evaluation period, ten youngsters, including the two children of staff, slept in the house. Only the six beds described above were available for their use. Apparently, four boys do not have beds and must make alternate sleeping arrangements. Boys interviewed by the ET stated that they slept in beds or on the floor in one of the two youth bedrooms, or on the living-room floor, depending on how many residents or visitors were present on a given night. Youth who spend nights in the living room share their quarters with the Program Director, who sleeps on the sofa.

The bed shortage is exacerbated on two to three weekends per month, when the house population expands to include a number of visiting teen-aged girls. (For a description of the girls' roles at the Ranch, see Administration and Staff section, (page 15). The ET received conflicting information regarding the number of girls who spend weekends at the Ranch and the sleeping arrangements made for them. The Program Director and Assistant Director told the ET that two girls make regular weekend visits to the Ranch. They reported that, as a rule, the girls visit only when the temporary absence of some program youth makes beds available, and are discouraged from coming to the Ranch if all program youths are present. If they do visit on such occasions, they reportedly share the Assistant Director's bedroom.

Program youth reported, on the other hand, that three or four girls spend weekends at SYK. These youths told the ET that residents frequently sleep on the living room floor so that the visiting girls can use their beds.

Evaluative.

The front house is clean, attractive, and homelike, but is too small to accommodate its twelve occupants and their weekend guests. There is insufficient space to afford each resident adequate room and privacy. Furthermore, occupancy by more than eight persons apparently exceeds the capacity of the septic tank system, and thus violates one of the conditions set out in the occupancy permit granted to the program in 1976.

Bedroom space falls far short of the fifty square feet per child required by OFC regulations.<sup>1</sup> Only 36 square feet and approximately 46 square feet per resident are provided in bedrooms #1 and #2, respectively. There are not enough beds to accommodate all resident youth, so that some youngsters must sleep on the living room floor. Both OFC licensing regulations<sup>2</sup> and DYS policy require that each program resident be provided with a bed for his exclusive use

FACILITY, Evaluative (continued)

throughout his stay in a program. In this case, however, acquisition of additional beds would result in either further overcrowding of residents' bedrooms, or, if the beds were placed in the living room, in an unacceptable reduction of common living space.

Storage facilities for residents' clothing and belongings are inconveniently located and inadequate for their purpose.<sup>3</sup> The ET feels that residents should not be required to journey from their bedrooms to a dark, wet basement every time they wish to change or put away their clothes. Furthermore, youth should be provided with storage facilities which protect clothing from dampness; apparently, the lockers provided at the SYK Ranch do not fulfill this function.

During the evaluation period, twelve people shared the single bathroom. It does not seem that one residential-type bathroom can meet the needs of all the SYK residents.<sup>4</sup>

Although the kitchen and living room are spacious enough for sedentary activities, they are too small to accommodate any activity involving much movement or noise. (The basement is too wet and crowded to serve this purpose.) Furthermore, the absence of partitions between the kitchen and living room limits the amount of activity or conversation that can be conducted on one room without disrupting that taking place in the other.

Because the program office is tiny and unenclosed, it affords insufficient space for staff to do paperwork, and no privacy for discussion involving staff members or staff and residents. In addition, the ET observed that routine paperwork was often done on the kitchen table possibly due to the small size of the office area. Maintaining client files in unlocked drawers is a questionable practice and in fact appears not to be in accordance with OFC regulations.<sup>5</sup>

Although residents spend most of their waking hours outdoors, and thus are offered ample outdoor space available for activity and perhaps privacy, such spacious grounds cannot compensate for overcrowded living quarters.

Recommendation,

The ET recommends that the program take whatever steps may be necessary to comply with OFC regulations regarding sleeping space, storage space, furniture (i.e. beds) and bathroom facilities.

FACILITY (continued)Reference.

<sup>1</sup>OFC Regulation 503.3(b): "The licensee shall provide bedrooms which ... provide at least fifty (50) square feet per child in multiple-sleeping rooms, and not less than seventy (70) square feet in single rooms."

<sup>2</sup>OFC Regulation 503.6: "The licensee shall provide each child with appropriate individual furniture ... "  
The ET believes that such "individual furniture" includes a bed.

<sup>3</sup>OFC Regulation 503.6: "The licensee shall provide each child with ... an individual closet (or designated section of a closet) with clothes racks and shelves."

OFC Regulation 503.7: "The licensee shall provide accessible storage areas for personal possessions ..."

<sup>4</sup>OFC Regulations 504.4 - 504.6: These regulations require that one toilet, wash basin, and tub or shower be provided for every six residents.

<sup>5</sup>OFC Regulation 205.3: "Information contained in a child's record shall be privileged and confidential ... "

OFC Regulation 205.5: "Case records shall be the property of the licensee, who shall secure the information therein against loss, defacement, tampering or unauthorized use..."

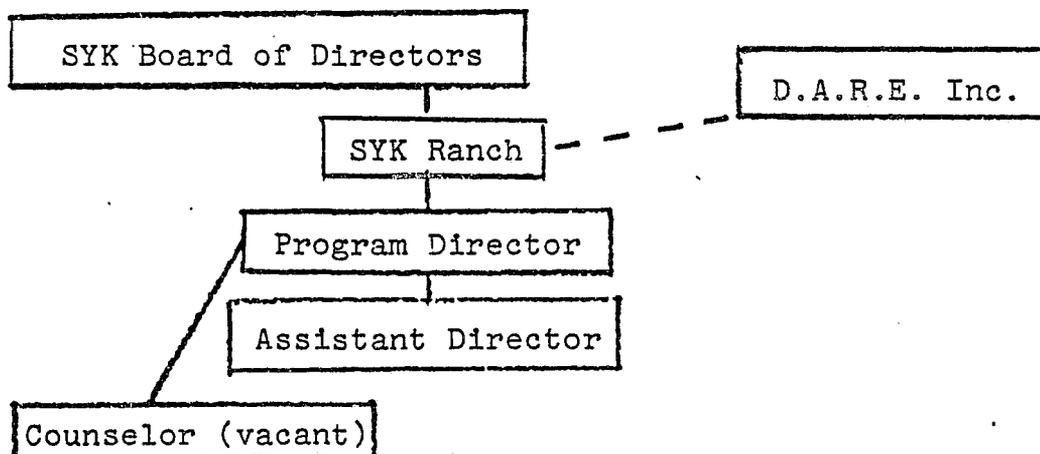
ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

With the exception of a four month period at the beginning of 1976 (see History section, pages 3 and 4), the SYK Ranch has been funded through D.A.R.E., both as a foster home and as a group home, since November 1974. While D.A.R.E. serves as a conduit for funds and supplies the program with clinical consultation, the SYK Ranch is, by and large, administered in autonomous fashion and directly responsible to its Board of Directors.

Both the Program Director and Assistant Director have been affiliated with SYK since its inception; additional positions, according to the Program Director, include one teacher and a counselor. To date the teaching position has not been filled and all those who have served as counselors in the past (seven, according to the Program Director) have been either paid through CETA (n=2) or worked on a volunteer basis. Just prior to this evaluation the one counselor, paid for through CETA, resigned after ten weeks on the job because, according to him, the program failed to live up to its agreement to supplement his CETA salary with an additional \$45.00 a week. For the week following his departure, the program was staffed by only the Director and Assistant Director, with two days of volunteer assistance on the part of a counselor from the I-3 Unit in Danvers. Just before the end of this evaluation period, two additional staff were "hired" -- one through CETA and one, a college student, on a volunteer basis.

Organizational Structure.

Table A&S-1: Organizational Structure\*



\* As observed by the ET on March 31, 1977.

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF (continued)

Staff Duties and Responsibilities.

Program Director\* - is responsible for all fiscal matters; all intake interviews and decisions; scheduling and supervising all daily activities; the hiring\*\*, firing and supervision of all staff; determination of educational services for all clients; providing individual and group counseling to youth on an informal, as needed, basis; serving as liason with the courts and relevant state agencies; providing family counseling when needed and where possible; disciplining youth in the program; and terminating youth when necessary.

Assistant Director\* - is responsible for providing riding instruction to youth in the program; managing the house; shopping; cooking; bookkeeping; gathering intake records (see Intake section, page 20). and filling out D.A.R.E.'s standard Youth Record Form.

Counselor - is, according to the Program Director, responsible for the "daily routine that I set up, the amount of hours he works, and reporting to me." According to one counselor, hired immediately prior to the conclusion of this evaluation, he is responsible for "making sure kids do their work and if they don't do it send them to (the Program Director)."

Staff Composition.

(For relevant characteristics of the SYK staff, as observed on March 31, 1977, see Table A&S-2 on the following page.)

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\* Duties, as described to ET by that individual.

\*\* According to the Program Director, the following are the criteria used in hiring staff: (1) knowledge of animals, (2) dedication to program's philosophy, (3) ability to follow the chain of command; and (4) knowledge of juveniles.

The Program Director also stated that before hiring a prospective staff member, he requires that individual to work with the program on a volunteer basis for two months to determine if he/she could adapt to the program.

Table A&S-2: Staff Profile of SYK Ranch

<u>Staff Category</u>	<u>Average Age</u>	<u>Race</u>		<u>Educational Background</u>			<u>Previous Related Work Experienc</u>	
		<u>Black</u>	<u>Cauc .</u>	<u>less than H.S.</u>	<u>H.S.</u>	<u>BA/BS</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Administrative (n=2)	33.0	0%	100%	50%	50%	0%	0%	100%

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF (continued)Staff Training.

No training is offered by the program and the Program Director reportedly has not participated in any of the training workshops available through D.A.R.E. Inc. According to the Program Director, in-house training has not been provided to staff because most of the staff have been volunteers and he "can't enforce it."

Staff Supervision.

No formal supervisory sessions are held.

Staff Communication.

All communication is done on an informal basis. A daily log, "available for staff to enter progress of youths behavior and other pertinent information in order to aid in staff communication and consistency"\* was employed briefly in September of 1976 and then discontinued.

Use of Volunteers.

In addition to the previously discussed dependance upon volunteers, the SYK Ranch has also entered into an agreement with Brookline High School, under which two teenage students receive academic credit for "working" at the Ranch on weekends.\*\* Contractual agreements between the Coordinator of Individualized Studies for Brookline High School, the Ranch's Assistant Director and both girls were signed outlining the girl's duties as follows: "assistant riding instructor and junior counselor for state juveniles in a group foster home." When questioned about the status of these girls the Program Director stated that "you can call them junior staff if you like." The frequency of this involvement varies but reportedly averages two weekends a month. Both girls have been involved with the Ranch approximately one year, became involved with the Ranch through a prior association with the Assistant Director, and reportedly bring as many as two friends with them upon occas. (see Facility section, page 9). Program residents interviewed stated that these girls ride a lot, spend most of their time with the Assistant Director and have limited involvement with program residents.

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\* Excerpt from SYK policy statement on Record keeping.

\*\* The ET attempted unsuccessfully to interview these students.

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF (continued)

Use of Consultants.

Ever since the program became involved with D.A.R.E., the Director of D.A.R.E. Foster Care has served as liason between the two groups. When the Ranch received a group license, he was hired as a clinical consultant, reportedly in order that the program might conform to OFC regulations. Consulting on a bi-weekly basis, at \$287.50 per month, the Director of D.A.R.E. Foster Care is responsible for drawing up treatment plans on all youth admitted to SYK Ranch and writing up subsequent monthly reports. Occassionally, according to the consultant, he will also assist the Program Director with counseling on an informal basis.

Evaluative.

The ET has serious concerns regarding staff coverage; staff qualifications; the hiring, orientation and training of staff; the lack of any formal system of communication; the program's relationship to D.A.R.E.; and the use of volunteers.

1. While there have been times when the program has "hired" staff, at no time has the funding for these staff members, both funded through CETA, come out of the program's weekly rate of \$196.07 per child. Since there is no written contract between DYS and the program, it is difficult to assess what the program rate is supposed to include (e.g. funding for a specific number of staff). In any event, the number of staff, particularly in light of the stated responsibilities of staff (i.e., Assistant Director has no responsibilities, other than as riding instructor, for interacting with, or providing supervision, or counseling for youth in the program), is insufficient in terms of meeting the needs of the youth in the program. This issue is heightened by the fact that, according to a majority of all residents and staff interviewed, there may be as many as fourteen youths involved in the program at one time (seven state youths, one special referral, the Director's son, the Assistant Director's son, the two "junior staff" from Brookline High School and their two friends.) In addition to minimizing the present staff's ability to adequately supervise, schedule and participate in program activities, this present understaffing also places an inordinate amount of responsibility upon the Program Director.

