

HOW CAN THE DAY REPORTING CENTER BENEFIT YOU?

SUMMARY

The Civil Grand Jury found that the Day Reporting Center does a great job of assisting in the rehabilitation of inmates. The work performed by the inmates provides services to non-profits that create substantial savings to the community.

BACKGROUND

The Day Reporting Center (DRC) was created in 2011 and continues to develop into what is called a “work in progress”. This facility and program was started and funded as a result of California Assembly Bill 109. Since the implementation of the Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011 (AB109), a substantial number of low-level felony sentences, which previously would have been served in state prison, must now be served in county jails. Additionally, most parole violations are now served in county jails as well. The resulting overcrowding in the jail necessitated the county to “think outside the box” and develop a program that not only eases overcrowding in the jail but provides a vehicle to rehabilitate inmates with the aim to reduce the risk of re-offense. The DRC was organized to provide an alternative to incarceration by a consortium of the departments of Sheriff, Probation, District Attorney, Behavioral Health, and other agencies. Offenders are provided with required therapeutic services.

METHODOLOGY

The 2017-2018 Civil Grand Jury visited and inspected the physical layout of the Day Reporting Center and were shown the procedures for handling of prisoners released from the Siskiyou County Jail to complete their sentences in a program under the supervision and control of the Sheriff’s Department. Facility operations, maintenance, security, and the handling of medical procedures were also presented to the Grand Jury.

DISCUSSION

The staff works with inmates of the jail upon release. They are placed in a well supervised environment to gain outside work experience. Inmates sign a contract agreeing to rules regarding work and attendance. The DRC’s services and programs provide the following:

- life training
- anger management training
- domestic violence prevention
- drug and alcohol treatment

- educational (GED) classes
- lumber milling
- furniture construction
- gardening
- culinary arts
- animal husbandry
- bicycle repair and restoration
- equine therapy

The chief goal of this program is to reduce the potential for re-occurrence of destructive behavior leading to criminal activities. One day of service in this program equals one day in jail. Some may return to their families and homes daily, while others require additional support activities. The cost of these programs is modest especially when compared to keeping inmates in the jail. Also, non-profits receive a direct benefit from the DRC's activities.

Working with animals has been found to be helpful in the rehabilitation process, as it can provide stress reduction for those involved. The center maintains a collection of chickens, pigs, goats, rabbits, turkeys etc. Eggs, poultry, and meat products are used on site or donated to charities. Horses are brought in to the facility to provide equine activities and to further animal husbandry efforts.

A well-equipped wood-working center was established to prepare rough lumber and timber for use as furniture, fencing and other products. Working with these wood products provides training and experience to augment other activities conducted at the center. Finished products are made available to non-profit organizations for their use or for fund raising activities.

Some of the many projects conducted by the DRC involve roadway and habitat cleanup projects. This can involve projects along state and local highways which help maintain the roads. The State of California (CALTRANS) provides partial funding for these activities which offset some of the program costs. The DRC supports community service projects such as the "Fire Crew Fuel Reduction Campaign" to reduce the dangers of wild fires in the county. This involves brush clearing to provide fire safe zones around buildings and structures. These services, where inmate vocational skills are developed, are available to non-profit organizations. This can also involve fence building, painting, landscaping, etc.

Siskiyou County is located in a mountainous and heavily forested area where wood burning is a way of life during the winter season for many of its residents. Since firewood is a primary heat source, the DRC assists many needy families by maintaining a large firewood production facility. Residents obtain vouchers which can be exchanged for wood to help meet their heating needs. The center collects timber through area wildfire operations or donations. Inmates cut, split, stack and process firewood to help meet this requirement. This is an example of a win-win operation that provides training and resources while serving the community.

One of the first programs offered by the DRC was gardening. Inmates have the opportunity to work in the garden learning how food is grown and processed. Food produced is utilized by the center or

donated to the Yreka Family Resource Center. Food processing and cooking is offered to inmates to demonstrate how to create a balanced and healthy diet. Over 900 pounds of produce are grown and utilized each year.

There is no substitute for education. Job training to develop skills and experience can only go so far without furthering basic educational level. The DRC is heavily committed to educational opportunity through its GED program and beyond. Every participant is given the opportunity to complete their basic education and to earn a high school diploma or more. Instructors are brought in as needed to assist in this process. This is another win-win for the inmates and the community.

A recent addition to the DRC is their “Bike Restoration Program”. Old, discarded, abandoned, but rebuildable bicycles are collected and refurbished on site and donated to kids and non-profit organizations within the county. This is another low cost and skill building program with benefits both inside the DRC and the community.

Preparing to re-enter society after incarceration is another program that the DRC emphasizes. Assistance is provided for inmates to obtain benefits such as Medi-Cal and Social Security, treatment centers, and employment opportunities. Those qualified are assisted with preparation of paperwork and steps to put their lives back in order.

All of the programs detailed above benefit the inmates and the community. The DRC would like the public and non-profit groups to be made aware of the services that are offered through their programs.

FINDINGS

F1: The width and breadth of programs offered by the DRC is impressive and the cost of operations is modest, especially when compared to keeping inmates in the jail. With woodworking, gardening, animal husbandry, bicycle restoration, and education, the center offers something for everyone.

F2: The public could be more aware of the programs being offered. Non-profit groups could have more information about services offered through the DRC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1: The County should continue to support the programs of the DRC.

R2: Steps should be taken to raise public awareness of the DRC and the work being done on their behalf. These may include posts to social media, submissions to local newspapers, public service announcements and other informational avenues.

REQUESTS FOR RESPONSES

Pursuant to Penal Code section 933.05(f), the Siskiyou Civil Grand Jury requests the Siskiyou County Sheriff's Department address the findings and recommendations in this report and take action as appropriate.

The Siskiyou County Civil Grand Jury also invites the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors to respond.

Reports issued by the Civil Grand Jury do not identify individuals interviewed. Penal Code section 929 requires that reports of the Civil Grand Jury not contain the name of any person or facts leading to the identity of any person who provides such information