

LUNA EVENING CENTER

The LUNA Academy facility 962 East Lake
Watsonville, CA 95076

PURPOSE

The Evening Center Program serves a maximum of 10 probation wards at any given time.

Services are available for referrals from the Juvenile Court, in response to probation violations for youth who are in need of additional supervision and structure for a brief period of time (between 12 and 30 days). It is an alternative to detention and/or an out of home placement avoidance effort. A youth may be ordered to attend the Evening Center as often as the Court deems this alternative appropriate. Meals are served on weekdays. The Evening Center program is staffed by personnel from the Probation Department, Children's Mental Health, Alcohol and Drug Program and occasional community based agency staff. The program targets youth who are struggling with drug and alcohol issues, failing to comply with conditions of probation and/or committing new offenses. The program offers an immediate response to relapse and other probation violations utilizing stabilization and transition services. Services at the Evening Center provide programming to address these and other issues, utilizing assessment as well as promising and evidenced-based practices. A list of services and activities is provided below.

WHO CAN REFER

- Probation Officers

Referrals typically come from these caseloads:

- Juvenile Drug Court PO
- Community Accountability Program
- Family Preservation and Wrap Around Programs
- Accountability Through Sanction Program
- Intake
- General Supervision Caseload

HOURS

- The Evening Center operates Monday through Friday from 4:00 PM until 8:00 PM and is supported on Saturdays by services from the Community Action Board's CRP Program.

YOUTH ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES: Youth must be on court ordered probation, ages 13-17

Youth pending court for multiple probation violations

Youth pending court for new law offenses

- Common types of referrals
 - Probation Violations
 - Positive Drug Test
 - School Related issues-Truancy, suspensions, failure to enroll
 - Failure to meet other terms of probation-missed counseling appointments, failing to complete community service
 - Run away behavior-not coming home, awol from home
 - Juvenile Drug Court Violations
 - New Law Offenses
 - Non-Violent Misdemeanors
 - Theft
 - Vandalism
 - Other minor misdemeanor charges
 - Youth pending disposition while in home supervision or electronic monitoring
 - Transition/step-down from out-of home placement

SERVICES

- Assessment (G.A.I.N. and follow-up)
- Transportation (adult to adult hand off)
- Evening Supervision (between the hours of 4:00 PM and 8:00 PM)
- Individual and Group Counseling
- Tutoring and Homework Assistance
- Thinking for a Change (Cognitive/Behavioral Programming)
- 7 Challenges (Alcohol and Drug Treatment cognitively based curriculum)
- Computer Lab
- Physical Fitness and Recreational Programming (Sports, Cardio-Training, Yoga)
- Employment Readiness and Mentoring (Job Training and Mentorship through CRP)
- Fresh Life Lines For Youth (FLY)-Law Related Education Program
- Friday Night Live Program-Life skills building program promoting healthy drug and alcohol free activities

Mission Statement

The mission of the Luna Evening Center is to help provide additional support to probation-involved youth that are struggling with substance use/abuse and other high-risk behaviors. The Evening Center will be providing a structured after-school environment where your child can examine their thoughts and feelings affecting their behavior and learn skills to make the best choices possible. It is a short-term immediate intervention designed to maintain area youth in their home and in their community

Evening Center Summary
Up to 2/1/07

<i>Total Episodes</i>	<i>254</i>
<i>Unique Episodes</i>	116
<i>Duplicate</i>	84 (72%)
 <i>Avg. # of Duplicate Episodes</i>	 3.09

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Latino</i>	210	83%
<i>Anglo</i>	37	15%
<i>Other</i>	7	2%
 <i>Total</i>	 <i>254</i>	 <i>100%</i>