2. On August 17, 1976, the Assistant Commissioner for After-care, in a memorandum to the Director of Region IV and the Program Director, stated that (1) "The Ranch must have qualified staff, who have either education or experience in group care, preferably both" and (2) "The regional office should review their resumes and approve the hirings" (see Relationship to DNS section, page 64). As reported to the ET by the Assistant Regional Director of Region IV, however, the first condition of the August 17 memorandum was rescinded at a later meeting (September 30, 1976).

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF, Evaluative (continued)

Clearly, if the program is to meet the needs of the youth it serves it must provide "qualified staff, who have either education or experience in group care." Further, since the program is viewed as taking "heavy-kids" (one regional caseworker stated that the children at the Ranch would otherwise be candidates for Secure Treatment) and since program staff are directly responsible for providing counseling services to youth it is particularly important that they have the experiential and/or academic background necessary to meet the specific needs of each individual youth in the program.

3. The ET could find no written policy on either staff orientation or staff training and all staff interviewed stated that they had received neither. It is the contention of the ET that staff orientation and training, essential to the quality of any program, is of particular import in light of the relatively limited staff experience and/or previous training in working with youth such as are placed at the SYK Ranch.<sup>1</sup>

4. The program's relationship with D.A.R.E. is somewhat ambiguous (there is a written, but unsigned, agreement), although apparently D.A.R.E. serves as little more than a conduit for funds. The ET questions the advisability of the Director of D.A.R.E. Foster Care serving as both program liaison, apparently subsumed in the eight percent administrative overhead, and the Clinical Consultant at an additional \$287.50 per month, collected by D.A.R.E. as the parent agency (see Budget and Contract, page 71).

5. The SYK policy statement on recordkeeping states that daily logs are "available for staff to enter progress of youths behavior and other pertinent information in order to aid in staff communication and consistency." The ET applauds this policy and questions why this practice was discontinued in September of 1976.

6. Five of the seven staff "employed" at the Ranch, according to the Program Director, have been volunteers. The use of these volunteers, un-trained by the program, does not conform to OFC Regulation 409.2.<sup>2</sup>

If, in fact, the aforementioned teenage girls from Brookline High School are serving as volunteers and working with program youth, they too should be receiving appropriate training and supervision.

In summary, as presently constituted, the SYK Ranch is staffed and administered in such a way as to raise serious questions as to the program's ability to provide adequate service to the youth entrusted into its care.

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF (continued)Recommendation.

The ET recommends that:

1. a) Additional staff be hired so as to provide more adequate staff coverage.  
b) Any additional staff hired should possess a level of expertise sufficient in meeting the needs of the youth in the program, as addressed throughout the body of this report.  
c) DYS be involved in all hirings so as to ensure the implementation of these recommendations.
2. A comprehensive system of orientation and on-going in-service training be implemented and provided to all staff.
3. A contractual agreement between the Ranch and DYS be negotiated, specifying the responsibilities of both parties as pertains to the number, functions and qualifications of all staff.
4. The daily log be re-instituted so as to ensure a more thorough system of staff communication.
5. a) Volunteers not be employed unless a training program is offered.  
b) Written job descriptions be submitted to DYS on each volunteer involved in the program.
6. The status of the "junior staff" be clarified and submitted, in writing, to DYS.

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF (continued)Reference.

<sup>1</sup>OFC Regulation 203.5 states that "the licensee shall provide orientation for all new employees to acquaint them with the facility's philosophy , organization, program practices and goals. Each licensee shall describe in writing the facility's plan for staff orientation."

OFC Regulation 203.6 states that "the licensee shall provide on-going staff training programs appropriate to the size and nature of the facility and staff involved. Each licensee shall describe in writing the facility's plan for staff training."

<sup>2</sup>OFC Regulation 409.2 states that "the licensee shall utilize volunteers only in conjunction with appropriate supervision and training."

INTAKE

Since October 20, 1975, when the SYK Ranch received its first OFC provisional group care license, thirty-nine youths have been admitted into the program.\* Thirty-four were referred by DYS and five by OSS.

Process.

Admission is usually initiated by a phone call from the appropriate DYS Residential Placement Supervisor to the Program Director to determine if there are any openings in the program. If there is a current opening, or if an opening is expected in the near future, the Region will be informed of intake information required (medical release form, placement history, psychological workups available, Cores and family history) and a pre-placement visit may be arranged. All youth admitted must first spend a weekend in the program, during which time both the prospective resident and the Program Director determine if they feel it is an appropriate placement. The Program Director stated that he makes it a point not to read any of the intake data submitted prior to making this decision as he feels that much of it is erroneous or misleading. This information is reviewed by the Assistant Director who, apparently, has input into the intake decision, primarily to correct, based on her review of the records, any possibly false impression the Director has reached.

At the conclusion of the weekend pre-placement visit, if the Program Director has determined that the youth's interest would be served by placement at the Ranch, any one of the following things can happen: 1) the youth may feel that he doesn't want to be at the Ranch; 2) the youth may be undecided, in which case the Program Director will tell him to go home, think about it, and call the program once he has made up his mind; 3) the youth may decide definitely that he wants to be in the program. If the youth has decided he wants to be a part of the program and there is no immediate opening, the Program Director instructs him to return home and call each day to see if an opening has emerged, with the understanding that admission is contingent upon good

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\* Note: Youths are considered to be terminated if they have been out of the program for a minimum of two weeks and subsequent re-admissions are viewed here by the ET as new and distinct admissions.

Not included in these figures are those youth, referred to by the Assistant Director as "strays," who are admitted into the program on a temporary and informal basis - generally as a favor to a friend.

### INTAKE, Process (continued)

behavior at home during this interim period. The Program Director stated that this system helps him to determine how motivated the youth is (i.e. by the frequency of the phone calls) and to maintain, and hopefully build upon, the relationship begun during the pre-placement visit.

According to the DYS Residential Placement Supervisor for Region IV, there has been an agreement in effect, at least since November, holding the Program Director responsible for involving Region IV in all DYS intakes. The Program Director informed the ET that he was not made aware of this policy until midway through this evaluation. There is no record of such a policy, but in the future all DYS referrals will be routed through Region IV.

### Criteria.

According to the Program Director, the SYK Ranch is best suited to dealing with DYS youth who (1) "the system has been shitting on for years, " (2) are "street wise," and (3) are tough enough, physically, to handle the amount of work demanded at the Ranch.

The program will not, according to the Program Director, take boys who (1) have sexual problems, because of the fact that it is an all-boys program; (2) have a history of arson, although exceptions may be made; (3) are suffering from "mental disturbances;" (4) have a history of abusing animals, although exceptions may be made depending upon the "degree" of the abuse; (5) are suicidal, because of the fact that youth in the program are frequently "isolated" due to the lack of staff; and (6) are involved with "hard drugs."

### Profile of Admissions.

As previously noted, the SYK Ranch has admitted thirty-four DYS youth into its program since October 20, 1975; relevant characteristics, based on Table I-1, (see following page) are as follows:

- 1) 38% were on "detention" status; 62% were committed.
- 2) 91% have been white.
- 3) The average age of these youths has been 15.6; 62% have been under the age of sixteen.
- 4) All have been males.
- 5) 94% were referred by Region IV.

Table I-1: Admissions Profile of DYS Youths Placed at SYK Ranch - By Status\*

I-1a: by Region.

	<u>Detention</u>	<u>Committed</u>	<u>= Total</u>
Region III	0	1	1
Region IV	13	19	32
Region VI	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	13	21	34

I-1b: by Sex.

	<u>Detention</u>	<u>Committed</u>	<u>= Total</u>
Male	13	21	34
Female	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	13	21	34

I-1d: by Age.

	<u>Detention</u>	<u>Committed</u>	<u>= Total</u>	<u>%</u>
13 yrs.	1	0	1	3%
14 yrs.	3	3	6	18%
15 yrs.	7	7	14	41%
16 yrs.	2	10	12	35%
17 yrs.	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	3%
	13	21	34	

I-1c: by Race.

	<u>Detention</u>	<u>Committed</u>	<u>= Total</u>
Black	0	2	2
Caucasian	13	18	31
Puerto Rican	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
	13	21	34

X=	15.2 yrs.	15.9 yrs.	15.6 yrs.
Range=	13.7-16.5 yrs.	14.0-17.2 yrs.	13.7-17.2 yrs.

} = 62%

INTAKE (continued)Orientation.

Once admitted, children are immediately assimilated into the program and, according to the Program Director, staffings are held within two weeks, out of which come the treatment plans devised by the program's clinical consultant (see Clinical Component section, page 46).

Evaluative.

1. The ET feels that the stated system by which the Program Director and a potential resident keep in touch during that time between the pre-placement visit and admission is a good one, as this period may be lengthy and the process of ongoing communication facilitates eventual admission.

2. The Program Director's frustration over the inadequacy of the records kept on youth referred is understandable; however, it is the ET's opinion that to deal with this frustration by not even reading them only further handicaps the process.

3. It is the consensus of the ET that the Program Director is not sufficiently informed (especially without reading the records prior to the intake decision) to determine which youth meet the program's intake criteria. Also, it is the ET's opinion that the Program Director is not qualified to determine whether or not a particular youth's educational and/or clinical needs will be best met at the Ranch.

4. The ET is also concerned over the total, and diverse, number of youth residing at the Ranch at any given time and the lack of any policy with regard to this. This is of particular concern due to the limited space available, the financial resources of the program and the paucity of staff.

Recommendation.

The ET recommends that:

1. Steps be taken to ensure that the number of youth should not exceed the limits established by the appropriate licensing agencies (see Facility section, page 6).

2. Intake material be reviewed by the Program Director prior to making intake decisions.

3. Qualified staff be hired, and involved in the intake process, to ensure that the intake criteria is met and that the educational and clinical needs of all youth are not overlooked.

PROGRAM - DAILY SCHEDULE

Through observations and interviews with staff, former staff and program residents, the ET found that the routine at the Ranch varies only slightly from day to day. Most client activities at the Ranch can be placed in one of three categories: manual labor, "hanging out" or riding horses. There are several factors that may affect the amount of time spent on activities in each of those categories on any particular day. These factors are: the weather, the Director's assessment of the mood of the residents, the amount of time the Director has to assign and supervise work tasks and the amount of time the Director or the Assistant Director has to supervise riding.

The ET conducted a time sample of daily activities while at the Ranch. Every fifteen minutes, beginning at 11:00 am one day and continuing until 11:00 am the following day, the ET recorded the whereabouts and activity of each youth. Reported by youth and staff and as observed by the ET, there is nothing extraordinary about this twenty-four hour period -- it is apparently a typical SYK Ranch day. (The weather on both days was quite nice and unseasonably warm.) This time sample includes the activities of all eight youths living at the Ranch at that time: the four DYS youths assigned there, one DYS youth living there temporarily but not assigned there, two youths placed there by the Office of Social Services and one youth living there as a favor by the Director to the youth's parents. Except for sleeping arrangements, the time sample excludes the activities of the Program Director's son and the Assistant Director's son.

TIME LOG

- 11:00 am - The Director, L\* and seven youths are laying drainage pipe next to the swamp in the back. The process consists of positioning and laying down the pipe, shoveling dirt into a wheelbarrow at another part of the Ranch, bringing the wheelbarrow to where the pipe has been laid and finally covering the pipe with the dirt. The eighth youth is indoors on "house duty." (For explanation of "House Duty" see page 28.)
- 11:15 am - The Director, L and three youths go back for coffee break. One of the three, who had words with the

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\* Counselor from the I-3 Unit at Danvers (see Administration and Staff section, page 12).

PROGRAM - DAILY SCHEDULE, Time Log (continued)

Director over the youth's complaints of a headache, is to have his temperature taken. The four other youths who had been laying pipe are to hay the horses and then return to the house. The eighth youth is still in the house on "house duty."

- 11:30 am - Six youths in the cellar. They are supposed to be cleaning it until the coffee is ready. They are mostly sitting and talking. The youth who complained of a headache was confined to bed with "mononucleosis" (see Controls section, page 53). The eighth youth is still upstairs on "house duty."
- 11:45 am - Same.
- 12:00 pm - All clients upstairs, drinking coffee in the kitchen except for the youth with "mononucleosis" confined to bed. (This is their first food intake since breakfast.) Right before going upstairs, they quickly straightened out the cellar.
- 12:15 pm - Coffee break still in progress. Some youths are inside, some are outside.
- 12:30 pm - Break still on. An impromptu discussion on stealing is taking place outside between L and three youths. It was brought on by L discovering that one of youths stole a pair of boots. L and the youth soon depart, with the Director's permission, to speak to the manager of the store that the boots were taken from.
- 12:45 pm - No change. One youth in bed with "mononucleosis," one youth doing "house duty," one away with L, five hanging around inside and outside.
- 1:00 pm - Same.
- 1:15 pm - Same.
- 1:30 pm - Same.
- 1:45 pm - Same. Youths return to house for lunch.
- 2:00 pm - L and youth return. Lunch begins (hot dogs and beans). The youth with "mononucleosis" eats in his room.
- 2:15 pm - Youths have finished lunch. One youth is cleaning up. One youth still in bed with "mononucleosis." The others are hanging around. Four will engage in a lesson on operating a power saw. A Ranger who arrived before lunch will conduct it.

