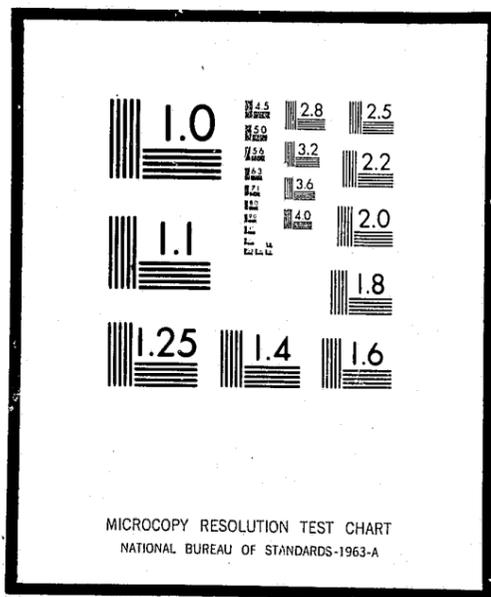


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WINONA COUNTY ^(MN) GROUP HOME

A Preliminary Evaluation Report

prepared by

Project Evaluation Unit

Governor's Commission on Crime Prevention and Control

April, 1974

16687
EVALUATION

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I. DESCRIPTION

A. THE PROJECT

1. Background Information

This preliminary evaluation of the Winona County Group Home, known as "Main House," covers the period from the project's beginning in January, 1973 to February 26, 1974.

Main House is currently in its second year of funding, with its present budget composed of \$24,855.00 in federal support and \$26,601.00 in matching funds and state "buy-in." In its initial funding period, the project received \$31,700.00 in federal support and \$22,662.00 in matching funds and state "buy-in." For its third year of funding the project is requesting \$20,890.00 in federal support and will supply \$25,000.00 in matching funds.

Prior to the opening of Main House, the Winona County Department of Family Services cooperated with the Department of Court Services in finding foster home placements for youths in the custody of the court. In spite of the cooperation, there were not enough placements available and some youths were either sent to state juvenile correctional institutions or back home against the better judgment of the Department of Court Services.

The Director of the Court Services department, who had formerly worked for the state Department of Corrections in the development of group homes, developed the grant application which resulted in the creation of the project. He currently serves as the Project Director on a 60% basis. The Winona County Board of Commissioners serves as the sponsoring unit of government and also supplies the matching funds for the project's budget.

The residence where the project is located is owned by Winona County.

2. The Residence

The Main House residence is located at 265 Main Street, Winona, two blocks from the city's business district. Churches and buildings comprise the immediate surroundings of the residence, with a public park directly across the street from the front entrance. The residence itself was originally a rectory for an adjacent church. It is a three story brick structure with twelve rooms. The first floor contains the kitchen and dining room, a "dayroom" or activity room and living quarters for the house parents. The second floor contains bedrooms and a bathroom for the clients. Each bedroom can serve two clients, but some clients have a private room when the project is not operating at capacity.

The project is designed to provide a residence in the community and treatment for ten male clients above thirteen years of age. It draws its clientele from the Winona County Department of Court Services, which refers youths who are in the custody of the department. The department also acts in a diversionary capacity by referring youths who have not yet been adjudicated. The project also accepts youths on a reentry basis, youths returning from juvenile institutions whom the project staff feel would benefit from a transition from the institution to their home.

3. The Project's Goals

The primary goal of the project as stated in its 1973 application is to develop and implement a "community-based group home program for youths who have gone through the County Court system on petitions of delinquency or

are behaving in such a way that they will soon be coming before the County Court system on petitions of delinquency if intervention is not immediately made." In order to achieve that goal, the project set four basic objectives.

- a. The purchase of a home in the community large enough for ten clients, a living area for group home parents, and counseling space.
- b. The development of a treatment program using a modification of a group therapy model called "Guided Group Interaction" in a setting of a foster family group home.
- c. To develop a counseling program for individual group home clients and their families.
- d. To design a research program which would help measure the project's effect and identify the types of youth which the project can most likely help.

Another goal which is implicit in the project's operation is the use of the project staff as advocates for the clients in seeking help from community service agencies.

4. The Project Staff

The project is designed to have six staff members, in the following positions.

One Project Director, 60% time

One Program Director, 100% time

Two House Parents, 100% time

Two Substitute House Parents, 25% time

All of the staff positions are currently filled. There has not been any staff turnover since the beginning of the project.

The project director is responsible for the overall administration of the project, and is assisted by the program director. One particular administrative duty of the program director is data collection and record keeping.

The house parents are responsible for the routine maintenance of the residence, including the assignment of the daily and weekly chores to the residents, and overseeing the budgeting for food, clothing, allowances, etc. The substitute house parents take care of the residence on weekends to allow the house parents some free time.

The program director leads the group therapy sessions on five evenings per week, and does individual counseling. It should be noted that at times the project director and house parents attend the group therapy sessions and can participate. The male parent's personality has been so suited that he participates regularly in the sessions along with the program director. As noted above, one of the program director's administrative duties is the record keeping. He is responsible for gathering evaluation data and maintains regular contact with the school counselors in order to have a current check of each resident's progress in school.