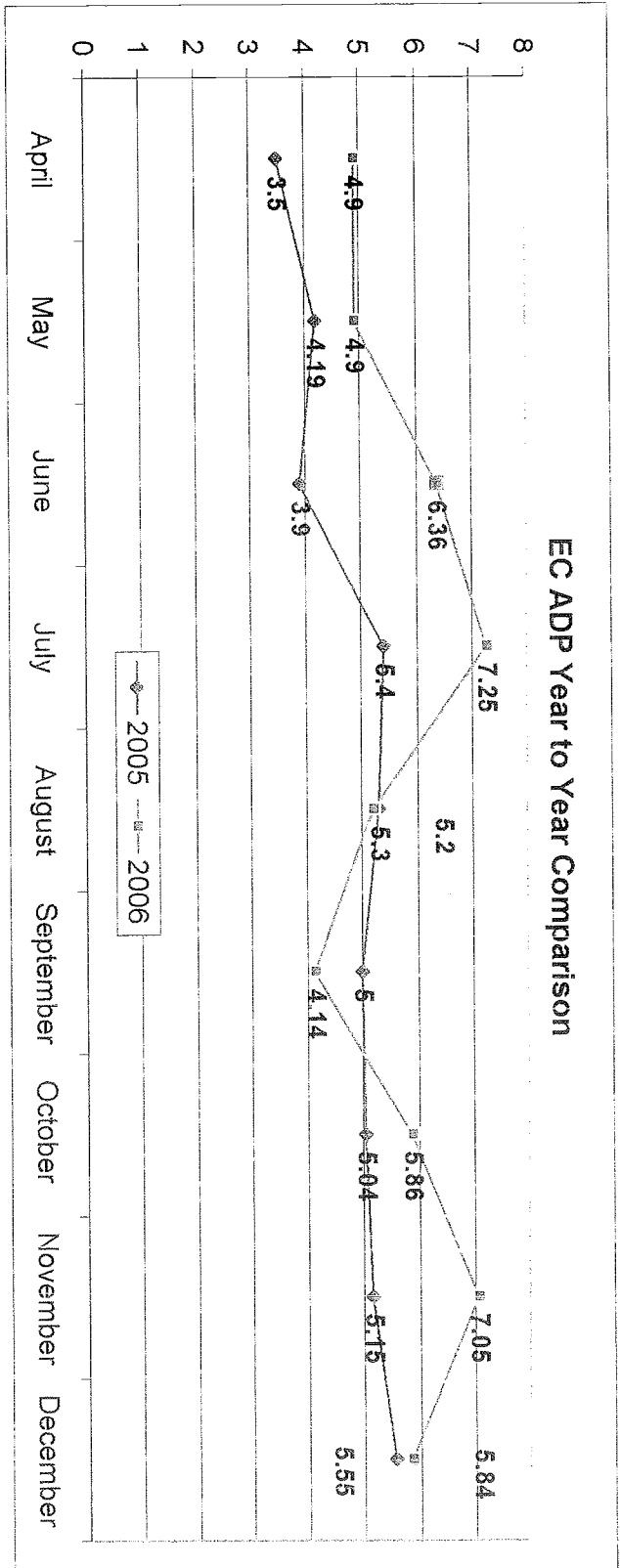
<i>Gender</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Male</i>	225	89%
<i>Female</i>	29	11%
 <i>Avg. Age-All</i>	 15.83	

	<i>Total</i>
<i>Successful Completion</i>	71%
<i>Avg. # days Ordered</i>	13.75
<i>Avg. # days Completed</i>	11.07
<i>Avg. # days for Success</i>	9.42