PROGRAM - DAILY SCHEDULE, Time Log (continued)

- 2:30 pm - Four youths still waiting for power saw lesson. Three others (who had the lesson) are either cleaning horses (two) or cleaning some donated barrels (one). Eighth youth still in bed with "mononucleosis."
- 2:45 pm - The power saw lesson begins. The saw is presently inoperable so the lesson deals with taking it apart and putting it back together. Three youths still engaged in cleaning horses or barrels. The eighth youth is still in bed with "mononucleosis."
- 3:00 pm - Same.
- 3:15 pm - Same.
- 3:30 pm - Same.
- 3:45 pm - The saw lesson is over. Some youths are in the corral with the horses, some are hanging around. One youth is still in bed with "mononucleosis."
- 4:00 pm - Same.
- 4:15 pm - Same.
- 4:30 pm - Most youths are in the corral with the horses. They are practicing riding and receiving some instruction from the Assistant Director. Two youths are raking a road. One youth is still in bed with "mononucleosis."
- 4:45 pm - Same.
- 5:00 pm - Same.
- 5:15 pm - Same.
- 5:30 pm - Same.
- 5:45 pm - Same.
- 6:00 pm - Same, except that the two youths who were raking the road are now hanging around.
- 6:15 pm - Everyone in house.
- 6:30 to  
7:30 pm - Group meeting. Youth who has been in bed (in pajamas) with "mononucleosis" puts on a pair of pants and joins meeting. This is his first time out of bed since he was given "mononucleosis" this morning.
- 7:45 pm - Dinner (beef stew). Youth with "mononucleosis" returns to room, eats dinner there, remains there for the night.

PROGRAM - DAILY SCHEDULE, Time Log (continued)

- 8:00 pm - Five youths go to the barn to do the evening chores. One youth stays behind for "house duty," the youth with "mononucleosis" remains in bed. The youth who is here as a favor to his parents leaves with his father. He is to return in five days.
- 8:15 pm - Same.
- 8:30 pm - Two youths are sitting outside, two youths are watching T.V., two youths are cleaning up in the kitchen, the youth with "mononucleosis" remains in bed.
- 8:45 pm - Youths hang out, watch T.V., play cards or talk.
- 9:00 pm - Same.
- 9:15 pm - Same.
- 9:30 pm - Same.
- 9:45 pm - Same.
- 10:00 pm - Everybody in the house retires for the night. The Director sleeps on the couch. The Assistant Director is in the master bedroom with her young son, five youths are in beds, two youths are in sleeping bags on the living room floor and one youth is on a beanbag chair on a bedroom floor. (One of the eight youths is the Director's teenage son.)
- 10:15 pm  
to 5:45 am - No change in sleeping accommodations.
- 6:00 am - Wake-up.
- 6:15 am - Everybody getting dressed and going outside to stay out of the way until breakfast is ready.
- 6:30 am - All youths outside except for youth on "house duty" (same youth as yesterday).
- 6:45 am - Same.
- 7:00 am - Same.
- 7:15 am - Breakfast (fried dough and cereal).
- 7:30 am - Breakfast.
- 7:45 am - Everyone is finished with breakfast, and the youths are waiting for the Director to take them to the barn.

PROGRAM - DAILY SCHEDULE, Time Log. (continued)

- 8:00 am - All youths at barn for chores (see explanation of chores below), except for youth on "house duty."
- 8:15 am - Same.
- 8:30 am - Same.
- 8:45 am - Same.
- 9:00 am - Same.
- 9:15 am - Same.
- 9:30 am - All youths (except for one on "house duty") begin to pick up and discard rocks from a field which will eventually be a corral. The Director plows the field with a makeshift plow attached to the back of the truck, and the youths remove the rocks from the wake of the plow. When the plowing ends the youths begin to rake up and remove the smaller rocks.
- 9:45 am - Raking rocks continue.
- 10:00 am - Same.
- 10:15 am - Same, the youth who was given "mononucleosis" yesterday complains that he feels sick. He is sent back to the house to return to bed.
- 10:30 am - Same.
- 10:45 am - Same.
- 11:00 am - Back to house for coffee break.
- ... End of twenty-four hour period.

Of the chores that are done every morning, the major task is to clean out the stable. This involves removing the horses from their stalls, sweeping the stalls clean, shoveling the sweepings into a wheelbarrow and emptying the wheelbarrow onto a manure pile outside the stable. Several wheelbarrow loads are collected and dumped each morning. Other less time-consuming tasks that are part of the morning chores involve general care and feeding of the animals.

"House Duty" at the Ranch consists of usual domestic chores. The program resident who is on "house duty" functions like a housekeeper: he helps out with vacuuming, the laundry and the cooking, makes sure that coffee is available, sets, cleans and

PROGRAM - DAILY SCHEDULE (continued)

washes the kitchen table and washes the dishes (by hand and by operating the dishwasher).

The major work assignments that the program residents performed during the twenty-four hour period covered by the time sample (i.e. laying drainage pipe, picking up rocks, etc.), reportedly are quite representative examples of other labor that they have done. Most of the manual labor that they do is essential to the maintenance and improvement of the property and the care of the animals. Some of these other tasks include raking leaves, shoveling snow, building a corral, moving felled trees, and building dry wells in all of the horse stalls (this activity consists mostly of digging holes in the stalls and filling them with rocks).

Program residents stated to the ET that "hanging out" is boring, though it is preferable to the manual labor. Youth reported that being given "mononucleosis" by the Director is the least desirable way to spend the day. One youth explained to the ET that if the kids "screw around" they attract the attention of the Director and he then finds some work for them to do. Thus, they are usually willing to sit around quietly, doing nothing.

## RECREATION

There is little evidence of a planned recreational program at the SYK Ranch. No time is specifically set aside for recreational activity. All but very informal forms of recreation (e.g. card playing during free time) occur at the discretion of the Director. The major recreation, horseback riding, occurs sporadically. The Director has stated that other recreative activities at the SYK Ranch are snowball fights, football, swimming, fighting with batakas and playing with cards and board games.

The Director stated that he has been unable to gain access to most community resources, although the program does use a local swimming hole. He stated that he unsuccessfully attempted to gain access for the program to a Girl Scout pool. One youth said that he attended a hockey game at North Station once while residing at the Ranch. According to a former staff member, during the ten weeks that he was employed at the Ranch, the youths never left the grounds for recreation -- in fact, to the best of his knowledge youth were allowed off grounds at all only three times during that ten week period. Program residents have confirmed that they rarely leave the grounds.

The riding program at the Ranch consists of each youth in the program being "given" a horse and maintaining responsibility for the care, grooming and training of his horse. The Director stated that in order to ride, a youth must discover how much work is involved in caring for a horse. Youth must "buy into" the animals in order to stay at the program. The Director stated that he will not keep a youth who does not "get into" the animals.

Program residents receive instruction in horse care, training and riding from the Director and the Assistant Director. They have both stated that they are licensed riding instructors.

The riding, reportedly, is done on an irregular basis for two reasons: 1) It is obviously a weather-dependent activity and 2) It is used as a control technique. The Director stated that riding time may be given if work tasks are done satisfactorily. He stated that a whole day could be spent working or a whole day could be spent riding. The amount of time that youths ride depends on their behavior and on the work that the Director would like them to do.

Aside from the sporadic riding times, the ET was unable to confirm any other form of outdoor recreational activity sponsored by the program. Youths and former staff were unable to recall any outdoor recreation besides riding. All youths said that the only form of outdoor recreation was riding and that the Ranch was "boring" because of the lack of other activities. The estimates of the amount of riding that is done varies from youth to youth, but all expressed a desire for a relief from boredom via other recreational activities. One client did recall that they were

once allowed to throw snowballs at a rowboat; otherwise, he said, snowball fights were against the rules. During the evaluation period, the ET observed one occasion when three program residents engaged in an impromptu makeshift "softball" game using a stick and a beaten-up, waterlogged tennis ball. This activity was unauthorized and took place while the youths were supposed to be working unsupervised in the barnyard. The Director reported that in warm weather, with supervision youths are allowed to ride their horses off grounds to various group activities. As for indoor recreation, the ET observed the following pursuits: playing cards, reading comic books and watching television.

Evaluative.

It is the opinion of the ET that the recreational program at the SYK Ranch is sorely deficient. Other than riding, there is no significant recreative activity available to the youths. OFC regulations stipulate that programs must provide a structured plan for recreation.<sup>1</sup>

By not providing an adequate recreational program, the SYK Ranch is depriving the children who it is supposed to be serving of the opportunity to develop their recreational skills and interests fully. As one program resident stated, "There should be something to do besides work - that's all we do."

Recommendation.

The ET recommends that:

1. The Ranch provide the program residents with the opportunity to engage in recreative activity other than riding. Youths have stated that they would like to participate in sports activities.
2. The amount of time that is allowed for recreation should not be totally dependent on the Director's assessment of the youths' behavior. Recreation time should be regularly scheduled.
3. A greater effort be made to identify and utilize off-grounds recreational facilities. The boredom that program residents experience is exacerbated by the lack of off-grounds activity.
4. Specific staff member(s) should be responsible for the development and implementation of a comprehensive recreational component for youth placed at the SYK Ranch.

RECREATION (continued)Reference."309.0 Recreational Services:

The licensee shall describe in writing its plan for meeting the recreational needs of the children served, including the use of community resources where appropriate.

309.1 The licensee shall provide or arrange for individual and group recreational programs appropriate to the age, interests and needs of each child.

309.2 The licensee shall provide a recreational program which provides for free, unplanned time for children to pursue individual interests, with supervision as required for the protection of the child."

During the period from March 28 to April 5, 1977 while the ET was conducting an evaluation of the SYK Ranch, no youths placed there by the Department of Youth Services were observed to receive tutorial services in an academic subject area nor did they attend school in the community. One youth reported that he was currently receiving homework assignments from an alternative school program.

The Program Director explained that youths placed at the SYK Ranch program, "aren't capable of school when they get here." He further stated that if a youth was "stable enough to get into a regular school program, he generally didn't need to be at SYK." At one time, tutors had been made available through the North Shore Community College but these services have since been terminated. When asked about the success of the previous tutorial program the Director stated that the youths participated "to get out of chores by going to school." One youth attended the local regional high school for a period of roughly ninety days (October 1976 through January 1977).

According to the Program Director, the determination to pursue educational services for a youth is made at the initial "staffing" following placement in the program. These staffings are attended by a part-time consultant psychologist provided by D.A.R.E. Inc., the Program Director, the youth's social worker and other SYK staff. The Director stated that the educational decisions made are not based on the results of educational or psychological testing or a Core evaluation but rather on his subjective judgment gained through observation of the youth in the following areas:

- 1) attention span
- 2) work habits
- 3) attitudes
- 4) the amount of structure needed
- 5) interest in books
- 6) responsibility to authority
- 7) informal talks with the kids

According to the Director, the part time consultant has never administered any formal testing on any youths at the Ranch nor has the Director requested that he do so.

The Director stated that requests for Core evaluations are discussed at the time of the staffing and that in a small percentage of cases, he requests that a Core be pursued by the director of the youth's DYS region. The program has not had a good success rate in obtaining these evaluations because, in the words of the Director, "when Cores are pushed you run into reluctant schools." He expressed some confusion regarding where the responsibility lies in conducting a Core evaluation. It is his understanding

that if a program has six or fewer youths in residence the responsibility for conducting an evaluation is that of the local school district, in this case the Triton Regional School District.

The Program Director reportedly advises each youth of his rights to an education in an informal manner. He stated that he does not feel it is necessary to give formal advice "read off a piece of paper." When asked for examples of how he informally provides this information the Director furnished the ET with the following examples: "Wouldn't you rather get an education than shovel shit?" or "Why the hell don't you go and get an education?"

