



Lighthouse
Youth Center
at Paint Creek
Interim
Inspection

July 7, 2011

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Report Coordinator

SECTION I. INTERIM INSPECTION OVERVIEW

Brittany Smith, Legislative Aide to CIIC Member Representative Peter Beck, and CIIC Inspector Jamie Hooks conducted an interim inspection of Lighthouse Youth Center at Paint Creek (LYC-PC) on July 7, 2011. The interim inspection included a walkthrough of the facility led by two youth, partaking in the youth meal, and speaking with additional youth to gauge their perceived level of safety and any concerns. Overall, the interim inspection was very positive.

SECTION II. KEY FINDINGS

- **Youth safety.** There was a noticeable absence of tension during the inspection and walkthrough of each housing unit. When asking youth to rate their perceived level of safety, with ten meaning the youth felt “very safe” and one meaning the youth felt “very unsafe,” the lowest rating reported by a youth was nine. Even this youth described the facility as “super safe.” Youth relayed that there was no fighting, no need to “watch [their] back,” no pressure to join a gang, and no tolerance for gang activity.

Both young men leading the walkthrough and a youth interviewed during the inspection discussed the effectiveness of using fellow peers as security monitors. A youth given this assignment is in charge of tracking the movement of youth in his unit and ensuring accountability. There are also youth assigned to monitor conversations on the unit. If more than two youth are conversing, an additional youth will monitor the conversation to ensure no one speaks about matters considered a security risk, such as planning an escape. Youth relayed that this form of peer monitoring works well, promotes responsibility, and helps youth support one another.

- **Facility conditions.** Overall, LYC-PC was very clean, orderly, and well-maintained. In particular, the landscaping on campus, which is completed by youth as a work assignment, looked great. It was evident that staff and youth take considerable pride in keeping the campus in good condition.
- **Positive youth-staff relationships.** All youth interviewed and both young men leading our walkthrough relayed that staff are very helpful, caring, and respectful. The positive relationship between youth and staff was evident even when observing the dynamics in the dining hall where youth and staff sat together, eating the same meal and engaging in conversation. Youth also relayed appreciation for the teaching staff, stating that the teachers are always willing to assist when youth have problems or questions.

It is clear that administration at LYC-PC value the thoughts and opinions of youth. This is apparent through their use of quarterly “Client Surveys,” whereby they ask youth to voluntarily comment on a range of questions about their experience at LYC-PC. Most questions poll youth regarding their interactions with staff, such as whether staff treat youth in a respectful and caring manner and whether staff are willing to see youth as often as necessary. In addition, the use of youth as tour guides for guests visiting LYC-PC further demonstrates the level of respect and trust administration has for youth.

- **Newly finished gymnasium.** The gymnasium was under construction during CIIC's Biennial Inspection of LYC-PC on August 30, 2011. Construction of the gymnasium was completed in October 2010. Youth relayed that everyone on campus has enjoyed using the new recreation space, particularly during times of inclement weather. Youth shared that they have been able to host basketball teams from other juvenile facilities in their league and that they were able to hold a career fair with professionals from the community, among other activities.