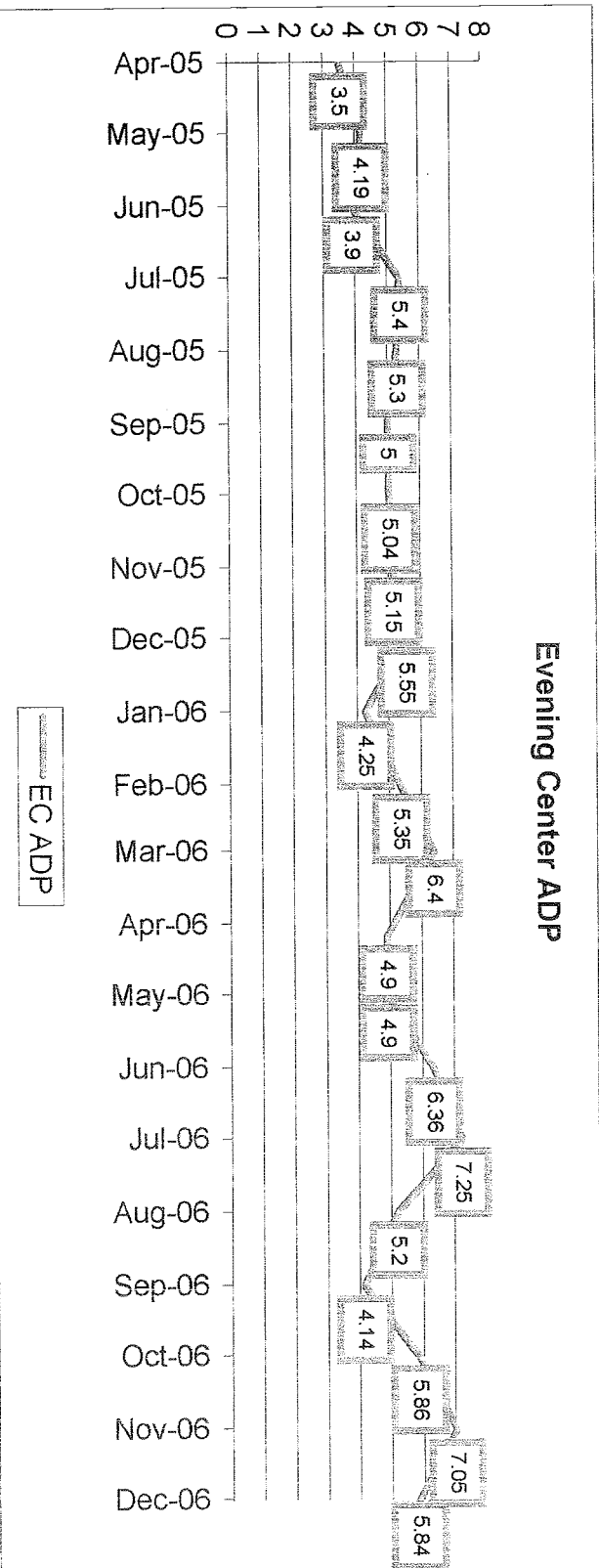
Evening Center Schedule Draft rev. 1/07

Evening Center	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3:00	Transport Probation	Transport Probation	Transport Probation	Transport Probation	Transport Probation	CRP Work Project Staff: Juan Anna
	Check-In Group	Check -In Group	Check-In Group	Check-In Group	Physical Activity-off site (Decided in advance) Snack	
4:00	Mindful Relaxation- 10 minutes Staff: MH	Mindful Relaxation-10 minutes Staff: MH	Mindful Relaxation-10 minutes Staff: MH	Mindful Relaxation-10 minutes Staff: MH	Snack	-stay in van -review outing rules w/youth
	Snack	Snack	Snack	Snack	5:00 Check In	
4:45-	FLY-Barrios Unidos Facilitator: Ben Alamillo	7 Challenges	Thinking for A Change 4:45-5:30	CRP YES Workshop Work project prep	Snack	
5:00	1x per mo.-Victim Awareness	FNL- Prep Bell Meets w/ 1 youth & preps for Co-Lead Role				
5:30	Thinking For A Change-CHMH	Friday Night Live Bella	Computer Class	7 Challenges:	Relapse Prevention:	
6:15	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	
6:45	Clean-Up	Clean-Up	Clean-Up	Clean-Up	Clean-Up	
7:00	Relapse Prevention	Natural Helpers- Presentations	Community Meeting	Creative Time	Creative Time	
7:45 - 8:00	Check Out/Clean Up- All Staff & Youth	Check Out/Clean Up- Staff & Youth	Check Out/Clean Up- All Staff & Youth	Check Out/Clean Up- All Staff & Youth	Check Out/Clean Up- All Staff & Youth	