The Director stated that he was orally notified by the Licensing Specialist that the kids must receive a educational services.<sup>1</sup>

He stated that through informal discussions with the Licensing Specialist, he learned that the educational requirements may be satisfied in the following ways:

- 1) Regular Education Program
- 2) Vocational Education Program
- 3) Discretionary Waiver

The Program Director decided, with the approval of the Assistant Regional Director of Region IV, to pursue "Discretionary Waivers" through the local school superintendent. Negotiations were initiated and conducted by telephone. When interviewed by members of the ET, the Superintendent stated that he had never visited the SYK Ranch program, seen a formal program description, reviewed the files, discussed the cases with former teachers or school officials, or met with any of the youths for whom waivers were granted. According to the Superintendent, he has granted eight such waivers for SYK residents since October 1976. He stated that the waivers were granted in compliance with Chapter 76, section 1 of the General Laws Pertaining to Education to wit:

## CHAPTER 76

### SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

#### CH. 76, § 1. REGULATION OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

"Every child between the minimum and maximum ages established for school attendance by the board of education, except a child between fourteen and sixteen who meets the requirements for the completion of the sixth grade of the public school

EDUCATION (continued)

as established by said board and who holds a permit for employment in private domestic service or service on a farm, under section eighty-six of chapter one hundred and forty-nine, and is regularly employed thereunder for at least six hours per day, or a child between fourteen and sixteen who meets said requirements and has the written permission of the superintendent of schools of the town where he resides to engage in nonwage-earning employment at home, or a child over fourteen who holds a permit for employment in a cooperating employment, as provided in said section eighty-six, shall, subject to section fifteen, attend a public day school in said town, or some other day school approved by the school committee, during the number of days required by the board of education in each school year, unless the child attends school in another town, for said number of days, under sections six to twelve, inclusive, or attends an experimental school project established under an experimental school plan, as provided in section on G of chapter fifteen, but such attendance shall not be required of a child whose physical or mental condition is such as to render attendance inexpedient or impracticable subject to the provisions of section three of chapter seventy-one B or of a child, granted an employment permit, by the superintendent of schools when such superintendent determines that the welfare of such child will be better served through the granting of such permit or of a child who is being otherwise instructed in a manner approved in advance by the superintendent or the school committee. The superintendent of schools may transfer to any specialized type of school on a full-time basis any child who possesses the educational qualifications enumerated in this section and in the opinion of the superintendent would be benefited by such transfer. ..."

The text of one such waiver found in a client's files is included below:

"Per our recent telephone conversation, the following is written concerning \_\_\_\_\_ who is now assigned to the SYK Ranch in Rowley.

Under the provisions of Ch. 76, Sect. 1, a Superintendent of Schools may grant a waiver from regular school attendance for a pupil whose condition is such as to render attendance inexpedient and impracticable.

In granting such a waiver the Superintendent must ensure that the welfare of such child will be better served for the granting of such permit.

Thus, I request you to assume responsibility that such training given \_\_\_\_\_ will be in the best interests of his own personal welfare.

EDUCATION (continued)

This waiver will only extend through the end of the school year 1977, and any request for extension beyond that time shall be forwarded to this office.

Please call me if there are any questions on this matter."

Of the four DYS youths placed at the SYK Ranch during the evaluation period, two youths had waiver letters granted by the superintendent in their files and, two youths (one of whom is under sixteen years old) had no waiver letter. None of these youths were receiving any educational services, except for the homework assignments reportedly received by one program youth.

Evaluative.

There is no formal educational component in the SYK Ranch program. Massachusetts statutes expressly require that all youth within the jurisdiction of DYS be provided with appropriate educational services. <sup>2</sup>

Further, section 307.1 of the OFC Licensing Regulations states in part:

"The licensee shall make available educational services to all children, as appropriate to the needs of each child."

Not only are educational services not made available but the informal criteria utilized by the Director are not comprehensive enough to determine the educational needs of each youth.

It is apparent that the mandates of Ch. 766 should be brought to bear in the development of an educational service plan. The Assistant Regional Director stated that since October, three SYK youths had been referred for Core evaluations while in the program; however, the Director has stated that it is difficult to get Cores completed due to the reluctance of school departments to get involved with his youngsters. Section 202.1(b) of Ch. 766 Regulations (1976) would appear to clarify the question of responsibility for conducting an evaluation:

202.1 "Each school committee shall satisfy all the requirements of Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972 and these regulations for the following categories of school age children:

202.1(b) Children who live in a place in which there are living a total of six or fewer than six children unrelated by blood relationship to the head of the household where such place is in the city, town or school district over which such school committee has jurisdiction."

EDUCATION (continued)

It appears from the section quoted above that the responsibility for conducting these Core evaluations is that of the Triton Regional School district. This interpretation of responsibility would apply if the total number of occupants was in accordance with the two occupancy permit for the Ranch which stipulates that occupancy cannot exceed eight people (see Facility section, page 6).

Section 315.5 delineates the responsibilities of the Department of Youth Services in initiating said referral for evaluation:

315.5 "A child who has been committed to, referred to, or detained by the Department of Youth Services, and who is currently under their jurisdiction. A regional official of the Department of Youth Services shall receive the referral and be responsible for determining whether a referral for an evaluation should be made."

It is clear that the program's method of informing the youngsters of their right to be evaluated and participate in an educational program as quoted previously is insufficient. The program does not bear this responsibility alone, however, as stated in Section 206.0 of the 766 Regulations:

206.0 School age children of ages sixteen through twenty-one: Consent of Parent and children.

"The requirements of these regulations shall not be construed to require the attendance at school of school age children of ages sixteen through twenty-one who have left school. Attendance at school by such school age children shall be completely voluntary. A school age child of ages eighteen through twenty-one shall be entitled to all of the rights given to school age children by these regulations and all of the rights given to adults by applicable laws. Each school committee shall make every effort to advise school age children of ages sixteen through twenty-one who have left school of all program options available to them in the school system."

Clearly, the School Committee of the Triton Regional School District, the Program Director, the Program Consultant and the officials of the Regional Office of DYS have not pursued, to the fullest possible extent, a course of action which would encourage each youngster at the SYK Ranch to avail himself of his rights to an education.

EDUCATION (continued)

Rather, the expedient solution of the "Discretionary Waiver" has been employed to abrogate the responsibility for providing an education component that simply does not exist. While the granting of such waivers is within the bounds of the law (see Ch. 76 Sect 1, quoted previously) the practice of granting waivers with a total lack of information on the part of school officials appears questionable at best. The Program Director's response when he learned of the ET interview with the Superintendent, "I hope you didn't screw up my waivers, I'll have to find some other way around it," speaks for itself. In summary, the educational component does not appear to be a high priority in the SYK Ranch program.

Recommendation.

1. That a meeting be scheduled including representatives of DYS Region IV, the Northeast Region of the State Department of Education, the School Committee of the Triton Regional School District, the Office for Children and the SYK Ranch to make final determination of the legal responsibilities of each party for the referral, evaluation and education of each youth placed in the SYK Ranch program and a clearly defined system for discharging those responsibilities.
2. Pending resolution of said question, that a duly certified Education Specialist be employed to provide an educational program for each youth currently residing at the SYK Ranch.
3. Pending resolution of recommendation #1, that the practice of utilizing "Discretionary Waivers" be suspended.

Reference.

- <sup>1</sup> "307.0 Educational Services:

The licensee shall describe in writing its plan for meeting the educational needs of the children served.

307.1 The licensee shall arrange for the education of each child in care, in compliance with state and local laws. The licensee shall make available educational services to all children, as appropriate to the needs of each child."

- <sup>2</sup> M.G.L.A. ch. 18A <sup>SS</sup> 2, 4, 7.

### VOCATIONAL

The vocational component of the SYK Ranch program consists of the chores and activities related to the care of the animals and the maintenance and improvement of the SYK grounds, facilities and equipment. The activities, as described by the Program Director, include:

1. Forestry - Learning the care and operation of chain saws and the safety requirements related to their operation. Once the youths have learned about the equipment, they put that knowledge to practical use by clearing out brush and cutting down trees that have been marked by the Forest Ranger.
2. Mechanics - Care and maintenance of the SYK trucks, vans and trailers. Youths assist the director in "engine tune-up" and routine maintenance.
3. Carpentry - Under the direction of the Program Director, SYK youths have built a cabin on State Forest land abutting the property and added a hayloft to the existing barn structure. Future plans call for the expansion of the existing hayloft and adding a "dormitory" to the front house.
4. Grading - Youths are using shovels and wheelbarrows to move earth from the rear of the property and build a riding trail through the existing swamp. They also have built and presently maintain the current driveways and pathways on the property.
5. Control of Water - Youths have learned to install culvert pipe as a means of controlling the water level of the "swamp" on the property which will be transformed into a small pond in the future.
6. Animal Husbandry - This area covers all activities related to the care and maintenance of the Ranch animals including: horses, cattle, ponies, pigs, rabbits, sheep, chickens, and dogs. It includes the daily cleaning of the stables and feeding of all of the animals and allows the youngsters to observe "life and death" through the birth and the eventual slaughter of some of the animals for food.
7. Blacksmithing - Learning how to install horse shoes and ensure that all animals are properly shod for existing Ranch and riding conditions.
8. Housekeeping - Youths assist in cooking and food preparation and maintaining the cleanliness of the living quarters.

VOCATIONAL (continued)

The Director also indicated that some youths have been employed in the community in jobs such as cutting lawns, construction work or dishwashing and maintenance at the local Holiday Inn. These jobs are arranged through friends of the Director and the youths are paid regular wages. Reportedly, this kind of employment is generally sought only for those youths who are preparing to end their stay at the Ranch. According to the Director, because of the tenuous nature of relations with the community, an expanded job program has not been pursued.

Youths who obtain jobs off the Ranch grounds have bank accounts established for them by the Assistant Director who acts as a "trustee." Earnings are deposited in the youth's account and savings are given to the youth at the time of his termination from SYK. Deductions are made from a youth's account to make restitution for any property damage that he might be responsible for. Youths are not paid for their daily labors on the SYK Ranch grounds. In rare instances ACTION monies have been made available for former residents to be employed at the Ranch and one such youth was employed during the evaluation period.

The Program Director informed ET members that he has attempted to arrange for vocational and educational services through the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School. In an interview with the Director of Special Needs Services at Whittier, conducted on April 1, 1977, ET members were told that the first contacts received from the Ranch were made on March 29, 1977. No youths placed at SYK had received either evaluative or training services at Whittier by the conclusion of the evaluation period.

Evaluative.

As previously stated, the vocational component of the SYK Ranch program consists of the chores and activities related to the care of the animals and the maintenance and improvement of the SYK grounds, facilities and equipment. Throughout the evaluation period the ET observed the program youth carrying out their daily chores and performing tasks as described above. The accomplishment of these tasks and chores did not appear to the ET as vocational. The youths at the Ranch seemed to function more as laborers than "vocational trainees." The focus of the program in this area was observed to be one of "getting the job done" rather than precise vocational training for each youth. Getting a job done in and of itself may serve as one aspect of job training in the sense that it may teach the youth the importance of perseverance and task accomplishment. Comprehensive skill training related to identification and development of a particular vocation, however, was not observed to be the major focus of the daily work done by the youths.

VOCATIONAL, Evaluative (continued)

The following serves as an illustration of one "lesson" observed by the ET. The lesson was presented by a Forest Ranger and involved the use and maintenance of a chain saw. Four youths were in attendance. The Ranger demonstrated how to take the saw apart for cleaning. He informed the youths of proper safety precautions including the use of safety glasses and helmets. One youth asked about a different type of chain saw that had a "safety bar" which would immediately shut off the saw in the case of an accident. The Ranger began to describe how the device operated when he was interrupted by the Program Director who stated that it was unnecessary to explain the device since none of the saws that the youths would use would be so equipped, and hence, the information was irrelevant. As one of the youths began to assemble the saw, another explained to him how it should be done. The Program Director informed the youth that he had not been appointed teacher and should mind his own business.

As observed by the ET, this kind of response not only failed to provide reinforcement for the youth's inquisitiveness but served as an example to other youths that such interest and questioning is not desirable behavior.

In the opinion of the Evaluation Team, the SYK Ranch is not providing an adequate vocational component to DYS youth. According to OFC licensing standards:

308.0 Vocational Preparation Services:

"The licensee shall describe in writing its plan for meeting the vocational needs of the children served.

308.1 The licensee shall give consideration to arranging vocational preparation service according to each child's needs and ability, and where appropriate, shall arrange for vocational services.

308.2 As appropriate to the needs of the child, the licensee shall arrange vocational services which include:

308.2(a) vocational evaluation;

308.2(b) formulation of vocational goals for the child;

308.2(c) formulation of a plan to achieve vocational goals;

308.2(d) implementation of vocational plan, including vocational counseling, instruction, and training, and vocational placement or referral to appropriate sources.

308.3 The child shall be fully involved in his vocational evaluation and formulation of vocational plan."

VOCATIONAL, Evaluative (continued)

As far as can be determined, no individual vocational evaluation is provided. Rather, each youth shares in the daily routine of Ranch chores which must be accomplished. No evidence was made available to the ET members that would indicate that a comprehensive vocational evaluation had been conducted nor an appropriate vocational plan developed based on the unique talents and aptitudes of each youths.

Furthermore, the ET is concerned that while the daily tasks and chores are referred to by the program as providing vocational training, they entail, in fact, little more than hours of hard physical labor for which the youth receive no financial remuneration. While it is expected that youths should carry out daily normal household chores such chores should not exceed one to two hours a day. Labor exceeding this amount of time with no fiscal or academic compensation can arguably be viewed as involuntary servitude and may also be in violation of federal and state labor laws. If youth are to continue to serve as the full time labor force for the operation of the Ranch, they must be paid accordingly at the minimum salary wage.

