

## **Juvenile Justice Community Assessment And Referral Center (CARC)**

Report of the 1999-2000 San Francisco Civil Grand Jury

### **SUMMARY**

The Civil Grand Jury (CGJ) studied the San Francisco Juvenile Justice Comprehensive Action Plan (the Action Plan) and specifically one of its six interventions, the Community Assessment and Referral Center (CARC). CARC acts as an alternative to incarceration at Juvenile Hall for youths 12 to 17 years of age arrested for a variety of criminal offenses. CARC is a referral center that provides a single point of entry for crisis intervention, assessment, service integration, referral and mentoring. This is a three-year test program and a first in the country.

Making CARC operational was a difficult and slow process, especially because it involved a variety of agencies and a departure from the norm. However, CARC is now operational and obtaining good results. The CGJ found that CARC, as part of the Action Plan, is an excellent program.

The CGJ has the following concerns:

- There is no method by which to easily update or amend the Action Plan or otherwise reach consensus in a public forum regarding significant issues such as a diversion plan to serve "high-risk" youth;
- Despite a drop in juvenile crime since 1988, there has been no decrease in the census at Juvenile Hall;
- That agreement be reached defining the type of juvenile crime to be referred to CARC instead of to the Youth Guidance Center (YGC);
- That there be a proper forum in which to present the formal evaluation of CARC done by the National Commission of Crime (NCCD) which is due in June of 2000. A proper forum would ensure enlightened dialogue and input from the public.

### **BACKGROUND**

CARC is one of six new programs that comprise San Francisco's Action Plan. The Action Plan was developed in 1997 at the request of the Mayor and under the auspices of both the Mayor's Criminal Justice Council and the California Board of Corrections (CBC). The goal of the Action Plan was not only to reduce delinquency and recidivism, but also to offer an opportunity to the offending youths to develop character. The six programs include:

1. CARC
2. The Life Learning Academy on Treasure Island;
3. The Bayview Safe Haven;
4. The Early Risk and Resiliency Program located in the Mission;
5. Mission Safe Corridor; and
6. The Life Learning Residential Center for Girls on Treasure Island.

These six programs were designed to fill the most critical gaps in San Francisco's juvenile justice system, providing intensive services for youths at risk as well as youths

already involved in the juvenile justice system. The San Francisco Board of Supervisors enacted legislation establishing a Coordinating Council for the Action Plan. The goal of the Coordinating Council was to develop a national model to reduce juvenile crime, and develop healthy youths, families, and communities. Those Coordinating Council members who signed this letter of commitment to the Action Plan are listed on Attachment 1.

The Action Plan also included the Juvenile Justice Comprehensive Circle Implementation Chart (Attachment 2). Funding came from a variety of sources, including the CBC, the City and County of San Francisco, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

CARC opened on a very limited basis on May 4, 1998, and did not go city-wide until the end of 1999.

In June 1999, four graduate students at the Goldman School of Public Policy, University of California at Berkeley, released a study titled, "Juvenile Justice Reform in San Francisco: An Examination of the Community Assessment and Referral Center" (hereafter referred to as the U.C. Study). The U.C. Study concluded, "...the severe underutilization of CARC has resulted from a lack of leadership and interagency collaboration." The U.C. Study became the foundation for news media articles such as, "*Study Blasts S.F. Juvenile Program Center for offenders said to help too few*" (San Francisco Chronicle, June 29, 1999). Because of this report, and the media attention that ensued, the CGJ decided to investigate CARC.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The investigation of the CGJ included interviews with the following:

- CARC staff members;
- Probation Department staff and a member of the Probation Commission;
- San Francisco Police Officers;
- A Graduate student who participated in the U.C. Study at the Goldman School of Public Policy;
- A staff member of Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth;
- A member of the Mayor's Criminal Justice Council;
- A staff member of the Center on Juvenile Criminal Justice;
- A member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors;
- A member of the staff of Delancy Street Foundation.

To understand the purpose and the agencies responsible for CARC, we reviewed the San Francisco Comprehensive Juvenile Justice Action Plan, Volumes I and II. To identify the number and type of crimes for which juveniles are arrested, we researched the Juvenile Probation Department's 1997 and 1998 Combined Annual Reports and their December 1999 Monthly Report. Since CARC opened in 1998 and, therefore, did not influence any data included in these reports, we also reviewed CARC's progress through interviews and CARC's Program Narrative Progress Reports to the CBC:

- Progress Report #1, 7/1/97 to 12/31/97;
- Progress Report #2, 1/1/98 to 6/30/98;
- Progress Report #3, 7/1/98 to 12/31/98;
- Progress Report #4, 1/1/99 to 6/30/99.

CARC's annual budgets were also reviewed, as well as correspondence with various City agencies and youth advocates.