EC ADP Year to Year Comparison

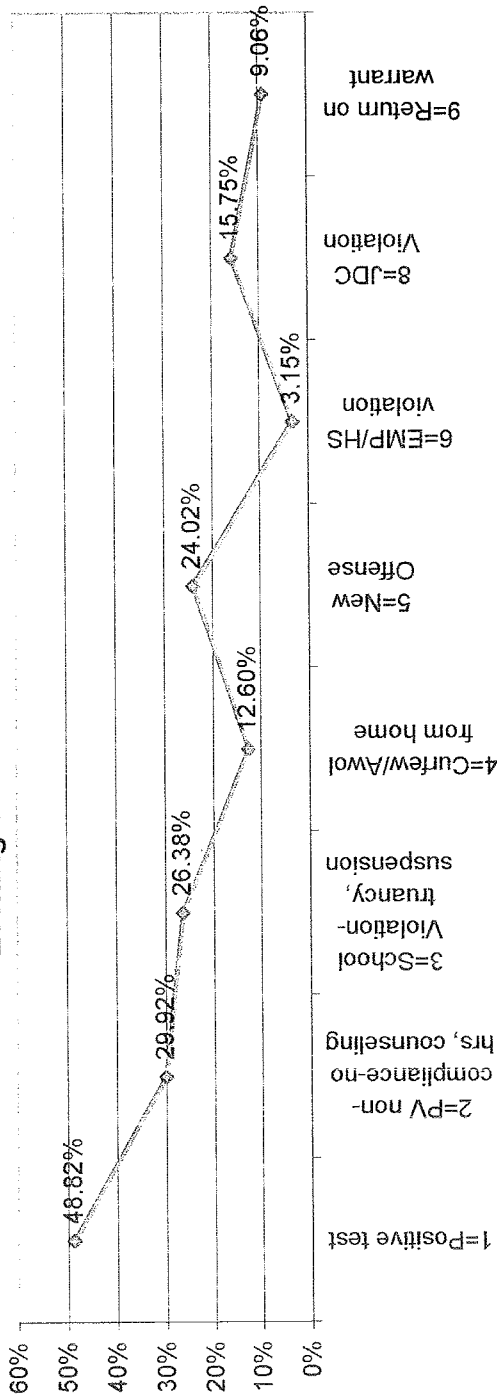


Evening Center ADP



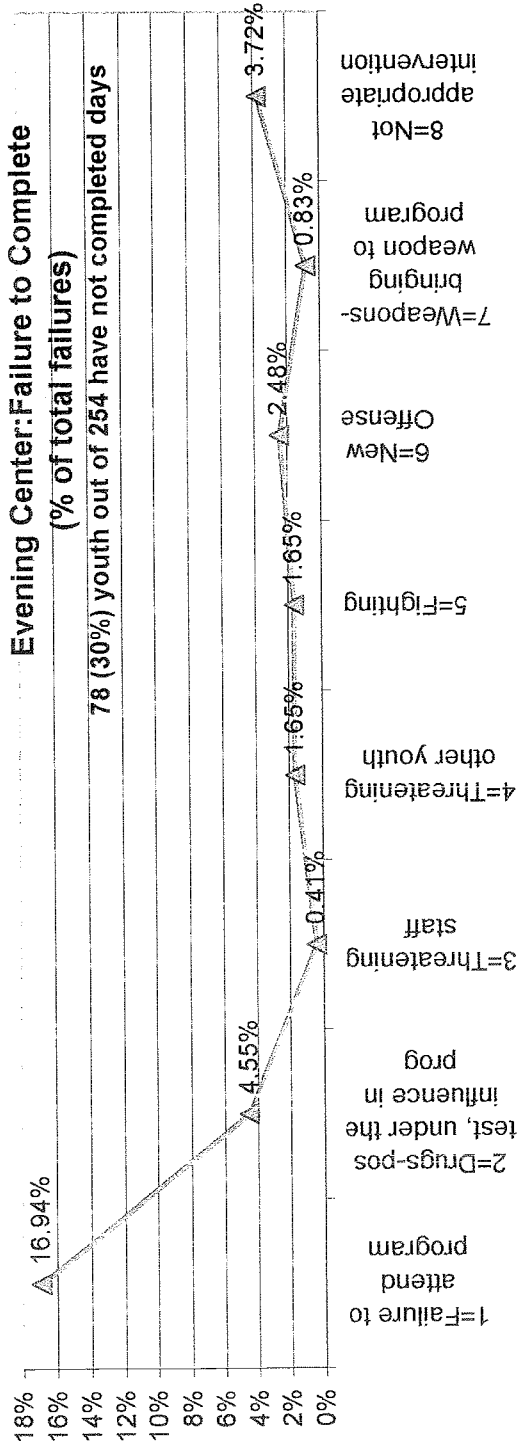
Updated 2/1/07