Recommendation.

1. That a comprehensive vocational assessment be conducted on each youth placed at the SYK Ranch to determine vocational aptitudes and interest through a facility such as the Whittier Regional Technical Vocational High School.

2. That a comprehensive vocational plan be developed and implemented for each youth, including the use of off-grounds work experiences as each youth is ready to assume the responsibilities necessary to such experiences.

Many of the Ranch activities and resources could provide excellent vehicles for vocational training. More intensive effort, however, is required on the part of SYK staff to avail itself of these opportunities.

In the area of cooking, for example, instruction could be given in the following areas:

- 1) Nutrition and the planning of a balanced diet.
- 2) Reading and following recipes.

- 3) Understanding of units of measure including:
  - a. teaspoons
  - b. tablespoons
  - c. cups
  - d. pints
  - e. quarts
  - f. ounces
  - g. pounds

In the area of carpentry, instruction could be given in the following areas:

- 1) Developing a blueprint or plan.
- 2) Determining materials required by the blueprint.
- 3) Determining the tools required to complete the project.
- 4) "Pricing" of materials through various suppliers.
- 5) Ordering materials.
- 6) Following a blueprint or plan.
- 7) Measuring and cutting lumber.
- 8) Installing windows and doors.
- 9) Proper insullation.
- 10) Applying finish "siding."
- 11) Applying roofing materials.
- 12) "Finish" carpentry.

Emphasis should be placed on the development of marketable skills that can aid in gaining employment once a youth leaves the SYK Ranch program.

3. The ET recommends that a meeting be held between the appropriate DYS staff and the program to develop a written policy and agreement in this area.

VOCATIONAL (continued)Reference.

29 USCA §201 et. seq. (Federal Fair Labor Standards Act) and  
Federal Regulations promulgated thereunder.

M.G.L.A. ch. 149 §56, et. seq. (State Child Labor laws)

M.G.L.A. ch. 76 §1 (Compulsory Education Law)

M.G.L.A. ch. 119 §53 (Liberal Construction of statutes dealing with  
youth within jurisdiction of juvenile courts)

King v. Carey, 405 F. Supp. 41 (W.D.N.Y., 1975)

Haller, Legal Challenges to Peonage in Juvenile Institutions,  
9 Clearinghouse Review 453 (Nov., 1975)

MEDICAL

Arrangements for medical and dental care for youth enrolled at the SYK Ranch are usually made by the Program Director. Until April 5, 1977, physical examinations and routine treatment reportedly were provided by a physician associated with the East Boston Neighborhood Health Center. The Program Director informed the ET that he had attempted to have each resident youth examined in East Boston shortly after his entry into the program. He stated, however, that he had been hindered in doing so by a shortage of staff to supervise youth at the Ranch while he accompanied the boy to be examined, by difficulty in securing youths' medical records and release forms, and by youth's being transferred or running from the program before appointments for examinations were scheduled. This reported difficulty in obtaining intake physical examinations was reflected in DYS client records. Only 50% of the folders kept for DYS children enrolled in the program during the evaluation period contained any medical information whatsoever, either from DYS or from SYK. (See Records section, page 58.)

At the beginning of the evaluation period, the Program Director stated that he hoped to circumvent these problems by arranging to have intake examinations performed at the Anna Jacques Hospital in Newburyport. (This hospital had previously agreed to provide the program with emergency room and ambulance services and was more conveniently located than the clinic in East Boston). This goal apparently was achieved on April 5, the last day of the evaluation period, when six program residents were, in fact, examined at the Anna Jacques Hospital. On that day, according to a staff nurse who had assisted the examining physician, the Program Director had negotiated an oral agreement with hospital personnel, whereby one Anna Jacques physician would examine each new SYK youth shortly after his entry into the program, and would provide any primary care required during the youth's residence. The nurse told the ET that she hoped to incorporate this agreement into a written plan for meeting SYK youths' health care needs.

...Dental care, according to the Program Director, is provided by a private dentist practicing in East Boston. At the time of the evaluation, one DYS resident reportedly was receiving extensive dental treatment. To the ET's knowledge, no other DYS youth in residence during the evaluation period had received dental services during his stay in the program.

The Director and Assistant Director informed the ET that most program youths who have been committed to DYS are eligible for Medicaid coverage, and have Medicaid cards when they enter the program. The Assistant Director reportedly obtains cards for eligible boys who do not have them at the time of intake. Detention youth reportedly do not usually have Medicaid coverage, and Medicaid does not pay for routine dental services for any youth. Dental bills and bills for medical treatment of detention youth

MEDICAL (continued)

are therefore forwarded to the youth's region by the program. The Director told the ET that the alleged failure of DYS regions to pay these expenses promptly had strained the program's relations with providers, and resulted in the local pharmacist's reported refusal to bill DYS for medication required by youth in any DYS program, including the Ranch.

Evaluative.

The ET believes that all DYS youth are entitled to receive high quality health care, commensurate with their individual requirements. These requirements may vary, depending, among other things, upon the nature of the program in which a given child is enrolled. Because SYK residents engage in prolonged physical labor, and have extensive contact with farm animals, they may be exposed to health and safety hazards not faced by youngsters in more conventional programs, and may, therefore, have health care needs which exceed those of DYS youth placed elsewhere.

The SYK Program Director and Assistant Director have attempted to provide adequate health care services for youth placed at the Ranch, although their efforts seem to have been stymied by the reported failure of DYS to supply necessary client records and to reimburse providers promptly. The ET is concerned, however, by the apparent absence of a coordinated effort by the program, DYS, and organizations having relevant expertise, to evaluate, plan for and satisfy health and safety requirements peculiar to the SYK Ranch.

Recommendation.

The ET recommends that current arrangements between the SYK Ranch and the Anna Jacques hospital be continued, provided that they remain satisfactory to all concerned. In order to address both ordinary and special health and safety needs of youth enrolled at SYK, representatives from the program, DYS, Anna Jacques Hospital, and any other interested organization whose resources might be helpful, should meet to compose a clear, written policy on medical services for SYK youth. Such a policy should describe the kinds of medical services (including dental care) to be provided, and the method of payment for these services, and should assign well-defined, appropriate responsibilities to each party charged with implementing the policy.

The ET further recommends that DYS help the program establish ongoing communication with local organizations having expertise in the prevention and control of farm-related health hazards, so that the program can make use of this expertise on an informal basis.

## CLINICAL COMPONENT

According to the Program Director, much of the program's therapeutic approach revolves around the animals. Through being responsible for the maintenance of the animals, a youth begins to develop a sense of responsibility and a clearer view of his place in nature. More importantly this involvement may help to reduce the tensions and anxieties of a new resident, thereby making it easier for the program to deal with his emotional needs.

### Treatment Plan.

Each youth placed at the SYK Ranch is supposed to have a staffing within two weeks of admission. This staffing is facilitated by the program's clinical consultant (see Administration and Staff section, page 12) and may include the caseworker, the Region IV Residential Placement Supervisor, the OFC Licensing Specialist, the Program Director and relevant others. No minutes are kept of these staffings, a fact which, according to the Program Director, greatly detracts from the usefulness of such meetings. Apparently the primary result of these staffings is the formulation of the "Treatment and Service Plan," prepared by the Clinical Consultant. These treatment plans consist of five components: 1) an "introduction," 2) "educational plans," 3) "medical plans," 4) "family contact," 5) "counseling plans" and 6) "reactions of youth."

The ET reviewed the four most recent, and most readily available, Treatment and Services Plans. The ET has, for the purpose of providing the reader of this report with a clear picture of clinical plans devised for youth in the program, extracted the "counseling plans" segment from each of these. They are as follows:

#### Counseling Plan for Youth #1

"(Youth #1) will receive counseling from the staff at (an alternative school the youth was attending) and (the Program Director) at the SYK Ranch."

"Counseling will concentrate upon getting (Youth #1) to express his feelings and attempt to develop a sense of trust within (Youth #1) so that he can develop more meaningful relationships."

"Experience at the Ranch will attempt to increase (Youth #1)'s sense of self-worth so that he will develop a more positive image of himself without having to resort to delinquent behavior."

CLINICAL COMPONENT (continued)Counseling Plan for Youth #2

"While he is at the Ranch, (Youth #2) will receive counseling from (the Program Director) and myself. Upon his placement with (a D.A.R.E. Foster Home), he will be assigned a caseworker by D.A.R.E. Foster Homes who will continue counseling with him in the Foster Home."

Counseling Plan for Youth #3

"Individual counseling will be provided for the boy by (the Program Director)."

Counseling Plan for Youth #4

"(Youth #4) has established a good relationship with (the Program Director) who will do most of the counseling with him.\* In the initial stages he will attempt to get the boy "to open up" and discuss some of the reasons for his behavior. After that, attempts will be made to show (Youth #4) more constructive ways of dealing with his anger, resulting from a most frustrating family situation."

The treatment plans of all four youth profiled above call for counseling to be provided by the Program Director.

One-to-one Counseling.

The Program Director informed the ET that he is responsible for all one-to-one counseling and that, upon occasion, he will be aided by the Clinical Consultant. The Program Director acknowledged his clinical limitations and stated that in those instances where he felt that youths needed more than he could provide, the youth's region would be notified and subsequently be responsible for securing additional services as needed. This was confirmed by the Clinical Consultant and the Assistant Director of Region IV; over the past six months, however, no such referrals were initiated.

All one-to-one counseling is reportedly conducted on an informal crisis-oriented basis. Three of the four DYS youth interviewed stated that such counseling generally dealt with immediate behavioral issues in the program; the fourth DYS youth stated that he had received no counseling from the Program Director but rather, on a limited basis, from the Assistant Director.

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\* Note: Youth was placed at the SYK Ranch the previous day.

CLINICAL COMPONENT (continued)Groups.

Group sessions, facilitated by the Program Director, are held on an informal as-needed basis and are designed to deal with pertinent issues and problems currently affecting the behavior of the youth in the program. During the period of this evaluation, the ET observed one such group. Conducted immediately prior to dinner, and lasting approximately one hour, this group was attended by the ten youth residing in the program at the time;

and the Program Director. The group took place in the living room with most of the participants gathered in a circle on the floor. The group began with the Program Director accusing one youth (a DYS youth, residing at the Ranch on a temporary basis while at the same time being paid to work at the Ranch through ACTION) of staying out late at night, while at home, and of going to the local liquor store. The youth at first denied this and, then, after much interaction between the two, acknowledged both of these incidents. Following this interchange, the Program Director focused his attention upon another youth, recently placed in the program by DYS, who had been involved in an altercation with another resident that morning and had, in general, been having a difficult time adjusting to the Ranch. The Program Director asked the boy to describe what happened, then asked the other participant to give his version. The Program Director then commented on the incident and asked the other residents to state who they felt was at fault. The group concluded with the Program Director explaining to the youth why he was on two-day cigarette restriction. Throughout the entire group session, the Program Director had a can of beer in his hand, sipped it intermittently. (Based upon interviews with DYS residents, this was not an isolated instance of the Director drinking alcoholic beverages in front of them.)

Evaluative.

While the ET recognizes the potential therapeutic value of the animals (both in terms of decreasing the anxiety level of a new resident and improving that resident's perception of responsibility) the ET has serious concerns regarding the degree to which the program, as presently structured, is capable of meeting the emotional needs, both current and historical, of the youth in its care.

The "Treatment and Services Plans," while completed on a regular basis and well within the prescribed two weeks after admission, appear to the ET to be lacking in depth and devoid of specificity as to the issues at play and possible methods of dealing with those issues. This impression was corroborated, in part, by the Program Director who informed the ET that these plans are of little use to him.

CLINICAL COMPONENT, Evaluative (continued)

All treatment plans viewed by the ET called for counseling to be provided by the Program Director. The Program Director has had no formal training, education or previous experience working with troubled youth prior to his involvement with Schoolyards for Kids. He reported that he is aware of his limitations in meeting the emotional needs of some of the youth placed in his program and stated that in these instances, referrals will be made, through DYS, for additional -- and more appropriate -- intervention; however, during the past six months, no such referrals have been made. The fact that all counseling is, therefore, provided by the Program Director is of great concern to the ET, especially when it is taken into account that some regional caseworkers who have placed youth at the Ranch consider the program to be an alternative to Secure Treatment.

The Group session observed by the ET was very informal and, in the opinion of the ET, designed to meet the needs of the program rather than of the youths involved. The thrust of the group seemed to be towards finding out things (i.e. Did you stay out late?, Did you go to the liquor store?, What happened this morning?, Who was at fault?, etc.) and affixing blame rather than dealing with the reasons for the child's current behavior, how it related to his previous behavior, and what can be done to modify that behavior in the future. Most group members were not involved in the group process except in giving their opinion of who was at fault in a particular instance.

