

ACQUISITIONS

GRANT NUMBER

76-A3698

FAIRFAX COUNTY GROUP HOMES

Evaluator

Edward Connors
Consultant

March 11, 1977

46465

PRC Public Management Services
7798 Old Springhouse Road
McLean, VA 22101
(703) 790-8611

FOREWORD

This grant evaluation was conducted by Mr. Edward Connors of PRC Public Management Services, Inc., pursuant to a contractual agreement with the Division of Justice and Crime Prevention, Commonwealth of Virginia. The methodology used in this evaluation is documented in a number of technical reports by PRC Public Management Services, Inc., the most recent of which is entitled:

A Comprehensive Evaluation Plan, Volume II: Project Background, History, and Recommendations, Report to the Division of Justice and Crime Prevention, PRC Public Management Services, Inc., McLean, Virginia; June, 1973.

Each grant project is rated in terms of: (1) achievement of state plan goals; (2) achievement of agency goals; (3) achievement of project goals; (4) direction and coordination, and (5) deliverable products. All DJCP grants evaluated by PRC/PMS staff receive an overall rating as well as a specific rating on each of the five categories listed above. A numerical rating scale is used that provides a standardized means for overall evaluation purposes. This rating scale is as follows:

- 7 - Model Project: Excellent on any judgmental criteria chosen.
- 6 - Very Good Project: Above average achievement on any criteria chosen with several excellent areas.
- 5 - Good Project: Above average in most areas with no major inadequacies.
- 4 - Average Project: A competently managed and reasonably effective project; no particularly outstanding characteristics; or a project with offsetting wide variations above and below the norm among the five rating categories.
- 3 - Adequate Project: Below average in most rating areas, but with no major shortcomings that totally negate the intent or accomplishments of the project.
- 2 - Marginally Adequate Project: Below average project in most rating areas with major shortcomings that severely affect the intent or accomplishment of the project.
- 1 - Poor Project: Wholly below average on any rating criteria chosen. Completely ineffective in meeting its intent or planned accomplishments.

The report that follows provides an evaluation of Grant Number 76-A3698.

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COVER SHEET

GRANT EVALUATION REPORT
DIVISION OF JUSTICE AND CRIME
PREVENTION COMMONWEALTH OF
VIRGINIA

- 1. Grant Number 76-A3698
- 2. Program Category Prevention, Treatment and Control of Juvenile Delinquency
- 3. Program Title Rehabilitation

DJCP Share 5. \$ _____
 Agency Cost 6. \$ _____
 Total Cost 7. \$ 97,913.00

Requesting Agency:

Planning District Commission:

8. Name: _____

10. Number: _____

9. Evaluation Summary

State Goal	Agency Goal	Progr. Goal	Proj. Dir.	Deliv. Prod.
4	5	4	4	N/A

4	5	4	4	N/A
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Persons Interviewed:

11. Name See Attached

12. _____

13. Rank or Position _____

14. _____

15. Address _____

16. _____

17. Telephone No. _____

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

Name	Agency	Telephone
19. <u>Mr. Edward Connors</u>	20. <u>PMS/PRC</u>	21. <u>(703)790-8611</u>

Date	Time Started	Time Ended
22. <u>2/18/77</u>	23. <u>9:00 a.m.</u>	24. <u>4:30 p.m.</u>

25. Elapsed Time 7 1/2 hours

26. Vendor(s) _____

27. DJCP Program Coordinator

Address _____

Mr. Bill Coles

Type of Vendor _____

EVALUATION BRIEF

76-A3698

The Fairfax County Group Home Parents project is funded under the DJCP Program Category of "Prevention, Treatment and Control of Juvenile Delinquency." The specific Program Title is "Rehabilitation." Funding of programs in this area are specifically intended to upgrade the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders.

This present project has achieved this goal in the sense that an improvement in postdispositional environment has been provided juvenile offenders as an alternative to institutional confinement.

The project fits neatly into the movement of the Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court system to develop a range of programs to deal with the growing problems of juvenile delinquency in the County. By coordinating this project with other services, such as Family Systems and the Work Training Program, the Court is displaying an efficient utilization of services.

The Fairfax County Group Home Parents project was initially funded in July 1975. The project was refunded in July 1976 for 15 months. The purpose of the project is to provide three postdispositional group homes and one pre-dispositional group home for juvenile court delinquent referrals.

The homes are run by married couples ("houseparents"), under contractual arrangements with the County. The County reimburses the houseparents by contributing to the rent, utilities, and per diem for the youths, which is used for food, clothing, school supplies, recreation, and other personal items. The project also provides the houseparents with an annual stipend of \$9,000 per year.