## **RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION**

### **Community Assessment and Referral Center**

Members of the CGJ visited CARC on August 26, 1999. CARC is located in the Tenderloin YMCA at 220 Golden Gate Ave. The YMCA provided the location, valued at between \$15,000 and \$20,000. The facility includes a waiting room space for an examination by a psychiatric technician, booking area, family meeting rooms, private rooms for individual assessment interviews, rooms for individual counseling, and rooms for youths in need of emergency shelter in the event family cannot be reached.

The initial establishment of CARC proved to be a very difficult task, especially since it involved a wide variety of government agencies needing to implement new ideas and new partnerships. CARC Progress Report #1 (Attachment 3) describes the research done to determine the anticipated client load. The report observes that, before CARC was ready to process youths, extensive site renovation plans for the facility space; permit process, architectural services, and the development of a computer system were needed.

During this time several City agencies also donated resources to CARC, such as a fingerprint and photo machine from the Police Department, a metal detector from the U.S. Marshal's Office, and a terminal for data transfer from the Probation Department. CARC staff positions needed to be filled and training scheduled.

CARC opened on its doors on limited basis on May 4, 1998, five days a week, ten hours per day (Monday through Friday, Noon to 10 PM).

On April 1, 1999, CARC expanded its hours of operation to six days per week, sixteen hours per day, (Monday through Saturday, 10:00 AM to 2:00 AM), which are also its current hours of operation. The Action Plan originally called for CARC to be open 7 days a week, 24 hours per day. We were advised that the hours were changed in order to reach the greatest number of eligible youths in the most efficient manner. It was the opinion of the staff and various City agencies that keeping CARC open for the extended days and hours would result in an underutilization of CARC and its resources.

After CARC opened, time was needed to train police officers in the various precincts. The Police Department loaned a police officer to CARC for purposes of liaison with the Police Department and for training of police officers. Training included the CARC location, CARC procedures, the exceptions to the arrested juveniles taken to CARC because of the type of crime with which the juveniles were charged (Attachment 3), and those Police Department policies and procedures that also applied to CARC. Originally, CARC was to serve arrested juveniles from only five precincts. However, since the Action Plan was amended to include the entire city, time was needed to train approximately 1100 police officers. Training was finished by December of 1999.

The Probation Department also needed time to hire and train personnel to staff CARC. Prior to June 28, 1999, the Probation Department was involved in a labor dispute with the Probation Officers Union. The dispute prevented the Department from hiring new probation officers. Since the settlement of the dispute, 20 new probation officers have

been hired; presently, four officers are assigned to CARC, and five other officers are assigned to the other five programs that round out the Action Plan.

Currently on each shift at CARC, there is a deputy sheriff who is responsible for security, a licensed psychiatric technician who does a screening for drugs and severe emotional problems, a probation officer to whom the arresting police officer releases the juvenile delinquent, and case managers (social service workers). The juvenile meets initially with the deputy sheriff. The deputy sheriff's duties were described as including not only security but also the opportunity to talk to and attempt to calm the juvenile since many of them are first offenders. The juvenile is then taken to the psychiatric technician who does the screening for drugs. The psychiatric technician at that time was seeing approximately 35 to 48 juveniles per month (this number has since been growing steadily). After the health and psychological examination, the staff meet with the juvenile's family. If the juvenile and the parents agree to a plan, a mentor is then assigned and the juvenile is then released to a probation officer.

The CGJ then interviewed members of the staff, including personnel from the Detention Diversion Advocacy Program (DDAP) and Delancy Street, who spoke enthusiastically of the successful results of their experience of one-on-one with juveniles.

At CARC there is a collaboration of many city agencies including schools, probation and police officers, sheriffs, deputy district attorneys and public health services. Members of community-based organizations such as Delancy Street Foundation, Huckleberry Youth Programs and DDAP work with CARC in developing plans. Members of the staff and collaborators with whom members of the CGJ met were extremely enthusiastic and optimistic as to the future of CARC.

#### Population of Youths Served

Originally, the program was to serve eligible youths from areas of the highest juvenile crime, the Mission, Tenderloin, Bayview-Hunter's Point, Ingleside, Southern and Chinatown neighborhoods. However, in an effort to serve more youth, CARC has been open citywide since December of 1999.

Also, CARC originally was to be a referral center for all juvenile crime. However, under the contract with Delancy Street, exceptions to the youths taken to CARC were made (see Attachment 4). Out-of-county youth, youths arrested for serious felonies, and youths who presented a danger to themselves or to others are not taken to CARC, but instead are taken directly to the YGC. This reduced the number of youths who were eligible for CARC's services. We were advised that the CBC had requested that the services of CARC be limited to the "low-risk" youths rather than to include "high-risk" youths for purposes of the pilot study. The CGJ was also advised that (a) DDAP is working with CARC, and (b) many of the "low-risk" youths who are referred to CARC have histories of "high-risk" crime and drug problems. As of January 27, 2000, of the 550 juveniles processed at CARC:

- 300 cases had been closed;
- 80 percent of the cases can be labeled a success;
- 50 percent of the cases involved a minor in his/her first offense;
- 17 percent can be defined as minor offenses;
- 40 percent of the cases were youths involved in gangs.