The ET questions the propriety of the Program Director drinking alcoholic beverages in front of the residents particularly while running a group and cautioning youth against drinking. This behavior serves not only to provide contradictory messages to youth, but further, is hardly consistent with the goal of providing an appropriate role model for youth. Program clients reported to the ET, and the ET observed, that the Program Director's consumption of alcoholic beverage in front of them is not limited to this occasion (see Controls section, page 54).

In summary, it is apparent to the ET that, at the time of this evaluation, there were few clinical services in operation at the SYK Ranch.

CLINICAL COMPONENT (continued)Recommendation.

To ensure that the individual clinical needs of all youth placed at the Ranch are met, the ET recommends that:

1. Formal weekly counseling periods be established and conducted in private. (Particularly important because of the limited number of staff and the crowded nature of program.)
2. A system of on-going in-service training be established for all staff working with youth in the program.
3. All staff responsible for one-to-one counseling and/or group facilitation have the academic and/or experiential expertise necessary to meet the needs of the youth in the program.
4. Treatment plans provide a more in-depth view of each youth's clinical needs as well as a specific plan for meeting those needs.

### CONTROLS

The turbulent history of the Ranch (see History section) and concerns over some of the methods used to control the behavior of residents prompted the Assistant Commissioner of After-care to explicitly address, in a March 3, 1976 memorandum to the Region IV Director, those methods which were unacceptable or must be regulated in the future. Such methods referred to were:

1. "The period of time for a boy to be tied to a counselor's waist from his own waist to deter the boy from running is questionable. The practice is to have a length of cord attached to each person tying them loosely. Rules must be set."
2. "The length of time a boy must wear pajamas to deter him from running is questionable. Rules must be set."
3. "A determination must be made if a boy is placed on the board during the day, what is a reasonable amount of time. (The board is described as piece of bed sized plywood which is set up off the ground with no mattress or blanket.)"
4. "No boy should be required to sleep overnight on the board without a mattress or blanket."

The Program Director informed the ET that such methods have been discontinued, but that DYS, rather than give him periodic updates on what he cannot do, should tell him what methods are permissible in controlling the behavior of the youth in his care.

Program policy dictates that whenever a youth's behavior requires adult intervention, limit setting, or punitive action, that youth is dealt with directly by the Program Director. According to the Program Director, his response to potentially volatile situations is the following five stage method:

- 1) To give the youngster(s) a stare, indicating his awareness of what is going on and his displeasure with it.
- 2) If the stare doesn't work, the Program Director will point out the youth(s)'s behavior.
- 3) This is, when necessary, followed by yelling at the youth(s) involved.
- 4) To threaten youth(s) with the prospect of work chores.
- 5) If all the above fail, to assign all youths to a work assignment. This is not seen as punishment,

CONTROLS (continued)

according to the Program Director, as it is generally work that would have to be done anyway. While youths are working, the Program Director will attempt to ascertain who the agitator was and separate him from the group, doing a different task under the supervision of the Program Director. While with the youth, the Program Director will discuss the situation and attempt to resolve it.

According to SYK policy, the following "house rules" are supposed to be "posted in prominent places at the Ranch" (the ET found this not to be the case):

- "1. No dope.
2. No drinking.
3. No stealing.
4. No smoking in the barn, be careful with cigarettes everywhere else.
5. Leaving the property is prohibited (except in the company of a staff member or by special permission).
6. Everyone is responsible for keeping hiself and his quarters clean and orderly.
7. Everyone contributes his fair share to the work involved in running the Ranch: maintenance and caring for the animals.
8. At all times show the people and animals living with you the kindness that you want to receive yourself."

There is no consistent system of response to youths who violate any of these rules. According to the Program Director, however, the following are the most commonly employed punitive responses:

Cigarette Restriction\* -- For lying or failing to invest in the program, a youth may lose the privilege of smoking -- usually for two days.

Room Restriction - When a youth is exhibiting hostile behavior, but a punishment is not warranted, he will be sent to his room, where he is to get into his pajamas and get in bed. The youth is to stay there until he requests a hearing with the Program Director and convinces him of a change in attitude. According to the Program Director, room restrictions usually range from an hour to one or two days.

Pig Pen/Cow Pen - Both the pig pen and the cow pen must be

\* Note: Youths who smoke are given one pack of cigarettes a day as an allowance; youths who don't smoke are given Coca-Cola or other "treats."

CONTROLS (continued)

cleaned periodically, with the major effort taking place in the early spring when the level of mud and manure in both pens, particularly the pig pen, is at its highest. Responsibility for cleaning either of these may be reserved for youth who have run from the program or, upon occasion, have been found guilty of stealing while in the program. At the time of this evaluation, three residents had recently been returned after running from the program, thereby qualifying them for the distinction of having to clean out one of the pens; however, none of the three had been forced to carry out this chore. The Program Director informed the ET that while youths are punished in this manner, it is usually used solely as a threat.

Mononucleosis - Any youth who "gets lazy and doesn't do work" is dealt with, by the Program Director, as though he were sick. The youth may have his temperature taken, be told that he has "mono," and instructed to go to bed. In the one instance observed by the ET, a youth was told that he had a temperature of 101 degrees when, in fact, his temperature was normal. When the youth is willing to accept responsibility for his share of the work load, he will be let out of his room and re-integrated into the program; however, continued shirking of responsibility may result in a relapse of "mono."

Weekend Home Visits - If a youth is not sufficiently invested in the program, he may lose the privilege of going home on weekends.

I-3 Danvers - The Program Director stated that he has an arrangement with DYS to the effect that any youth who is disrupting the program and needs additional structure will be temporarily placed at the I-3 Unit upon his recommendation. The Region IV Assistant Director stated that this was not the case. However, regardless of the actual existence of such an arrangement, the DYS youth in the program interviewed by the ET (n=4) expressed concern over being placed at I-3 by the Program Director if they misbehaved.

In addition to these acknowledged methods of control, the Program Director has, by his own admission, resorted to physical restraints, upon occasion, in attempting to control the behavior of youth in the program. The Program Director informed the ET that in four instances, over the past year, he has slapped (n=3) or spanked (n=1) youth in the program. Two of these situations involved DYS youth residing in the program at the time of this evaluation. All four DYS youth interviewed by the ET stated that they had been spanked, slapped or punched by the Program Director. ... One youth stated that he was spanked by the Program Director, who corroborated the incident. According to the Program Director. According to the Program Director, this youth had attempted to run from the program and, while being put in pajamas, was spanked across his bare bottom. ... The second DYS youth interviewed stated that he had been hit by the Program Director on three separate occasions. The most recent of these instances occurred during the course of this evaluation

CONTROLS (continued)

and was acknowledged by the Program Director. Due to the seriousness of the alleged incident, the ET referred this matter, along with another allegation involving a resident terminated just prior to the beginning of the evaluation, to the Assistant Commissioner for Aftercare for investigation (see Relationship to DYS section, page 67).

... Another youth alleged that the Program Director had slapped him in the face to wake him up. ... The final DYS youth alleged that the Program Director was sitting in the SYK truck, drinking Scotch, and asked him if he wanted "a hit." The boy said yes, whereupon the Program Director allegedly hit him in the face. This allegation was corroborated by a former staff member and another youth in the program. Two interviewees further alleged that the Program Director frequently drinks Scotch in front of the boys, often as much as three or four half-pint bottles a day.

Evaluative.

It is the ET's contention that the one constant method of control is fear -- fear of being transferred to I-3, fear of having to clean the pig pen, fear of being assigned additional work, fear of being restricted to one's room (or being given "mono"), and/or fear of the Program Director. The ET is seriously concerned with the technique of the Program Director giving a youth "mono," and the potential ramifications of this method of dealing with laziness or lack of motivation of the youth; the degree and apparent frequency of corporal punishment; and the manner in which I-3 is held as a threat over the heads of youth in the program. All behavioral control mechanisms utilized are negative rather than positive reinforcers (i.e. youths lose privileges rather than earn them).

The absence of any written policy statement pertaining to the system of controls is also of concern to the ET, especially in light of the program's history. This absence is seen by the ET as creating an atmosphere of uncertainty on the part of the youths and inconsistency on the part of the staff.

Also, the ET is greatly troubled by the fact that the Program Director drinks in front of the youth in the program, especially to the degree reported by the staff and youth and as observed by the ET. The ET can only question how a Program Director can enforce a house rule of "no drinking," and deal effectively with the drinking problems of the youth in his care, when he drinks to such an extent himself.

Finally, regarding the Program Director's complaint pertaining to DYS's lack of policy about which methods of control can and cannot be used. The ET is in agreement with him that a program is

CONTROLS, Evaluative (continued)

handicapped to a greater or lesser degree, depending upon the level of expertise of program staff, if the funding agency does not spell out clearly its expectations. It is incumbent upon DYS to devise standards, particularly as pertains to control issues, which the program can use as guidelines in dealing with the behavior of the youth in its care.

In summary, the ET is greatly concerned over the effects of the control system employed at SYK Ranch on the youth in its care. Such a system cannot be tolerated by the Department of Youth Services.

Recommendation.

It is recommended that:

1. Policy statements be devised by the program, outlining the specific methods of control, positive and negative, to be employed. No use of corporal punishment (hitting, slapping, punching, spanking, etc.) can be sanctioned.

2. The use of I-3 as a control device be clarified, by DYS and the program, and be committed to writing. In the formulation of such policy particular attention must be paid to youths' rights regarding due process.

3. Attempts be made to develop a more positive system of reinforcement.

4. DYS provide the program with a set of standards outlining those control mechanisms which are unacceptable or inappropriate.

5. Staff be hired who are capable of handling sensitive control issues in a professional and appropriate manner.

RECORDS

The records of current and former program residents are kept in an unlocked file drawer located in the program office. The office has no door and cannot be secured. Each youth's record contains DYS-forwarded information as well as material recorded and/or received during the youths's stay at the Ranch.

According to the Program Director, each youth's file should include Intake forms, medical releases, physicals, monthly progress reports and treatment plans. The regional Placement Supervisor, responsible for monitoring the Ranch, stated that each youth's file should contain all information required by Office for Children (OFC) regulations. She also stated in a monitoring memorandum of 11/30/76 that the Program Director and the D.A.R.E. liaison/Clinical Consultant have made sure that each youth's file is complete. The ET reviewed records maintained on all DYS youths who have been assigned to the Ranch since it was re-opened as a group care facility in October, 1976 (n=10). Table R-1 (see following page) presents a breakdown of the information found in each youth's record in the categories required by OFC.

Table R-1: OFC Requirements\*

<u>Youth #</u> (n=10)	<u>Face Sheet</u>	<u>Treatment Plan</u>	<u>Progress Reports</u>	<u>Termination Plan</u>	<u>Medical Records</u>	<u>Medical Release</u>
1	yes	yes	complete	no	no	no
2	no	yes	complete	no	**	yes
3	no	yes	none	yes	**	yes
4	no	no	complete	no	no	yes
5	yes	yes	complete	yes	no	yes
6	no	yes	complete	no	**	yes
7	yes	no	complete	NA	no	yes
8	yes	no	NA	NA	no	no
9	yes	yes	complete	NA	yes	no
<u>10</u>	<u>yes</u>	<u>yes</u>	<u>complete</u>	<u>NA</u>	<u>no</u>	<u>yes</u>

## Totals:

Yes	60%	70%	89%	33%	10%	70%
No	40%	30%	11%	67%	90%	30%
N	10	10	9	6	10	10

\*OFC also requires that all pertinent correspondence, and a report on following services (where applicable) be included in the files.

\*\*While these three folders contained medical records that were less than a year old, the exams were not recent enough to conform with OFC regulations.

RECORDS (continued)Evaluative.

The ET views as most serious its findings that of the ten youths who have entered the program since October, 1976:

- 1) Despite a report to the contrary by the monitoring region, not one had a complete record.
- 2) Only four had indications of medical examination within the past year.
- 3) Three did not have medical release forms.

Recommendation.

1. The ET recommends that the SYK Ranch and DYS institute a firm written policy by which they would ensure that:

- a) Each youth's file is complete.
- b) Each youth entering the program receives a complete medical examination at the earliest possible time.  
(Program has already begun to address this issue, see Medical section, page 44.)
- c) Records are secured in accordance with OFC regulations.

2. The ET further recommends that the monitoring region directly examine youths' records to see if they are complete.

## TERMINATION

Since October 20, 1975, when the SYK Ranch received its first OFC provisional group care license, thirty-three youths have been admitted to, and subsequently terminated from, the SYK Ranch.\* Thirty of these were youths in custody of DYS, the three additional youths having been referred by OSS.