All of the staff members share the responsibility for individual counseling. In the setting of a group residence, this function is mostly informal and ongoing. A particular resident may discuss a problem privately with a staff member or may open the discussion to include another resident or staff member, etc. In the daily routine in the residence - preparing for school, meals, housework and leisure activity - all of the staff share in helping the residents. The help might be in a discussion of a resident's

problem, helping with homework or joining them in other activities. The entire staff meets weekly in order to review the needs of individual clients and to determine how the project can meet those needs.

The entire staff participates in making community contacts. The tasks here include representing the project through speaking engagements, informal contacts with the community, conducting tours of the residence, and acting on the individual client's behalf with community agencies such as the school system, welfare department, private agencies, employers, etc.

5. The Project's Program and Operation

The project is designed to accept as clients pre-delinquents, adjudicated delinquents, parolees from juvenile correctional institutions and "crisis placements," youths who need temporary lodging. The project limits the age group to youths at least thirteen years old. It will not accept youths who are assaultive. Other counties can make referrals of their residents to the project, but the staff limits the acceptance of these referrals to keep room in the project for Winona County residents.

Referrals of potential clients come from three sources.

1. The project director in his capacity as the Director of Court Services in the county.
2. State juvenile institutions.
3. Other agencies outside of the county.

As Director of Court Services, the project director is in a position of recommending treatment for youths who have been placed in the custody of the court. He also has the opportunity to make recommendations for youth who

have been referred to the courts but who have not yet been adjudicated. If the director, through an interview with a youth and any interested parties (parents, probation officer, etc.) feels that the youth is a potential client, he recommends the Main House to the youth. He then discusses the case with the project staff. If the staff agrees to accept the youth and the youth agrees to enter the project, the director contacts the court and proposes the Main House as the youth's treatment program.

If the court agrees, the youth begins the intake procedures. For one type of youth, the individual who has been referred to the court for adjudication as a delinquent, the project is under a time constraint. The court can continue the youth's case for ninety days and extend the continuance for another ninety days if it wishes. After the 180 day period, however, the court must either release the youth from its custody or adjudicate him a juvenile delinquent.

The director's interview with the client and his parents is the beginning of the intake process. The client is given a one-half day visit to the residence and sits in on the group therapy session. In the case of a client who is a referral from an institution, the client gets a weekend leave from the institution and spends the weekend at the residence.

During his visit, the staff gets the opportunity to evaluate him and explain the rules which each resident is expected to follow. The rules are simple and forthright. They include a house curfew, house maintenance duties, places which are off limits to residents, home visits and three rules of conduct:

1. Residents may not engage in illegal activity either in or outside of the residence.
2. Residents may not engage in any activity which would bring adverse pressure upon the project by the community.
3. Residents must not be inactive. That is, they must be working toward some goal in their education, job, etc.

When a client is accepted into the project, he moves into the residence and takes on the same living pattern as the rest of the clients. He is expected and is helped to pursue his education. If he is over 16, he may decide to find work or find vocational training. This comprises his daily activity. Along with that, the resident shares in helping with meal preparation, keeping the house clean, etc., and participation in group therapy for one and one-half to two hours on five evenings a week.

There are no formal phases of a client's progress at Main House. The lack of formal steps of progress is characteristic of most group homes as distinguished from other residential corrections projects such as P.O.R.T. projects. Group homes are distinguished from juvenile foster homes in that some, as Main House, have therapy programs led by trained staff. Another distinguishing feature is that the group home staffs are people experienced in working with juveniles who have a history of emotional and delinquency problems.

At Main House, decisions on whether or not a resident is making satisfactory progress are made by the residents as a group during the group therapy sessions. A resident can be considered a failure as a project member

if he frequently runs away from the residence, is arrested for a serious offense, or refuses to go along with a decision made by the group. In the event that the resident is arrested for a serious offense the decision to terminate him is not made by the group since it becomes a legal matter. The process of being terminated from the project as a success can be initiated by either the individual client or the project staff. The resident can, at a group session, state that he feels he is ready to leave the project. At times, the staff might feel that a resident is ready to leave, and inform the director, who discusses it with the resident. If the resident agrees, he can bring up the matter at a group session. In either case, the group is asked to make the decision. If they agree that a resident is ready to go, the director arranges a meeting with the resident's parents to prepare for the youth's return home.

B. THE CLIENTS

This section will provide descriptions of the social characteristics of the Main House clients. Further analysis of the data provided here is forthcoming.

There are nine clients currently in the project (as of February 26, 1974). Main House has served a total of twenty-two youths since it began accepting clients in June, 1973. For the residents who have left the project, Table I shows the reasons for termination.

TABLE I REASONS FOR TERMINATION	
REASON	FREQUENCY
Successful Completion	5
Voluntary Termination	1
Withdrawn by Committing Agency	3
Poor Adjustment	2
Absconded	1
Convicted of New Offense	1
TOTAL	13

The average (median) age of the residents served by Main House is sixteen years. The ethnic background of all of the residents is Caucasian. Table II shows the distribution of the residents' ages.