It was also stressed that there is a great need for CARC to focus on giving juveniles increased mental health resources.

The number of youths served at CARC has been increasing. The CGJ was advised by CARC that as of March 22, 2000, CARC had served 652 youths and that 392 of those cases had been closed. Of those 392 cases, 77 percent were closed successfully, 14 percent were unsuccessful in that the youths had identified needs but did not participate in the case plan developed and 9 percent were closed due to "no fault" of the youths.

Regarding the CBC request that the services of CARC be limited to the "low-risk" youth, several advocates voiced a concern that, while CARC was performing well, the overall program was not targeting "high-risk" youths (see Attachment 4). It was felt that, in order for the Action Plan to succeed, more diversion should be offered to the "high-risk" youths, including serious and violent offenders, and that there be a delineation of duties of the probation officers and case workers.

There also was general concern of all those interviewed that the number of youths detained at the YGC has not been reduced. Despite a reduction in the juvenile crime rate (see table below), and the many proactive programs, which have been started by YGC, the YGC population has remained consistently high. Everyone interviewed by the CGJ expressed concern about this fact. The Probation Department stated that they are concerned about the daily population not decreasing and are studying population management. They have hired a new person to study why the population has not decreased. The Department is also holding daily meetings and is reviewing the best practices of other cities. The Implementation Team (see Attachment 1) has also hired an outside investigator to study the population management at the YGC.

YEAR	YGC DAILY POPULATION	JUVENILE LAW VIOLATIONS*
1993	115	5888
1994	127	5679
1995	112	5341
1996	129	6038
1997	122	5521
1998	119	5222
1999	119	4872

\* Juvenile Probation Department 1997 and 1998 Combined Annual Reports.

Regarding the goal of reducing daily populations, a member of the Board of Supervisors advised the CGJ that DDAP had worked with the member of the Board of Supervisors and the Mayor in order to reduce the census at the YGC in 1996. The Supervisor

expressed the wish that DDAP could work with the Probation Department. Requests for funding for DDAP have been made by this Supervisor and a judge of the Superior Court who handles juvenile cases (Attachments 5 and 6) as well as the District Attorney's office.

The CGJ was apprised that there appears to be a lack of consensus among the advocates and the participants in the Action Plan as to the respective roles of CARC and the YGC, a plan to serve "high-risk" youth, the role of probation officers and case workers, and reduction in YGC census. This lack of a consensus may well be due to the fact that there is no method by which to easily update or amend the Action Plan or otherwise reach consensus in a public forum. For instance, there are no regularly scheduled meetings of the Action Plan signatories, nor are any planned. Currently, the Executive Director for the Action Plan must individually discuss proposed changes with each signatory. This method may work well for some policy decisions, but based on our review does not appear to be a satisfactory method by which to resolve more significant issues.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The CARC pilot project ends in June 2000. It is unfortunate that an evaluation of CARC by the NCCD will not be finished by the time this CGJ report is due. Our conclusions and recommendations will be made with the assumption that the evaluation will be positive and that CARC will continue as an integral part of the Action Plan. All those interviewed were of the opinion that the San Francisco Comprehensive Juvenile Local Action Plan was excellent. There was also agreement by the vast majority of those interviewed that CARC is doing a good job.

Our interviews and review of reports and correspondence lead to the following conclusions and recommendations:

***1. CARC is presently not underutilized, but rather a pilot project that is improving with time. CARC should be continued following completion of the pilot project.***

One of the earlier criticisms of CARC was that it was greatly underutilized. This may have been true during the time period when the U.C. Study was undertaken, but since then this finding has changed significantly. As noted in the Results above, CARC was establishing the various components of its trial program during the time that research for the U.C. Study was performed. As such, CARC could not be expected to demonstrate the level of utilization expected by those performing the U.C. Study. Based on our review of this pilot project, we find that CARC is beginning to show its value. The number of juveniles served has increased, and more City districts are being served. Further, the Probation Department also does not feel that CARC is underutilized because it is set up as a pilot project, which will be properly evaluated by the NCCD, sometime in June 2000.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

CARC should be continued after the pilot program period. A meeting should be set as soon as possible after the NCCD evaluation. This meeting should give all interested parties an opportunity to be heard on issues that will be addressed in the NCCD evaluation and raised in this CGJ investigation.