The project coordinator does a good job of screening, orienting, training, and regulating the houseparents. Criteria has been established for acceptable houseparents and a screening process is employed with a Family Service's representative and the Director of Court Services sitting in to provide input.

As an attempt to improve services, the houseparents meet every other week with an experienced family counselor from the County Family Systems Program to discuss difficulties which arise at the homes. The sessions seek to open up the houseparents to alternative methods of dealing with the problems of their youths.

Placements in the homes are handled by the Project Coordinator. These placements are made as a result of referrals by the Court and Probation Counselors. While most youths are status offenders, some have committed criminal offenses. Length of residence is generally four to six months.

On an overall basis, the project is meeting its objectives. However, some problems in implementation have been identified. There have been substantial delays in (1) replacing terminated houseparents; and (2) starting the predispositional home. Due to these delays, the project has been operating at less than capacity, resulting in a waiting list of referrals.

The delays in finding replacements are due to the time it takes to advertise for new houseparents; screen applicants; select houseparents; and orient them to the project. The project has also reported difficulty in dealing with les-sors due to the uniqueness and size of the "families." It is possible that by maintaining and continually updating the file of applicants that these de-lays could be reduced. This would result in less emergency planning for re-placements. Moreover, the applicants could be used as volunteers to fill-in for the houseparents during their vacations. This would give the applicants a familiarity with the responsibilities of foster care.

There is a clear need for an analysis of the impact of the project on the youths. This type of project could be very beneficial to a certain type of child. It may be possible to identify the characteristics of such a successful placement.

EVALUATION BRIEF

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The current Coordinator has learned quickly and is performing very well. She has recently found replacements for terminated houseparents and has found houseparents to start the predispositional home. She also seems to work well with other Court personnel. This is important in dealing with Probation Counselors to place referrals.

In summary, the project holds much promise and should be given significant attention by DJCP. Economically, the project could be beneficial to other jurisdictions.

PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Name and Position

Date

Vincent Picciano
Director of Court Services
Fairfax County Juvenile & Dom. Rel. Court

February 18, 1977

Camilla Stroud
Group Home Project Coordinator

February 18, 1977

Mary Remley
Houseparent

February 18, 1977

SECTION 1. (Continued)

Grant Number 76-A3698

Evaluator Edward Connors

1) Achievement of State Plan Goals 1 2 3 ④ 5 6 7

The Fairfax County Group Home Parents project is funded under the DJCP Program Category of "Prevention, Treatment and Control of Juvenile Delinquency." The specific Program Title is "Rehabilitation." Funding of programs in this area are specifically intended to upgrade the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders.

This present project has achieved this goal in the sense that an improvement in postdispositional environment has been provided juvenile offenders as an alternative to institutional confinement.

While success of the project has yet to be determined, DJCP has met their obligation by broadening the scope of available alternatives for the court's sentencing discretion. Probation officers seeking various treatment plans to "rehabilitate" delinquent youths, or at least alter antisocial behavior, now have another avenue that may be successful with certain types of youths. Moreover, the court disposition of relegating delinquents, and particularly status offenders, to family homes in the community is a beneficial effort. One of the special emphasis areas of the new Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of LEAA is to remove status offenders from detention and correctional facilities.

SECTION 1. (Continued)

Grant Number 75-A3698

Evaluator Edward Connors

2) Achievement of Agency Goals 1 2 3 4 (5) 6 7

The project fits neatly into the movement of the Fairfax County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court system to develop a range of programs to deal with the growing problems of juvenile delinquency in the County. By coordinating this project with other services, such as Family Systems and the Work Training Program, the Court is displaying an efficient utilization of services. By upgrading these services, the Court will improve its posture to attract competent and creative staff, who will continue to improve the services.

This type of program development benefits everyone involved including the delinquents, their parents, and the community.

SECTION 1. (Continued)

Grant Number 76-A3698

Evaluator Edward Connors

3) Achievement of Program Goals 1 2 3 ④ 5 6 7

The Fairfax County Group Home Parents project was initially funded in July 1975. The project was refunded in July 1976 for 15 months. The purpose of the project is to provide three postdispositional group homes and one predispositional group home for juvenile court delinquent referrals.

The homes are run by married couples ("houseparents"), under contractual arrangements with the County. The County reimburses the houseparents by contributing to the rent, utilities, and per diem for the youths, which is used for food, clothing, school supplies, recreation, and other personal items. The project also provides the houseparents with a annual stipend of \$9,000 per year.