Evening Center: Reason for Referral

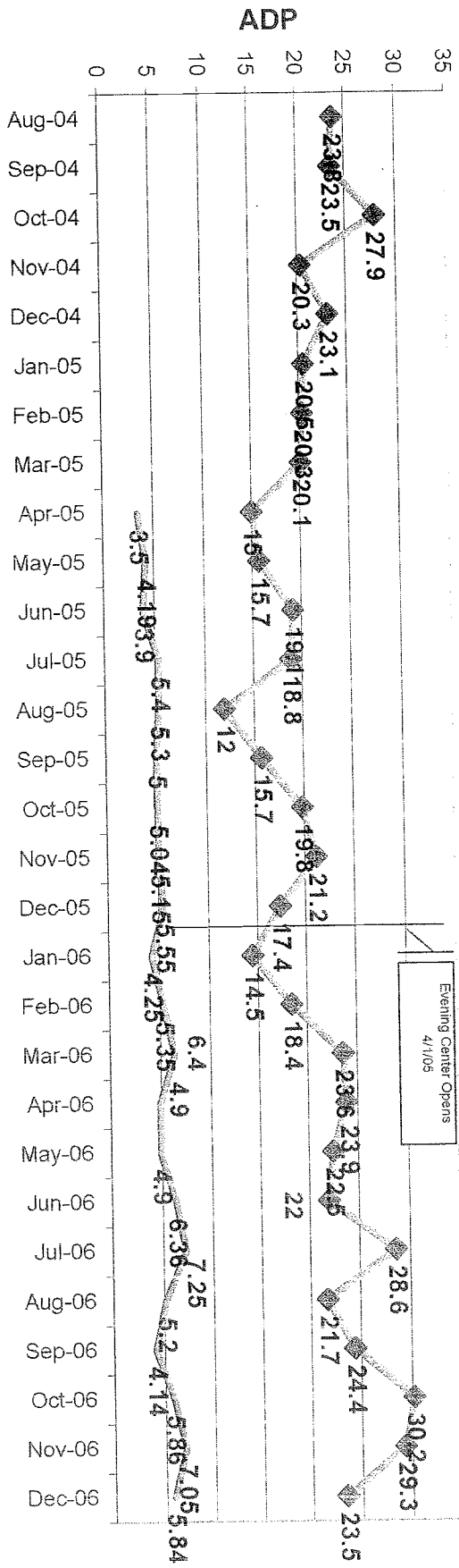


Evening Center: Failure to Complete (% of total failures)

