

## San Diego County Juvenile Justice Commission

### Pre-Inspection Worksheet

#### Data from Calendar Year 2022

<b>Facility Name:</b> Casa de Amparo	
<b>Facility Type:</b> Group Home	
<b>Facility Address:</b>  325 Buena Creek Rd. San Marcos, CA 92069	<b>Date of Inspection:</b> August 29, 2023
	<b>JJC Chair:</b> Maya De La Torre
	<b>JJC Admin. Officer:</b> Scott Brown <b>JJC Admin. Assistant:</b> Vanessa Ramirez
	<b>CWS Director:</b> Kimberly Giardina
	<b>Presiding Judge of the Juvenile Court:</b>  Honorable Ana España
<b>Facility Administrator:</b> Erin Gospodarec, Director of Quality Assurance	<b>Telephone:</b> (760) 566-3557
<b>JJC Inspection Team:</b> Francisco Carbajal (in person and virtual incident report inspections), Dayanira Heredia (virtual incident report inspection) Yvette Klepin and Amy Lansing (in person inspection).	
<b>Staff and Representatives Interviewed / Met with in Person:</b> Mike Barnett, Sheena Bergeron, Erin Gospodarec, Stephanie Donnellan, Denisse Lucero and Michele Solomon were present for the in-person inspection. Erin Gospodarec and Stephanie Donnellan were present for the virtual follow-up meeting.	
<b>Overview:</b> Casa de Amparo is a 501c3 organization located in San Marcos, California, providing ample space for recreational activities, spacious campus-like cottages, and an office building where one-on-one counseling, administration, and overall operations are performed. Casa de Amparo is focused on treating and preventing child abuse and neglect in San Diego County, including housing youth in the dependency system. Services include crisis intervention, individual and group counseling, psychiatric evaluation and treatment, school placement, prosocial and strength-based activities, and much more, depending on the youth's individual and changing needs. As one of the primary Short Term Residential Treatment Programs (STRTPs) serving San Diego County, Casa de Amparo has undergone changes in response to recent and emerging legislation restricting number of beds qualifying for governmental support and has worked diligently to create two separate facilities while efficiently staffing both on the same plot of land. Legislative changes have resulted in serving youths with the highest mental health challenges and Casa de Amparo has increased their supportive network in the school systems and broader community.	

**The San Diego County Juvenile Justice Commission is a state-mandated, court-appointed citizens' commission. Its purpose is to inquire into the administration of juvenile court law in San Diego County, to provide leadership for citizen action and to promote an effective juvenile justice system operated in an environment of credibility, dignity, fairness and respect for the youth of San Diego County**

## Table of Contents

COMMISSION COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION .....	4
RECOMMENDATIONS: .....	4
COMMENDATIONS: .....	4
GENERAL COMMENTS FROM THE INSPECTION TEAM:.....	4
ADMINISTRATION / MANAGEMENT .....	6
Admission and Orientation: .....	6
Personal Property and Monies:.....	7
Youth Release and Transition: .....	8
Accommodations for the Disabled: .....	8
SECURITY AND CONTROL .....	9
Permanent Logs: .....	9
Security Features: .....	9
Security Inspections:.....	9
Control of Dangerous Materials:.....	9
Non-Hazardous Furnishings:.....	9
Control of Contraband: .....	9
Resident Searches: .....	10
Accountability and Supervision: .....	10
Use of Force:.....	10
Use of Restraints: .....	11
Tool & Equipment Control: .....	11
Weapons Control: .....	11
Discipline: .....	11
Contingency/Emergency Plans:.....	11
HOSPITALIZATION, ASSAULT AND AWOL HISTORY: .....	13
Peer-to-Peer Assaults in Calendar Year:.....	13
Resident-to-Staff Assaults in Calendar Year: .....	13
Serious Incidents During the Calendar Year: .....	13
Hospitalizations: .....	13
AWOLS .....	14
FACILITY BACKGROUND .....	15
Other Inspections (please list most recent inspections and dates):.....	15
Resident/Staff Composition and Communication: .....	15