The contracts between the County and the houseparents are for twelve months. The contracts detail the services provided by each. In general, the houseparents are to provide a home setting, care, discipline, and "love." The Court and project coordinator provide support and guidance to the houseparents.

The specific objectives of the project, as identified in the current grant application, are:

- 1) to provide three group homes, two for boys, and one for girls, as post-dispositional placements for court cases;
- 2) to provide one group home as an emergency predispositional placement for boys;
- 3) to reduce the number and frequency of repeat offenses by youth placed in these homes;
- 4) to make available family counseling services with the intent of re-integrating the child into his/her family after four to nine months for the post-dispositional homes, and to prevent unnecessary out of home placements after disposition

for those in the pre-dispositional home.

The grant application further specifies that the project anticipates serving a minimum of 60 youths in the pre-dispositional group home, and a minimum of 45 youths in the post-dispositional homes. Comments on the achievement of these objectives will follow throughout this discussion.

The project coordinator does a good job of screening, orienting, training, and regulating the houseparents. Criteria has been established for acceptable houseparents and a screening process is employed with a Family Service's representative and the Director of Court Services sitting in to provide input.

Once houseparents are selected, they are given a general orientation. A memorandum outlining the orientation program is attached to this evaluation.

As an attempt to improve services, the houseparents meet every other week with an experienced family counselor from the County Family Systems Program to discuss difficulties which arise at the homes. The sessions seek to open up the houseparents to alternative methods of dealing with the problems of their youths. The prevalent theory utilized by Family Systems is that the youths are "acting out." That is, the youths are manifesting a deeper problem from their natural home. Along with this recognition, the houseparents are urged to inculcate self-discipline in the youths, force the youths to realize that antisocial "acting out" is not acceptable to community living

The homes are not intended to be therapeutic communities, although therapeutic counseling is available for youths on an individual basis, if felt necessary by the Probation Counselor. The group homes are meant to provide the youths with a healthy family environment. Most of the houseparents have younger children of their own. This type of atmosphere will be beneficial to youths in need of a positive environment to foster self-development.

ACHIEVEMENT OF PROGRAM GOALS

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Placements in the homes are handled by the Project Coordinator. These placements are made as a result of referrals by the Court and Probation Counselors. While most youths are status offenders, some have committed criminal offenses. Length of residence is generally four to six months.

Each youth in the homes are involved in a treatment plan. The plan may involve finishing high school, working, vocational training, or some other activity. In addition, the youths are given responsibilities around the home, such as cleaning, cooking, etc. The youths must also conform to certain house rules including a curfew.

There is also some effort to work with the natural parents of the youths. The Probation Counselors and Family Systems staff counsel the parents to facilitate the youth's transition back home, to another placement, or to emancipation.

On an overall basis, the project is meeting its objectives. However, some problems in implementation have been identified. There have been substantial delays in (1) replacing terminated houseparents; and (2) starting the predispositional home. Due to these delays, the project has been operating at less than capacity, resulting in a waiting list of referrals.

The delays in finding replacements are due to the time it takes to advertise for new houseparents; screen applicants; select houseparents; and orient them to the project. The project has also reported difficulty in dealing with lessors due to the uniqueness and size of the "families." It is possible that by maintaining and continually updating the file of applicants that these delays could be reduced. This would result in less emergency planning for replacements. Moreover, the applicants could be used as volunteers to fill-in for the houseparents during their vacations. This would give the applicants a familiarity with the responsibilities of foster care.

ACHIEVEMENT OF PROGRAM GOALS

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Because of these delays, only 14 youths have been placed in the postdispositional homes since the current grant period started in July 1976. No youths have been placed in predispositional homes.

There is a clear need for an analysis of the impact of the project on the youths. This type of project could be very beneficial to a certain type of child. It may be possible to identify the characteristics of such a successful placement. No such efforts have been made to date, although these efforts are planned. The Fairfax County Office of Research and Statistics is planning to conduct an evaluation of the project. This evaluation, as stated in the grant application, will pay "particular attention ... to attempting to define more clearly what characteristics are common to youngsters who 'succeed' in group homes as compared to those who do not."

The project should prepare as much follow-up data as possible in anticipation of this evaluation. To date, little follow-up or impact information is available. Since August 1976, two youths have successfully completed stays at the homes. Moreover, seven youths have been terminated from the project; five of whom were recidivistic runaways. Running away seems to be a significant enough problem to merit particular attention by the ORS evaluation. Some changes should be made either in screening referrals or implementation of the project to cope with the runaway problem.

In summary, the project holds much promise and should be given significant attention by DJCP. Economically, the project could be beneficial to other jurisdictions. Even more important however, is the aspect of the affable involvement of the surrogate families.