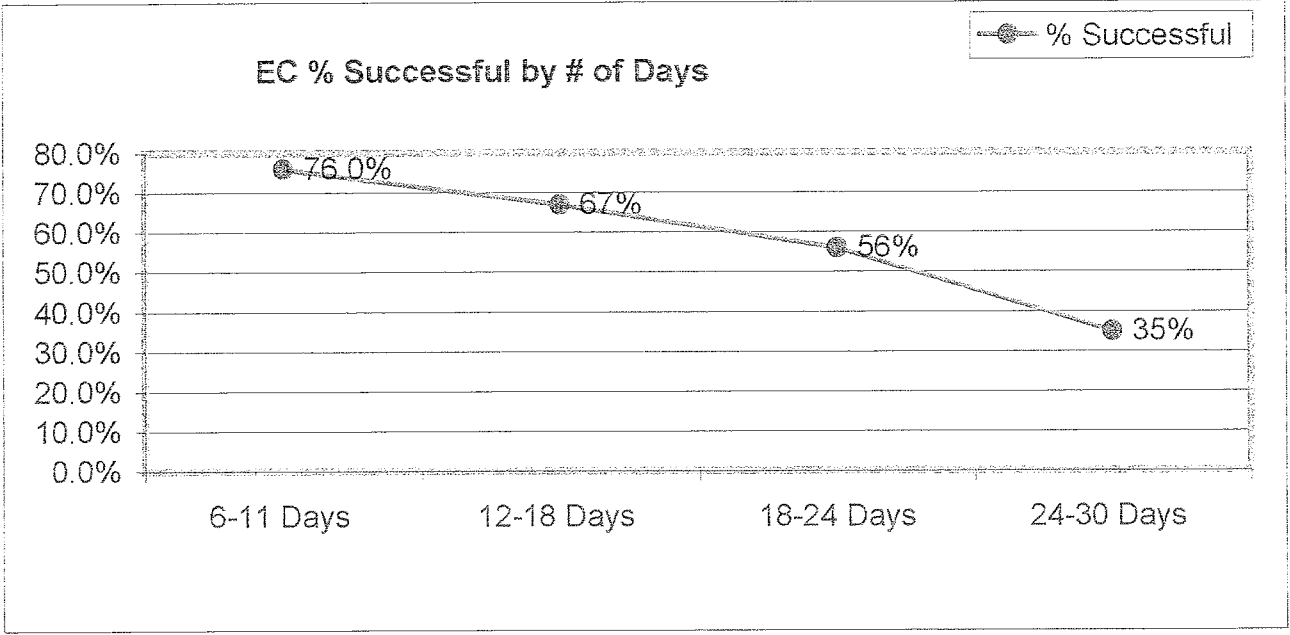
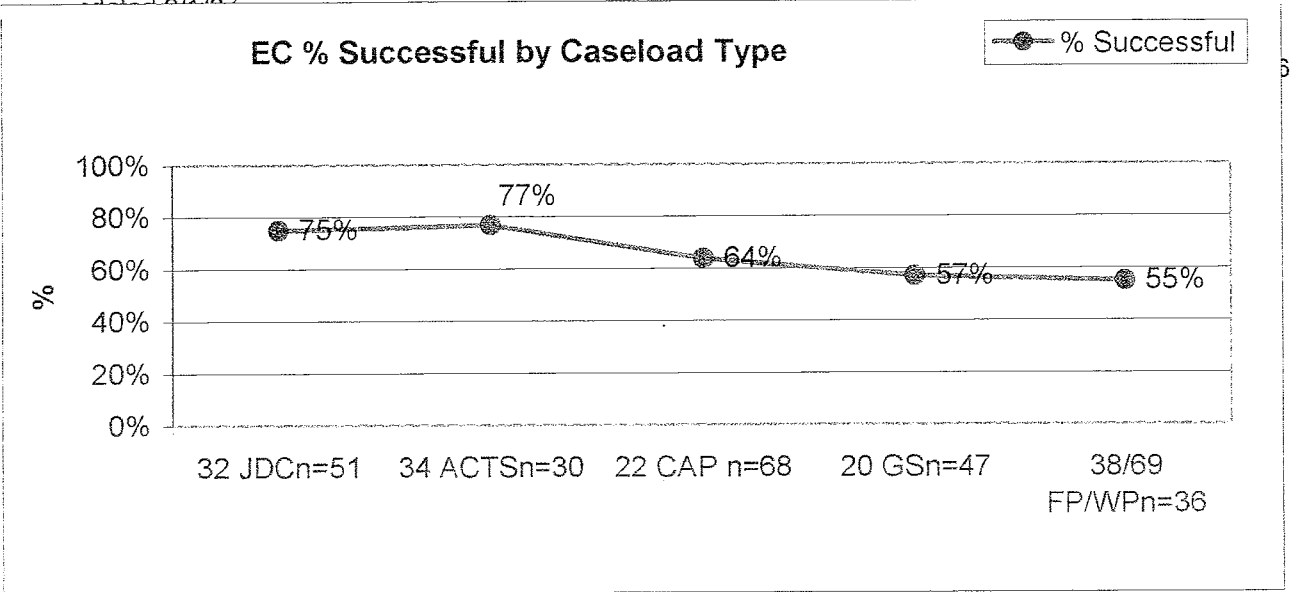
78 (30%) youth out of 254 have not completed days