General Facility Condition: ..... 15  
Housing/Sleeping Accommodations: ..... 15  
Storage: ..... 15  
Facility Capacity: ..... 16  
Average Length of Stay: ..... 16  
TRAINING, PERSONNEL, AND MANAGEMENT ..... 17  
    Child Supervision and Staffing Levels: ..... 17  
    Training: *[Specify types, frequency and what roles are required to attend]* ..... 17  
    Staff Background and Reference Checks: ..... 18  
GRIEVANCES, REPORTING INCIDENTS AND STAFF MISCONDUCT ..... 19  
    Problems/Complaints Affecting Facility During the Calendar Year: ..... 19  
    Grievances: ..... 19  
    Reporting of Incidents: *[Please be prepared to discuss with JJC Inspection Team.]* ..... 19  
    Staff Misconduct: ..... 19  
CLASSIFICATION ..... 20  
COUNSELING AND CASEWORK SERVICES ..... 20  
PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES ..... 22  
    School Program: ..... 22  
    Parenting Classes: ..... 23  
    Recreation and Exercise: ..... 23  
    Religious Program: ..... 24  
    Work Program/Vocational Training: ..... 24  
    Visiting: ..... 24  
    Correspondence: ..... 25  
    Access to Legal Services: ..... 25  
HEALTH SERVICES ..... 26  
MEAL SERVICE ..... 26  
    Adequate and Varied Meals: ..... 26  
    Special Diets: ..... 26  
SANITATION ..... 27  
    Clothing and Personal Hygiene: ..... 27  
    Bedding and Linens: ..... 27

## **COMMISSION COMMENTS & RECOMMENDATIONS FROM LAST INSPECTION**

The Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) conducted only a partial inspection in 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions. There were no concerns based on the Pre-inspection report, but a facility inspection could not be conducted. Our virtual inspection instead consisted of a 1) follow-up to the prior inspection (noting that Casa de Amparo does have extensive programming and policies in place for youth with Commercial Sexual Exploitation histories), 2) a pragmatic conversation about challenges related to COVID-19 and specific COVID-19 precautions that were put in place; and 3) Casa de Amparo's work to meet changing legislative requirements. No specific recommendations were made. Instead, a plan was instituted to conduct an in-person inspection when feasible.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Given consideration for overdose potential in high need populations, the JJC recommends that all Casa de Amparo staff have quick access to Naloxone kits and ongoing education, and refresher training, on administration to prevent overdose emergencies. We recognize this is a centrally stored, locked and controlled medication, but believe further conversations with community partners and governing/regulating agencies (e.g., community care licensing) is warranted to promote faster access by all staff. Education and training of residents would also be valuable and help even beyond their stay at Casa de Amparo. Educated and trained youth back in the community amplify the potential to save lives.
2. The JJC recommends recruitment of more counselors with substance abuse experience to expand support available to residents struggling with drug and alcohol disorders. We recognize that changing legislative requirements and budgetary limitations have seriously impacted all STRTP's ability to recruit and retain specialized staff, but we support Casa de Amparo's continued efforts in this particularly challenging area.
3. The JJC supports Casa de Amparo's efforts to engage community partners within the San Marcos community. Exploration of substance abuse programs in the San Marcos Area may supplement staff expertise and increase availability of resources for maladaptive coping strategies such as substance use among Casa de Amparo's residents. Potential new avenues for exploration include attending the San Marcos Prevention Coalition monthly meetings or engaging the resources available at the San Marcos One Safe Place.
4. In spaces where there is not much natural light, like in some resident rooms, consider installing modern or contemporary bedroom-like lighting fixtures that are fixed to a surface to prevent any dangers to anyone.

### **COMMENDATIONS:**

Casa de Amparo has made significant strides in providing for populations with increasingly higher service needs, in the face of changing legislative requirements and funding levels. The JJC thanks the entire Casa de Amparo staff for welcoming the inspection team for both an in person and virtual inspection.