Table T-1: Length of Stay of All DYS Youth Terminated - By Status

		<u>Average</u>	<u>Range</u>
Committed	(n=17)	28.6 days	1-170 days
Detention to Committed**	(n=5)	48.0 days	7-115 days
Detention	(n=8)	8.1 days	2- 16 days
	N=30	26.1 days	1-170 days

### Successful Termination.

According to the Program Director, there should be ongoing communication and planning pertaining to the development of a suitable aftercare plan and a pre-termination staffing attended by a combination of the following: the resident, the Program Director, the Region IV Assistant Director, the Residential Placement Supervisor, the DYS caseworker, the OFC Licensing Specialist and involved others. Ideally, this aftercare plan should be negotiated in such a manner as to coincide with the youth's "completion" of the program. However, according to the Program Director, this is infrequent and usually occurs only in those instances where the youth is scheduled to go home.

### Unsuccessful Termination.

Unsuccessful terminations, as defined by the Program Director, may take one of four forms:

- (1) Youths who are ready to leave the program, having accrued all benefits possible, but are forced to remain

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\* ET considers youth who have been out of the program at least two weeks as having been terminated and any subsequent returns as new admissions.

\*\* Refers to youth placed at SYK while on detention but committed prior to termination.

TERMINATION, Unsuccessful Termination (continued)

in the program due to the absence of any appropriate placement (see above).

- (2) Youths who are unwilling or unable to invest in the program, most frequently because of an inability to "buy into" the animals.
- (3) Youths who have violated house rules or have engaged in extremely inappropriate behavior.
- (4) Youths who run from the program and are subsequently terminated.

Runs.

The program is responsible for reporting all "runs" to the Rowley Chief of Police and Region IV. (The Program Director stated that the program is not required to submit written reports on youths who run and that the program does not keep up-to-date records on runs from the program.) Following a run, the Region continues to pay the program for a period of three days so as to ensure that, should the youth return, a slot will be available. It is the program's policy to accept runaways back into the program unless it is felt that the child will neither adapt to nor benefit from such an action.

Table T-2: Run Rate\* of All DYS Youths Terminated - By Status

		<u># of Runs</u>	<u>Run Rate</u>
Committed Detention to	(n=17)	16	.034
Committed	(n= 5)	3	.013
Detention	<u>(n= 8)</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>.053</u>
	N=30	22	.028

Table T-3: DYS Youth Terminated While on Run - By Status

		<u># of Runs</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Committed Detention to	(n=17)	12	70.6 %
Committed	(n= 5)	1	20.0 %
Detention	<u>(n= 8)</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>12.5 %</u>
	N=30	14	46.7 %

\* Run Rate equals the number of runs per 1,000 days in program.

TERMINATION (continued)Aftercare.

Although the program's official responsibility for a youth is ended as soon as that youth is terminated, the SYK Ranch's Program Director stated that staff attempt to maintain communication whenever possible. At the time of this evaluation, one DYS youth who had previously completed the program was working days at the program, paid through ACTION and was temporarily residing at the Ranch, on a "pro bono" basis, to work out some problems he was having at home.

The program's primary focus is upon stabilizing youth to such a point that they can successfully return to their own homes.

Table T-4: Aftercare Placements of DYS Youth Terminated - By Status

		<u>Home</u>	<u>Shelter</u> <u>Care</u>	<u>Resid.</u> <u>Care</u>	<u>Secure</u> <u>Det.</u>	<u>Unknown</u>
Committed	(n=5)	1	0	1	2	1
Detention to						
Committed	(n=4)	3	1	0	0	0
Detention	<u>(n=7)</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
	* N=16	9	1	2	3	1
		56.2%	6.2%	12.5%	18.8%	6.2%

Evaluative.

The ET is concerned over the fact that the Ranch has such a high "run rate" (.028) and that 47% of all the youth terminated have been terminated while on the run (especially in light of the short term nature of the program). It is the ET's opinion that this high frequency of "runs" at SYK is due, to a large degree, to the lack of program content outlined in the body of this report.

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\* Fourteen youths terminated on the run. Information on the remaining sixteen youths presented here.

### RELATIONSHIP TO COMMUNITY

In the past, the relationship between the SYK Ranch and segments of the surrounding community was turbulent. Allegations of abuse and of improper living conditions (until June of 1976, program youth and staff lived in outbuildings behind the current program residence.) had made the Ranch a target of controversy in the community. This controversy came to a head in January, 1976 when the Rowley Board of Health issued an order to vacate the premises for failure to meet local requirements for human habitation (see History section, page 3). In addition, according to some community members interviewed by the ET, many local residents feared that the presence in their neighborhood of a facility for delinquent youth would lower property values and lead to increased crime.

Since the summer of 1976, when the Ranch reopened in its current quarters, community hostility to the program appears to have diminished substantially. Information which the ET gathered by interviewing Selectment\*, the local Police Chief, and five neighbors indicates that while direct community interaction with the program is minimal, that which does take place is characterized by mutual cooperation. The Police Chief, for example, stated that the program reports all runs to his department, and that DYS Region IV reports the arrival of all new program residents. Selectmen and neighbors reported that the Program Director has invited them to visit the Ranch, and has generally been cooperative whenever minor problems (e.g., with program dogs) arise.

The Police Chief and one Selectman attributed the improvement in Ranch-community relations both to the program's relocation to the front house and to the Director's efforts to comply with conditions set forth in a meeting held on September 30, 1976 between DYS personnel and local and state officials (see History section, page 4).

... The ET learned, however, that most interviewees were unaware of the total number of youth living at the Ranch and of the nature of services provided by the program. For example, the Police Chief and one Selectman told the ET that most SYK residents attended the Triton Regional High School, while, in fact, no program youth have been enrolled in local public schools since January of 1977. The ET also found that although community antagonism towards the program reportedly has lessened during the past year, some issues continue to trouble the persons interviewed. Neighbors

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\*This body also functions as the local Board of Health.

RELATIONSHIP TO COMMUNITY (continued)

told the ET that they were somewhat fearful that youth placed at SYK might be "potentially dangerous." (It should be noted, however, that all of the neighbors interviewed reported that to their knowledge, program youth had not engaged in undesirable activity in the community.) Neighbors also expressed concern over whether Rowley taxpayers would have to "foot the bill" for education of program youth in the local system, and resentment of DYS's reported failure to communicate with local residents regarding the "dangerousness" of the children placed there. Two Selectmen reported that they shared the neighbors' concerns regarding the local school systems financial responsibility for program youth; and one Selectment reported concern over DYS's failure to better communicate with the community in general.

Evaluative.

The ET commends the efforts made by the Program Director to improve the program's relationship with the surrounding community. By cooperating with local officials and by attempting to become acquainted with neighbors, the Director has played an important role in the reduction of local hostility to the program. The ET is concerned, however, that the reported failure of DYS to help acquaint local residents with the program has contributed to the ignorance and apprehension which still prevail in the community. This ignorance and apprehension may impede the program's ability to become involved in community activities and make use of community resources.

Recommendation.

The ET recommends that DYS Region IV call a meeting of DYS personnel, the Program Director and appropriate community representatives for the purpose of developing a strategy to further improve the program's relationship with the community and to begin to establish positive and systematic program-community involvement.

### RELATIONSHIP TO DYS

As a result of past allegations about the program and subsequent investigations (see History section), the SYK Ranch has received a great deal of attention from the Assistant Commissioner for Aftercare and from personnel in Region IV. The Program Director feels that while he has a good working relationship with Region IV, he does have some specific complaints about it and the Central DYS office.

At the time of the evaluation, the Director expressed concern that DYS had not informed him of its intentions regarding the future of the program. He also stated that he had not been kept aware of policy decisions affecting the Ranch being made by the Regional Office or Central DYS. Such policy includes both written memoranda and verbal communications within DYS (see below) about the Ranch. Another complaint lodged with the ET by the Director is that while DYS informs him of control mechanisms he cannot use after he has used them, DYS never tells him what mechanisms he can use.

Due to outstanding concerns resulting from the investigations of past allegations about the Ranch, the Assistant Commissioner set up a specific monitoring process to be implemented by Region IV. The monitoring plan was first discussed in a memorandum from the Assistant Commissioner dated August 17, 1976. A second memorandum, dated September 27, 1976, requires that a Region IV employee "be responsible for monthly reports to [the Assistant Commissioner] on the ranch." The present Placement Supervisor for Region IV took on the responsibility for monitoring the Ranch and preparing the monthly reports during November, 1976. She currently retains that responsibility.

The Assistant Regional Director of Region IV supervises the monitoring process. It is his responsibility to forward the monitoring reports to the Assistant Commissioner. He has described the monitoring as a two-pronged process: the program is visited and/or phone contact is maintained by the regional caseworkers who have youths placed there, and the Placement Supervisor regularly visits the program and communicates with the youths and their caseworkers. He stated that a strength of the program is its ability to handle kids who are resistant to the "group process." He also stated that a problem area is the absence of a contract between DYS and the program and that the Region will never have adequate control over the program until a specific contract is drawn up.

The Placement Supervisor has stated that as the monitor of the Ranch, she is required to visit the Ranch weekly, speak to the Program Director and the youths there, review the progress of each youth, attend all staffings involving youth from the Ranch, assist the Director in preparation of a contract, review the resumes of prospective employees in conjunction with the Assistant Regional Director, and submit a monthly written report to the Assistant Commissioner. She stated that all regions desiring to place a youth

RELATIONSHIP TO DYS (continued)

at the Ranch must have the prior permission of Region IV, and that she must ensure that, aside from emergency placements, no more than four DYS youths are placed at the Ranch at any one time.

The Placement Supervisor provided the ET with the reports that she has prepared for the Assistant Commissioner since November, 1976. The first report is dated November 30, 1976 and covers the months of October and November, 1976; the second is dated December 10, 1976 and described as an update of the first report, it deals only with intakes and terminations subsequent to November 30, 1976; the third is dated January, 1977 and was written on or after February 11, 1977. The first two memoranda were received by the Assistant Commissioner on December 15, 1976. There is no indication from the Assistant Commissioner's office that he received the third memorandum, nor is there any evidence that memoranda have been prepared covering the months of February or March, 1977 (as of April 15, 1977).

These memoranda written by the regional monitor indicate that the Region is pleased with the SYK Ranch. The report of November 30, 1976 closes with the statement, "During my visits I have found a well-rounded program which seems to be benefitting all involved." The January, 1977 memorandum (which the Assistant Commissioner apparently did not receive) states, "Things are functioning smoothly and no further problems (in reference to incidents at Ranch) are anticipated."

In an interview with the ET concerning her role as the regional monitor of the Ranch, the Placement Supervisor stated that despite the Ranch's history of allegations of abuse, she considers it improper to ask youths placed there if they have been slapped or punched or otherwise abused by any staff member. She stated that if there were such incidents, she expects that the youths at the Ranch would take the initiative to inform her. She was informed by the Program Director of two slapping and/or punching actions that he participated in: one immediately preceded the evaluation period and the other occurred during it. The Placement Supervisor's "investigation" of these two incidents is described below.)

Other than those two incidents, the Placement Supervisor reportedly was not aware of any allegations of physical violence directed towards program residents by staff members during her five months of monitoring. Sadly, the ET found that when asked in individual interviews, all four DYS youth in the program alleged that they had been struck by the Program Director. (These allegations were in addition to the two that had been reported to the Placement Supervisor by the Program Director.) From the information gained through interviews with these youths, three of the four allegations involved abuse that had occurred at least five weeks before the evaluation period began. Two

RELATIONSHIP TO DYS (continued)

of these allegations were confirmed by a former staff member and one was confirmed by the Program Director.

As mentioned above, the Regional office was twice informed by the Program Director that he had struck a DYS youth residing at the Ranch. These specific incidents occurred on March 20, 1977 and March 31, 1977 and involved two different youths. The Regional Office received an incident report, dated March 23, 1977, from the program on the March 20, 1977 incident. The D.A.R.E. consultant composed a report on the second incident, based on his discussion of the incident with the Program Director; this was received by the Region IV office on May 3, 1977, thirty-three days after the incident occurred (and fourteen days later the Region submitted a report to the Assistant Commissioner of Aftercare, see below).

According to the Assistant Regional Director, there is no DYS requirement concerning incident reports. According to the Assistant Commissioner for Aftercare, however, incident reports are required on acts of violence such as those referred to above. The Commissioner of DYS wrote a memorandum dealing with incident reports dated July 1, 1976 and addressed to all regional offices, DYS units and private contractors doing business with DYS. This memorandum reads, in part,

"Within 48 hours after the incident, the head or acting head of the facility or program must send a report to:  
a) all the regional offices involved  
....."

The Commissioner reemphasized this particular policy in a second memorandum dated December 27, 1976 and addressed to "all Units."