Required Response

Mayor  
Board of Supervisors  
Criminal Justice Council  
Juvenile Justice Commission  
Delinquency Prevention Commission

**2. *Despite a drop in juvenile crime in San Francisco since 1988, the census at Juvenile Hall has remained consistently high. One of CARC's goals is to decrease the number of juveniles detained at the YGC.***

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

In light of the fact that despite the drop in juvenile crime and the success of CARC there continues to be a high number of juveniles detained at YGC, we would recommend that the Board of Supervisors obtain copies of the population management investigation of both the Implementation Team and the Probation Department and schedule a hearing as to why there has not been a decrease in the number of juveniles detained at YGC.

#### Required Response

Board of Supervisors  
Delinquency Prevention Commission

**3. *There are exceptions as to which juvenile offenders are referred to CARC (see Attachment 4). The Implementation Team should identify resources needed to service "high-risk" youths and those with mental health needs.***

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

If CARC is continued after the NCCD evaluation, the issue of the type of cases that should be referred to CARC should be made clear. While the decision of the exception of juveniles from who are referred to CARC may be that of the CBC, it is recommended that leadership be taken either by the Implementation Team or the Coordinating Council of the Mayor's Criminal Justice Council in order to provide the CBC with information so that a well-informed decision can be made.

#### Required Response

Mayor  
Juvenile Probation Department  
San Francisco Police Department  
Criminal Justice Council  
Juvenile Justice Commission  
District Attorney  
Public Defender  
Department of Public Health

**4. *A proper public forum is needed to present the NCCD evaluation and ensure enlightened dialogue with and input from the public.***

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

A meeting should be set as soon as possible after the NCCD evaluation before either the Implementation Team or the Mayor's Criminal Justice Council. Consideration should be given to soliciting help from the signatories of the Action Plan as well as San

Francisco State University and Golden Gate University (Attachments 7 and 8). This meeting should give all interested parties an opportunity to be heard on issues that will be addressed in the NCCD evaluation and raised in this CGJ investigation namely: usage of CARC; the stable population at Juvenile Hall over the years; exceptions to juvenile offenders who are referred to CARC; programs that target "high-risk" youth; removing any impediments to success; mediating differences and misunderstandings thereby ensuring coordination among agencies; optimizing the allocation of funds among the various service providers; implementing effective leadership to ensure accountability, coordination and communication; requiring accountability of all participants by demanding detailed reports that measures performance; and lastly, getting consensus from all the participants as to the future of CARC.

Required Response

Mayor  
Board of Supervisors  
Criminal Justice Council  
Juvenile Justice Commission

**5. *There is no easy method to update or amend the Action Plan or otherwise reach consensus. For instance, there are no regularly scheduled meetings of the Action Plan signatories, nor are any planned. There should be a formalized method by which significant issues can be referred to all participants in the Implementation Team, which was established by the Mayor as an objective body to implement the Action Plan and which is in the best position to try to reach resolution in a manner which is of greatest benefit to the juvenile offenders.***

**RECOMMENDATION**

The Implementation Team should agree to meet on a regular basis, at least twice a year, to discuss significant issues related to the Action Plan.

Required Response

Mayor  
Juvenile Probation Department  
Criminal Justice Council  
Juvenile Justice Commission

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ATTACHMENT 1  
COORDINATING COUNCIL'S LETTER OF COMMITMENT

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ATTACHMENT 2  
JUVENILE JUSTICE COMPREHENSIVE CIRCLE  
IMPLEMENTATION CHART

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ATTACHMENT 3  
COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT AND REFERRAL CENTER  
PROGRAM NARRATIVE

PROGRESS REPORT #1  
7/1/97 TO 12/31/97

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ATTACHMENT 4  
CARC REFERRAL CENTER  
GUIDELINES FOR TAKING YOUTH TO EITHER  
CARC OR YOUTH GUIDANCE CENTER  
BASED ON TYPE OF CHARGE

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ATTACHMENT 5  
LETTER DATED AUGUST 24, 1999,  
FROM SUPERVISOR MICHAEL YAKI  
TO  
JESSE WILLIAMS, CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

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ATTACHMENT 6  
LETTER DATED SEPTEMBER 2, 1999,  
FROM SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE KEVIN MCCARTHY  
TO  
SUPERVISOR MICHAEL YAKI

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ATTACHMENT 7  
LETTER DATED MARCH 13, 1997,  
FROM ROBERT A. CORRIGAN, PRESIDENT,  
SAN FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY  
TO  
MIMI SILBERT, PRESIDENT AND CEO,  
DELANCEY STREET FOUNDATION

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ATTACHMENT 8  
LETTER DATED MARCH 14, 1997,  
FROM THOMAS M. STAUFFER, PRESIDENT,  
GOLDEN GATE UNIVERSITY  
TO  
GOLDEN GATE UNIVERSITY COLLEAGUES