### **GENERAL COMMENTS FROM THE INSPECTION TEAM:**

The JJC performed their physical inspection on August 29th, 2023. The campus is well-maintained and resides on a large piece of land in northern San Marcos. The inspection team first met with the campus team, reviewed the pre-inspection worksheet, asked clarifying questions, inquired about

areas where the JJC may be able to assist (e.g., fostering community connections) and concluded with a tour of the campus. Casa de Amparo has three cottages and a transitional preparation program. Cottages A and D can serve pregnant and parenting youth. With permission, the commission toured most youths' living spaces, including bedrooms, bathrooms, and communal areas, like the living room.

Casa has strengthened their partnership with the San Marcos Unified School District to ensure the resident's educational needs are met. In conversation with staff, Commissioners elevated more community engagement to ensure staff is aware of any new youth opportunities, for example, attending the San Marcos Prevention Coalition, which addresses many concerns, including the fentanyl, alcohol, and tobacco crisis, or the San Marcos One Safe Place who has over 90 partnerships from around the San Marcos area.

The JJC supports Casa de Amparo's efforts to engage Behavioral Health Services in an collaborative effort to obtain more flexible and tailored support for their residents, especially given the increased needs of the population as required by STRTP regulations.

The JJC aspires to fostering community and collaboration between agencies to ensure our young people thrive. We are grateful to collaborate with Casa de Amparo and acknowledge the important work their staff is doing and meaningful services they are providing current residents.

**ADMINISTRATION / MANAGEMENT**

*[Please be prepared to discuss during the inspection.]*

**Admission and Orientation:**

Are minors oriented to rules and procedures?  Yes  No

Are minors given copies of rules and procedures?  Yes  No

Can minors request that rules and procedures be provided in a language other than English?  Yes  No

Can parents request that rules and procedures be provided in a language other than English?  Yes  No

Are minors required to sign a document indicating they understand rules and procedures?  Yes  No

Are rules and procedures posted anywhere in the facility?  Yes  No

If yes, please indicate the number of postings and the locations.

Number: 4

Locations: Located in each cottage suite

Are staff trained in LGBTQI+ competency?  Yes  No

Has special LGBTQI+, ally and/or bystander training been implemented?  Yes  No

Do you ask youth their gender identity and preferred pronouns during intake?  Yes  No

How are LGBTQI+ youth identified upon admission to the facility?

Information is gathered from each resident during their admission including, initial clinical assessment, information in the resident's record, county case plan developed by the placing agency, and recommendations from the resident's county social worker or probation officer, and members of their Child and Family Team.

How do you work with youth who identify as non-binary, queer, queergender, non-conforming (neither male nor female)?

Casa de Amparo staff utilize an affirming approach to validate residents' identity and help create a safe and inclusive space for all. Information from the youth is used to develop their individualized Needs and Services Plan and ensures consistency with their individualized treatment plan and goals. If the youth identifies as part of a specialty population such as LGBTQ+ or SOGIE, this information is incorporated into their Needs and Services Plan using the resident's own language and ideas. Program Therapists, Case Managers and therapeutic milieu staff ensure youth in the LGBTQ+ and SOGIE communities are provided a safe and nurturing environment with inclusive and client-focused activities. Based on their individual needs, preferences and interests, youth may also participate both on-site and with external community providers if determined safe and appropriate by their Child and Family Team.

What safety measures are in place to ensure that LGBTQI+ youth are safe and protected from harmful encounters?