On April 19, 1977, thirty days after the first incident of March 20 and nineteen days after the second incident of March 31, the Assistant Commissioner received written reports from the Region of its investigations into the two incidents. Both investigations were conducted by the Placement Supervisor. The entire scope of the second investigation report reflects the Program Director's version of the incident; no other interviews

RELATIONSHIP TO DYS (continued)

were reported. The report does not request or suggest the need of further inquiry into the matter by DYS.\*

During the course of its evaluation, the ET obtained information in several areas which was either contradictory to what was written in the monitoring reports, or was not covered in any of the reports. The ET determined through interviews with the Assistant Regional Director and the Placement Supervisor, that despite at least five months of monitoring they were unaware of the following facts concerning the Ranch:

- 1) Each youth is not able to sleep in a bed if he so desires;
- 2) Teenage girls regularly stay overnight on weekends and reportedly have displaced DYS youths from their beds (See Administration and Staff section, page 15 and Facility, page 3.)
- 3) These teenage girls are characterized as staff members by the Director;
- 4) A fifth DYS youth stays at the Ranch sporadically for several nights at a time at the direction of the Program Director.
- 5) One youth residing at the program as a private placement is unfunded by any outside source;
- 6) The file of every DYS youth admitted to the program since October is incomplete (see: Records section, page 58).

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\* On April 15, 1977, the Evaluation Unit submitted a memorandum to the Assistant Commissioner requesting, in part, an immediate investigation by the DYS Central Office Investigator into these allegations. The ET's decision to submit this memorandum was based on statements made to the ET by the youths involved in the second incident, statements by the Assistant Regional Director on what the scope of the investigation would be, and the ET's concern over the pace of the Region's investigation. The statements by the youth and the Assistant Regional Director were made to the ET on April 13, 1977. On April 25, 1977, at the request of the Assistant Commissioner, the DYS Central Office Investigator began an investigation into both sets of allegations. As a result of that investigation the Assistant Commissioner decided to terminate DYS involvement with the Ranch, and on April 28, 1977 all DYS youths in the program were withdrawn and placed elsewhere.

RELATIONSHIP TO DYS (continued)

There are also other areas of confusion involving the Ranch. These seem to be caused by a breakdown in communication amongst the Assistant Commissioner's office, Region IV, and the SYK Ranch Director. These areas are outlined below:

- 1) The memorandum of August 17, 1976 addressed to the Regional Director and the Program Director from the Assistant Commissioner states that the Region is to review the resumes and approve the hirings of any staff brought on at the Ranch. The Assistant Regional Director and the Placement Supervisor acknowledged that this is their responsibility. The Program Director stated that he never saw that memorandum. Full-time staff members have been brought on by the Program Director without the prior knowledge or approval of the Region. In addition, as mentioned above, the Regional personnel did not know that the teenaged weekend visitors are characterized by the program as staff.
- 2) The Assistant Commissioner and the Assistant Regional Director stated that on September 30, 1976 when it was decided to allow the SYK Ranch to reopen as a group care facility, it was agreed that the following six months would be an "assessment period" for the Ranch. They stated that the Program Director was so informed. However the Program Director stated that he did not learn that the Ranch was to be assessed during that period until January 21, 1977 at a meeting with the Assistant Commissioner.
- 3) The Assistant Regional Director stated that whenever the Program Director receives a referral from a region other than Region IV, the Program Director must receive approval for intake from Region IV. The Program Director stated that he first learned of this policy during the evaluation period.

Evaluative.

The most disturbing aspects of the relationship between SYK Ranch and DYS center on the Region's policy regarding incident reports, the process by which alleged incidents have been investigated and the thoroughness of monitoring being done. The performance of the Region in those three areas would be considered unacceptable under normal circumstances; in light of the past allegations about the Ranch and the Assistant Commissioner's explicit directives concerning monitoring, the erratic job being done by the Region is cause for greater concern.

RELATIONSHIP TO DYS, Evaluative (continued)

Reports by the Region to the Assistant Commissioner have been incomplete, inaccurate, and irregular. The lack of a comprehensive and thorough Regional monitoring job has resulted in Regional ignorance of many facts pertinent to the operation of the Ranch, causing it to supply the Assistant Commissioner with a distorted view of the program.

Recommendation.

The performance of Region IV in monitoring the Ranch and investigating allegations of abuse, as well as the lack of consistent communication between DYS and the Program Director, and within DYS between the Regional Office and the Assistant Commissioner, leads the ET to make the following recommendations:

1. A clear process for regional monitoring of programs should be designed, along with specific criteria by which the programs must be judged. Monitoring must include attention to specific services provided, as well as the general health and safety of the youths. While flexibility must be allowed so that all programs will be most fairly assessed, there should be a basic framework to the monitoring system in order to provide a consistent yardstick by which a program's effectiveness and value can be measured. Modifications to the basic monitoring format, made to facilitate the process for individual programs, must be made and committed to writing to lessen the possibility of any party misunderstanding the monitoring needs and requirements.
2. DYS Central Office must play an active role in overseeing the regional monitoring. The Central Office must ensure, at a minimum, that qualified persons are doing the monitoring on a regular basis and submitting the necessary reports and that the reports are accurate and the monitoring process complete.

RELATIONSHIP TO DYS, Recommendation (continued)

3. The Assistant Commissioner's office must reiterate official DYS policy regarding incident reporting to Region IV and to any other regions that is unsure of the correct procedure. When Region IV understands that policy, it should inform the Assistant Commissioner's office of the steps that it has taken to ensure that all units it monitors know that policy and remain in compliance with it. The ET further recommends that an explicit policy on the process of regional investigation of incidents be formulated and disseminated throughout the regions. This process should be designed to provide the Assistant Commissioner and the Central Office Investigator with a clear picture of the nature and seriousness of the incident or allegation.

4. All policy decisions regarding the program should immediately be put in writing and disseminated appropriately. The ET emphasizes that programs must be kept abreast of decisions that affect their operation. Meetings should be followed by written correspondence between the participants to ensure that all have the same understanding of the results of the meeting.

It is not within the scope of this evaluation to conduct a fiscal analysis or audit. The following presentation of "Budget and Contract" information does not constitute a comprehensive examination of those matters.

The SYK Ranch does not have a current official budget breakdown. The only listing of its expenditures is done through "monthly financial reports" that it provides to D.A.R.E. Inc. The Ranch is a D.A.R.E. program, although there is no signed contract between D.A.R.E. and the SYK Ranch. D.A.R.E., however, holds the OFC license and acts as a conduit for billing and payment between the Ranch and DYS. (In addition, D.A.R.E. provides a consultant to the program; see Administration and Staff section, page 12.) According to the Financial Manager of D.A.R.E., the billing and payment process is as follows: the SYK Ranch Program Director informs D.A.R.E. of the names of the youths in the program and the days each youth was in attendance at the Ranch. D.A.R.E. then bills DYS through the appropriate regions. D.A.R.E. makes payment to the program without waiting for payment from DYS. According to the D.A.R.E. Financial Manager, the amount of money D.A.R.E. pays the Ranch equals the amount billed DYS, minus 8% for D.A.R.E.'s overhead, and minus the consultant's salary and fringe benefits (amounting to an additional \$287.50 per month). Payment is made via a check made out to the Program Director.

The Financial Manager stated that the purpose of the monthly financial reports is to inform D.A.R.E. of the total amount of money the Program Director is spending. He stated that D.A.R.E.'s original intention was to compare the monthly financial reports with the annual statement the program is required to file with the Department of Corporations and Taxation. This comparison has not been made due to the lack of continuity in DYS utilizing and therefore funding the Ranch.

The Financial Manager further stated that D.A.R.E. is only concerned with the total expenses indicated on the monthly financial reports, not in individual line-items. This total is then compared with the amount that D.A.R.E. will forward to the program for the youths there. D.A.R.E. forwards the program's share of the billing regardless of the relative sizes of the two amounts. If the program's reported expenses exceed the amount it is due, D.A.R.E. makes no inquiry into how the Ranch meets its financial obligations. If the Ranch's reported expenses are less than the amount it is due, D.A.R.E. expects the Ranch to place the balance in an escrow account, to be used against expenses in future periods. The Financial Manager stated that, to the best of his knowledge, the monthly financial statement has almost always reported expenses greater than the amount the Ranch was due. According to the Financial Manager, if the Ranch was to close down, the money in the escrow account would revert to D.A.R.E., which would then return it to DYS.

As stated above, as far as the operation of the SYK Ranch is concerned, there is no signed contractual agreement between any of the three parties involved: D.A.R.E., Inc., the SYK Ranch,

BUDGET AND CONTRACT (continued)

and DYS. According to DYS policy, D.A.R.E. and DYS need not have a contract because no more than six DYS youths are enrolled in the program at any one time. An agreement between D.A.R.E. and the SYK Ranch was drawn up some time ago but it has never been signed. The Financial Manager considers it binding nonetheless. When the ET asked the Program Director about the contract, he emphasized that it was not signed.

In reference to D.A.R.E.'s lack of interest in individual line items on the SYK Ranch's monthly financial reports, the Financial Manager stated that other than D.A.R.E.'s overhead and the salary and fringe benefits of the D.A.R.E. consultant, D.A.R.E. simply transfers the money with no participation in, or inspection of SYK Ranch expenditure decisions. As far as D.A.R.E. is concerned, the Ranch has complete autonomy in spending money.

Complete fiscal autonomy for the SYK Ranch appears to be supported by DYS Region IV. The Placement Supervisor stated that the Program Director can do as he sees fit with the funds that DYS provides for the youths it places there. She stated that the Program Director's use of the money is not an issue; he may do whatever he wants with his salary. It was unclear to the ET as to how much of the funds paid to the Ranch were considered by the Placement Supervisor to be the Program Director's salary.

The Assistant Regional Director stated that he does not know how the Program Director spends the money. He stated that some of the DYS funding is probably going to pay off past debts of the Ranch, incurred during the eight months (February through October, 1976) that DYS was not using the Ranch as a group care facility. According to the Assistant Regional Director, the closing was due to what proved to be unsubstantiated allegations about the Ranch, and therefore DYS is partially responsible for the debts incurred in maintenance of the Ranch and the animals during that period. He had no objection to the money that DYS allotted for the care of youths currently there being used to pay off those past debts, if in fact that is the case. The Assistant Regional Director had no knowledge of, nor questions concerning, actual or relative expenditures at the Ranch. He did not feel that there was any inappropriate use of the money because he had not seen any misuse.

Evaluative.

The ET feels that the SYK Ranch, as well as any other program, should be fiscally accountable to DYS. The complete absence of written and signed contractual agreements between any of the parties involved, and the lack of financial monitoring of the program is potentially dangerous to each party. Therefore, the ET makes the following recommendations:

BUDGET AND CONTRACT (continued)Recommendations.

1. DYS should conduct a full-scale audit and line item analysis of the program's finances. As the structure of this program is, to some extent, unique, DYS must be aware of how its money is being spent, and of the amount and relative size of each type of expenditure. DYS must determine the appropriateness of all budget allocations, especially those that cannot be considered direct services to DYS youth. (An analysis of SYK Ranch expenditures for the period of October 2, 1975 to January 31, 1976 by the DYS Contract and Budget Monitoring Unit raised serious questions about how money at the Ranch was used. The issues which the report laid out have not, to the ET's knowledge, been resolved.

2. DYS, D.A.R.E. Inc., and the SYK Ranch take immediate steps to alleviate the lack of accountability by writing and signing a contract. This contract should include a budget specifying categorical expenditures. Deviations from this contract by the Ranch should not be made without the explicit written approval of DYS.

3. DYS must formulate a policy on the use of DYS money for the shelter, care and feeding of youths not under DYS authority. DYS must decide what the rate it pays is based on; and what are (and what are not) legitimate uses of the money,

SUMMARY

The ET found the SYK Ranch to be failing, almost completely, in the provision of: 1) the proper amount of living space for each of the youth in its care; 2) educational services for its residents, 62% of whom enter the program are under the age of sixteen; 3) structured and varied recreational opportunities; 4) a systematic vocational program; 5) the clinical services necessary in meeting the emotional needs of the youth in the program; 6) a structured system of controls which deals with the behavior of youth in a fair, consistent and appropriate manner; and 7) sufficient staff coverage. In conclusion, it is evident that there is no "program" in operation at the SYK Ranch and that residents spend the vast majority of their time doing nothing and/or performing, without pay, the tasks necessary to maintain the Ranch property.

DYS must bear a large share of the responsibility for the serious lack of services provided, due to their tacit approval of the status quo (as manifested through the conditions set forth as a result of the September 30, 1976 meeting and through the "positive" regional monitoring reports). The Ranch must, however, bear ultimate responsibility for the poor quality of services provided.

Due to the failure of the SYK Ranch to honor its responsibility in providing comprehensive program services, as well as the serious allegations of abuse related to the ET by both residents and staff, the ET must recommend that DYS terminate all involvement with the program.

**END**