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY ADP: JUVENILE HALL AND EVENING CENTER



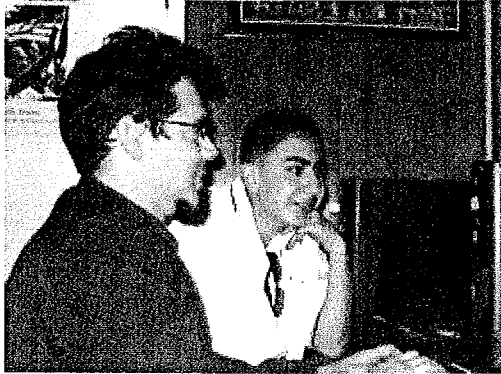
◆ Juv Hall □ Evening Center



An alternative to juvenile detention — that works

By Diane Curtis

Staff Writer



(Click to Enlarge)

With varying degrees of attentiveness, three teenagers lounge on overstuffed couches as mental health counselor Lui Lutz leads a "Thinking for Change" discussion focused on finding options to an unpleasant job.

"Pay attention to your thoughts and feelings," Lutz says in a distinctive German accent. "First, what are your feelings (when you have a job assignment you don't like)?" "I don't want to be here no more," says one youngster in a black ECKO T-shirt. "It sucks," says a young woman. "Get a new job," says a young man in a hooded black sweatshirt. The discussion continues until, finally, the participants come up with various plans for reacting in a thoughtful manner to their fictional — yet probable in real life — circumstances.

"Thinking for Change" is one element in the five-nights-a-week (plus another day of community service) Luna Evening Center program, which in turn is an element of Santa Cruz County's juvenile justice reform efforts. The key element of that reform is to make detention the exception rather than the rule.

The philosophy is based on hard data showing that juvenile detention, especially during that period after youngsters have been cited but before they have appeared before a judge, should be limited to those who pose a public safety or flight risk and not the majority who are not a danger to others, who will show up for their court dates and who, the research shows, will likely be more harmed than helped by detention. "A recent literature review of youth corrections shows that detention has a profoundly negative impact on young people's mental and physical well-being, their education and their employment," according to "The Dangers of Detention," a 2006 study from the Washington-based Justice Policy Institute.

"Not only does inappropriately detaining youth cost taxpayers millions of dollars a year, but the over-use of detention generally does not make our communities any safer," says Bart Lubow, head of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI).

The teenagers at the Luna Evening Center come by probation staff-driven van to the cozy converted store in a nondescript Watsonville shopping center next to a laundromat, TaeKwanDo studio and towing service. They are well aware that they could be elsewhere. Rather than sitting in their jeans, sweatshirts and tennis shoes, they could be in the standard-issue khakis, T-shirts and slip-on shoes at juvenile hall, where, one teenager notes, you're away from parents, school and friends and "you have to walk around with your hands behind your back."

"Detention is the gateway to juvenile justice's deep end," says Raquel Mariscal, a California attorney and senior consultant for JDAI. "The foundation chose to work in this area because juvenile justice was expensive, arbitrary, discriminatory and ineffective." Plus, she adds, it was harming children. On its Web site, the foundation said that the JDAI "has been the flagship of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's efforts to increase the odds that youth in the juvenile justice system make successful transitions to adulthood. After more than a decade of innovation and replication, JDAI is one of the nation's most effective, influential and widespread juvenile justice system reform initiatives."

The foundation cites the Santa Cruz program as a model. Since the program's start in 1997, the number of young people in Santa Cruz County's juvenile hall has decreased from an average of 50 per day to 16 with no increase in juvenile crime. In fact, juvenile felony arrests have decreased 48 percent and juvenile misdemeanor arrests are down 43 percent.