Casa de Amparo's interventions are age/developmentally appropriate and ensure that youth are safe and provided services in an affirming space. By implementing measures including behavior management techniques, staff are able to use program expectations and consequences as a tool for teaching positive outcomes when expectations are met. This technique provides incentives for residents whose engagement and behavior is appropriate, while youth who engage in negative or inappropriate behavior receive appropriate consequences. Other prevention and early intervention techniques that support a safe community include:

- Individual risk assessment and safety plan completed by Therapists and youth at admission with on-going updates as needed
- Non-discrimination and anti-bullying policies
- Training for staff and youth on creating an affirming community for LGBTQ+ and gender expansive youth
- Healthy Relationship groups with clinical staff, reinforcing positive relationships based on gender identity, expression or behavior
- Trauma History Questionnaire informing treatment planning and individualized interventions based on the youth's past encounters and history
- Implementation of Emergency Intervention Plan detailing de-escalation techniques such as verbal cues, redirection, setting limits, providing alternatives and modeling appropriate behavior.

What safety measures are in place to help and protect youth transitioning to male or female?

Casa de Amparo has a long history of supporting LGBTQ+ and SOGIE youth. Case Managers and Therapists engage the youth's natural supports who are affirming of their individual needs and help reinforce protective factors that promote their positive outcomes and reduce risk factors. Casa de Amparo's groups and community meetings reinforce acceptance and support from staff and peers and provide a safe place for youth to support each other around issues related to gender identity and sexual orientation. Transitioning youth have also connected with community-based clubhouses and programs as additional resources to expand their supportive system, while the health care department assists in connecting youth with affirming medical care including services provided on-site by TrueCare.

Are youth made aware of anti-bullying policies and procedures?  Yes  No

What steps are taken to ensure that minors are explained the rules and procedures in a developmentally appropriate manner?

Upon admission, each youth is provided with Casa de Amparo's Resident Handbook which details the program's expectations and rules. During their intake, residents also review program procedures, including Personal Rights and Grievances with facility staff. At this time, youth have the opportunity to ask questions about the program. Following admission into the program, residents are regularly reminded of program rules in community meetings, groups and individually as appropriate. Youth also have the opportunity to provide feedback on program procedures through Casa de Amparo's youth-led Resident Council.

**Personal Property and Monies:**

Are personal property and monies recorded, stored, and returned upon release?  Yes  No

Describe the types of personal property that may be kept in sleeping rooms:

Casa de Amparo makes every effort to ensure that each resident's cash resources, personal property, and valuables are safeguarded while in our care. Staff assist residents in learning to be responsible

for their money and personal belongings, educating youth on the safe storage of items in their bedroom and/or a secure area monitored by staff, as needed. Items determined to be safe and appropriate may remain with the youth in their bedroom, while hygiene items are secured and checked out.

**Youth Release and Transition:**

Are there established protocols for transitioning youth out of the facility and into the community?\*

Yes  No

*\*Please attach policy/protocol.*

Are transition concerns regarding youth relayed to assigned staff in the community?

Yes  No

Has the facility received any complaints from parents/guardians regarding the transition process?

Yes  No

*If so, how many? N/A*

Has the facility received any complaints from attorneys regarding the transition process?

Yes  No

*If so, how many? N/A*

**Accommodations for the Disabled:**

Does the facility accept youth with disabilities (Emotional, Physical, Special Needs)?

Yes  No

Is the facility ADA compliant?

Yes  No

Has the facility been found to be non-ADA compliant in the calendar year?

Yes  No

Has the facility received any complaints regarding the placement of Youth with disabilities (Emotional, Physical, Special Needs)?

Yes  No

Does the facility offer Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) to Youth with Disabilities?

Yes  No



## SECURITY AND CONTROL

### **Permanent Logs:**

Are there policies and procedures in place that describe the types of incidents and occurrences which must be documented on a daily basis?  Yes  No

Are these logs stored electronically?  N/A  Yes  No

If logs are stored electronically, is there sufficient technical support to ensure that the electronic files that contain these logs are not compromised, corrupted, or deleted?  N/A  Yes  No

### **Security Features:**

Does the facility have security features (cameras, locks, alarms, etc.)?  Yes  No

If yes, please describe security features:

Campus security features include key and fob restricted access to security sensitive areas, HIPPA compliant electronic records and computer network, camera system and security alarm system.