TABLE II AGE DISTRIBUTION OF MAIN HOUSE RESIDENTS	
AGE	FREQUENCY
13	1
14	2
15	4
16	6
17	7
Not Recorded	2
TOTAL	22

Seventeen of the residents, or 77% of the total population of residents, were residents of Winona County at intake. Four residents were from other counties in Minnesota and one resident was from Wisconsin.

Table III shows the distribution of the educational level of residents.

TABLE III EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF RESIDENTS	
GRADE	FREQUENCY
6	2
8	3
9	6
10	9
11	1
12	1
TOTAL	22

The average grade level of the residents is the ninth grade. The resident with the twelfth grade education has a G.E.D. certificate.

Most of the project's residents were either living with their parents at the time that they were accepted by the project or came to the project from correctional institutions. The primary source of referrals to the project has been the County Court Services Department. Table IV shows the source of referrals and their frequency.

TABLE IV SOURCE OF REFERRALS OF RESIDENTS	
SOURCE	FREQUENCY
Court Services	17
Self Referral	2
Social Worker	1
Parole Officer	1
Institution Counselor	1
TOTAL	22

The number of juvenile arrests per resident ranges from zero to six, the average (median) number being two. For analysis purposes, the offenses committed by the juveniles were categorized according to the categories status and non-status offenses. Six residents had been adjudicated prior to intake for status offenses. Nineteen of the residents were adjudicated prior to intake for non-status offenses. Table V shows the number of non-status offenses for which the residents were adjudicated.

TABLE V NUMBER OF NON-STATUS OFFENSE ADJUDICATIONS FOR PROJECT CLIENTS	
NUMBER OF ADJUDICATIONS	NUMBER OF RESIDENTS
1	7
2	5
3	3
4	1
5	2
6	1
TOTAL	19*

*Two residents had no record of adjudication.

The average (median) age of the residents at their first adjudication is fourteen; the ages range from eight to seventeen.

Most of the residents have not been in juvenile correctional facilities. Only eight of the residents had been in such an institution for a period of a month or more. Table VI shows the number of months spent in juvenile correctional institutions.

TABLE VI NUMBER OF MONTHS SPENT IN JUVENILE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS	
MONTHS	FREQUENCY
0, or less than two weeks	14
1	2
3	1
4	1
6	1
11	1
28	1
66	1
TOTAL	22

Two of the residents had been arrested for adult offenses and one resident had spent time in a jail (two months). None of the residents had spent any time in an adult correctional institution.

The terminated residents' length of stay in the project ranged from a few days to 48 weeks. Five residents, or 23% of the terminated residents, had stays of a month or less. These five were withdrawn from the project because of poor adjustment. The clients who were terminated as successes had stays ranging from 18 to 48 weeks. Table VII shows the number of weeks spent in the project by the terminated residents.

TABLE VII DISTRIBUTION OF NUMBER OF WEEKS IN PROJECT BY TERMINATED RESIDENT	
WEEKS	FREQUENCY
1	1
2	1
3	1
4	1
10	2
18	1
21	1
24	1
25	1
33	1
36	1
48	1
TOTAL	13

The gap between the four week maximum stay for the unsuccessful client and

ten-week maximum stay of the successful clients suggests that there might be a predictable length of the adjustment period for residents, after which the chances of being a failure are relatively low. However, systematic analysis and a larger data base are necessary before the relationship between length of stay and success can be discussed. The necessary data is being collected and will in time yield a sufficient data base for systematic analysis.

The issue of "cost per client" of community-based projects has been raised in the past, but as yet there are no agreed upon figures for determining the cost, let alone what constitutes a reasonable cost. The Evaluation Unit is attempting to work toward an acceptable standard of measurement and to that end we have computed a "cost per day" figure for the residents of Main House. We emphasize that the following figures should be interpreted as a rough estimate of cost.

Basically, the cost figure was derived from the total funds spent from the project's beginning in January, 1973, to March 31, 1974. The total cost of the project was approximately \$56,820.00. This figure includes the federal share for that period, plus the local contribution of \$15,000.00 in construction costs and \$85.00 per week for each client for the client's room and board, clothing allowance, etc. We subtracted from the total project cost \$30,000.00 which we are defining as "start-up" costs. This includes the \$15,000.00 local contribution for construction, plus \$15,000.00 in federal money for construction, equipment, and the first month of operating costs (salaries, utility bills, etc.).

The twenty-two clients who have been or are still in the project have

spent a total of 370 "client weeks" in the project. By dividing 370 into the revised total cost of \$26,820.00, we arrive at a weekly cost per client of \$72.48 and a daily cost of \$10.36 per client.

Again, these figures are rough estimates. For example, the accounting for the first funding year showed \$7,184.00 in unspent federal funds. At this writing, it is not known how much of this cost was spent in the last part of the funding period. The entire figure was subtracted from the federal share for that period. In addition, the only documented local expenditures were the \$15,000.00 construction cost and \$85.00 per week for each client. Additional local funds were spent, but we have included in these figures only the amounts which were available from the Crime Commission records. The overall bias introduced by the estimated figures is toward a lower cost per client.

END