Detention "creates a feeling of shame, a label of being a bad kid," says Santa Cruz County Chief Probation Officer Judy Cox. "It disrupts school placements, separates kids from families and puts them in contact with other kids who have an orientation toward a criminal lifestyle." What Santa Cruz County is trying to do, she says, is "make sure we are using detention for those who are truly a danger in the community. But for those who are not a danger, we want to make sure we're providing evidence-based services."

The young people at Luna Center — most of whom were taken into custody for drug or gang-related misdemeanors or probation violations — meditate, are assigned chores, get mental health and drug abuse counseling, have access to reading-writing and computer classes, eat dinner with the adult staff of probation officers and counselors and have time for play at the ping pong or futbol tables.

"I'd rather be here than juvenile hall," says Jorge T., who completed his last stint at Luna six months ago and has stayed out of trouble since. At juvenile hall, he couldn't sleep and he missed his parents. He was sad all the time, he says. Besides living at home and continuing his normal life, the biggest plus of alternative detention was having an adult — in his case, counselor Mike Chavez — to talk to. "If you have any questions — about anything — you can ask him," says Jorge. "I finally listened and learned."

It wasn't quick or easy, and the jury is still out on whether what he's learned has sunk in for good. Jorge has been at Luna eight times for truancy and drug offenses and then for violating probation requirements. "The first three times I came here I didn't really care," he recalls. "The fourth or fifth time it caught my attention."

Jorge and some of his peers don't discount the advantage that just having something to do after school confers. "It keeps me occupied," he says of the academy. "Otherwise, I'd be out on the streets." Another young man, who said he'd like to get out of his gang but can't because of the certainty that he'd be beaten up if he tried, says the mandatory program gives him an excuse not to hang out with other gang members. When his detention ends, he says, he'll have to lie about after-school obligations.

Fernando Giraldo, assistant juvenile division director in the probation department who oversees Luna Evening Center, says he's never sure why something suddenly clicks for Jorge and others who finally make the decision to stay out of the juvenile justice system, but he sees it time and time again. Most frequently, the turnaround is just a part of growing up. Adolescents routinely outgrow their troublemaking, he says, but only if they're in their communities living a fairly normal life. If they're locked up, that natural growth process is often thwarted, and their surroundings, which create a sense of hopelessness for some, make them more comfortable with continued crime.

Cox says the success of the Santa Cruz reform effort lies in following the Casey foundation's eight "core strategies" regarding improving the juvenile justice system:

- Collaboration between juvenile justice agencies and community organizations;
- Use of accurate data for diagnosis and assessment;
- Objective admissions criteria;
- New or enhanced non-secure alternatives to detention, such as electronic monitoring;
- Case processing reforms to reduce length of stay in custody, expand non-secure program slots and ensure timely intervention;
- Efforts to reduce detention of those awaiting placement or who have committed minor probation violations;
- Reducing racial disparities; and
- Improving conditions of confinement.

Cox estimates that Santa Cruz County has saved millions of dollars in lockup costs, which statewide range from \$70,000 to \$100,000 per year per child. She says the county was lucky it didn't get a grant it had sought for a new juvenile detention center with an operational cost of \$1.5 million a year. They don't need it, she says.

While some California counties like Sacramento, Santa Clara, Ventura and Placer are embracing the alternative-to-detention culture, others are finding the transition slow going. Alameda County is making inroads with a program called Pathways to Change. San Francisco has offered a program called Detention Diversion Advocacy Project. But Bill Siffermann, who was recruited two years ago by Mayor Gavin Newsom to be the city's chief juvenile probation officer specifically because he had such success with JDAI in Chicago, says he's frustrated by the lack of progress. "I'm not happy with the stage it's at here," he says. "We want probation officers to consider these alternatives more regularly and make more effective engagements with community-based providers. But there is a real cultural impasse here between CBOs (community-based organizations) and probation officers . . . I have to develop a greater collaboration between social work and probation."

Mariscal says every community should be implementing alternative-to-detention programs. "If you can do it in Chicago, you can damn well do it anywhere," she says.