SECTION 1. (Continued)

Grant Number 76-A3698

Evaluator Edward Connors

4) Project Direction and Coordination 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The management and direction of this project is rated 4. This rating, as described in the forward to this report, signifies a project with offsetting positive and negative points. The delays, creating a backlog of referrals, clearly impinge the efficiency of the project. Moreover, the benefits of the project have yet to be documented, even though the project has been in operation for nearly a year and a half.

To set the record straight, the present Group Home Coordinator was only hired in August 1976. The delays coincided with her acclimatization to administrative work in general and the specifics of this project. The delays in starting the predispositional home are grounded in decision-making at higher levels.

The current Coordinator has learned quickly and is performing very well. She has recently found replacements for terminated houseparents and has found houseparents to start the predispositional home. She also seems to work well with other Court personnel. This is important in dealing with Probation Counselors to place referrals.

Besides selection and placement of both houseparents and delinquent referrals, some of the other duties of the Coordinator include assisting the houseparents establish accounts and records; coordinating the training of houseparents; assisting houseparents establish rules and procedures for dealing with the youths; and numerous other operational efforts. The Coordinator also has the responsibility of providing input on whether or not to terminate problem youths from the project.

In general, the current Coordinator is a very determined person and should be a benefit to the future of the project.

TO: Camilla Stroud
FROM: John W. White
RE: Training of new group home parents

The following is the orientation program designed for new group home parents. The purpose of this program is to familiarize group home parents with basic procedures and resources used by the Court in solving problems. In addition the program is designed to give Court staff as well as group home parents the opportunity to meet in a non-crisis atmosphere.

I. General orientation: four hours

- a. Goal of Court as defined by Code of Va.
- b. Organizational overview
- c. Unit functions overview
- d. Decision making:
 1. new referrals
 2. crisis
 3. termination
- e. Video tape presentation on conducting social investigations.
- f. Court movie
- g. Special programs that aid placement.

II. Visit in-community Court resources: 8 hours

- a. Morning:
 1. McLean Unit-Ken McLaughlin and staff.
 2. Alternative House-Bob Newman and staff.
 3. Girls Probation House-Joe Fedeli and staff.
- b. Lunch
- c. Afternoon:
 1. Intake - Georges Augsburger and staff
 2. Central Unit -Eric Assur and staff
 3. Detention Home - J. Melvin and staff
 4. South County Unit - Frank Pitts and staff

III. Visit State Board of Corrections -8 hours

- a. Reception and Diagnostic Center
- b. Beaumont and/or Bon Air

IV. Observe Court - 6 hours

- a. adjudication hearings (9-12 noon)
- b. detention hearings (1:30-2:30)
- c. disposition hearings (2:30 on)
Tuesday is ideal because the three types of hearings can usually be heard.

This is a recommended minimum orientation program and can be arranged to meet the convenience of foster parents. Parts I and II will involve group home parents together. Parts III and IV can be arranged individually. Foster parents who are interested can contact Camilla or myself for additional training as visits to resources not listed.

QUALIFICATIONS OF EVALUATOR

Mr. Edward F. Connors, III is a Senior Consultant with PRC Public Management Services, Inc. He has over six years of broad experience in criminal justice consulting, researching, and field experience. Prior to joining PMS, Mr. Connors held a supervisory position with the U.S. Marshal Service in Washington, D.C.

As a member of the PMS staff specializing in management analysis and development, Mr. Connors has served as Project Director of a comprehensive project implementing Management By Objectives (MBO) and upgrading the career development system of the Montgomery County, Maryland Department of Police; has served as Project Director implementing MBO in the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania Police Department; was also Project Director of a study for the Interstate Commerce Commission to improve the design and delivery of information produced in the regulatory publications; also served as Project Director for a nationwide study of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' visitor protection services at their recreation lakes throughout the country. Mr. Connors has also prominently assisted management projects in the following police agencies: Howard County, Maryland; Fredericksburg, Virginia; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and New Bedford, Massachusetts.

Mr. Connors has also had major responsibility for correctional studies in Atlanta/Fulton County, Georgia; Mobile, Alabama; and Southeastern Virginia Planning District Commission.

Mr. Connors holds a Masters Degree in the Administration of Justice from the American University and an undergraduate degree in Criminology and Psychology from the University of Maryland and is also currently attending the University of Baltimore School of Law. Mr. Connors has been a part-time faculty member at Montgomery College in Rockville, Maryland and Prince George's Community College in Largo, Maryland assisting in the development and instruction of the criminal justice curricula. Mr. Connors has also authored several articles for criminal justice journals.



END