Are there staff members on site who have the skills to maintain security features?  Yes  No

### **Security Inspections:**

Does the administrator in charge visually inspect the facility for security-related concerns?  Yes  No

If yes, how often: Daily with quarterly review by Facilities Committee

Are random reviews of security tapes conducted?  N/A  Yes  No

If yes, how often: Random review, monthly at minimum

### **Control of Dangerous Materials:**

Are dangerous materials (toxins, biohazards, etc.) stored on site?  Yes  No

*If yes:*

A. What materials are stored?

Detergent, disinfectants and sharps

B. Where are materials stored?

Detergent, disinfectants and sharps are securely stored in a locked space and are only accessible to staff.

C. Do youth have access to the dangerous materials?  Yes  No

If yes, what protocols are in place to ensure Youth safety?

N/A

### **Non-Hazardous Furnishings:**

Are mattresses and bedding fire-resistant and non-toxic?  Yes  No

### **Control of Contraband:**

Are there written policies that describe contraband?  Yes  No

Are there written policies that describe the disposition of contraband?  Yes  No  
Has a weapon been found in the facility during the calendar year?  Yes  No  
*If yes, where?*  
N/A

Has a Youth been found in possession of any illegal controlled substance (i.e. alcohol, tobacco, or drugs) during the calendar year?  Yes  No

- A. How many incidents during the calendar year? 218
- B. Please describe the type of contraband:

The facility also categorizes unsafe objects that pose a potential risk to clients as contraband, which are included in the figures above. Most illegal substances during the reporting period have included electronic vaping devices, marijuana and tobacco, which were confiscated before entry to the facility or during safety and security checks.

**Resident Searches:**

Do staff search sleep areas/rooms?  Yes  No  
If staff search sleep areas/rooms, do staff search in the presence of the youth?  Yes  No  
If staff search sleep areas/rooms, is clean bedding or clothes mixed with soiled bedding or clothes during this process?  Yes  No

**Accountability and Supervision:**

Describe measures taken to ensure that youth are supervised in a manner that provides for youth and staff safety.

During the hours of 7:00 am – 10:pm, there is at least one direct care staff for every four residents (1:4 ratio). During the hours of 10:00pm – 7:00am, there is at least one staff to every six residents (1:6 ratio). While these staffing levels are always maintained in compliance with Community Care Licensing regulations, the actual staffing ratios for Casa de Amparo averages approximately 1:3 with additional resources available from on-site clinical and support staff. In 2022, Casa de Amparo’s STRTP staff schedule was updated following a thorough analysis of incident trends, staff resources and programmatic needs. The AM, PM and Overnight staffing schedule was revised in August 2022 to provide an overlap of coverage and support where the need and opportunity for client engagement is historically greatest. The staffing schedule was updated as follows: AM shift 6am – 4pm; PM shift 2pm – 12am; and Overnight shift 9pm – 7am. Staff conduct physical counts of all residents throughout each shift and as requested by the Shift Supervisor. There are also intermittent perimeter checks conducted outside the facility to enhance the safety of residents at the treatment facility.

**Use of Force:**

Does the facility utilize “use-of-force” techniques?  Yes  No  
If yes, does the facility have written policies regarding use of force?  N/A  Yes  No

*Please highlight if the policy includes the following:*

- A. Staff Development
  - a. Including “staff-to-staff” intervention strategies
  - b. Training (Evidenced based/Culturally Competent)
- B. Documentation Process
- C. Reporting Process
- D. Use of Force Review Process

If not, how do you ensure staff development, documentation, reporting, and review processes occur? N/A

**Use of Restraints:**

Does the facility utilize "restraint" techniques?  Yes  No  
If yes, does the facility have written policies regarding "use-of-restraint"?  N/A  Yes  No

*Please highlight if the policy includes the following:*

- A. Staff Development
  - a. Including "staff-to-staff" intervention strategies
  - b. Training (Evidenced based/Culturally Competent)
- B. Documentation Process
- C. Reporting Process
- D. Use-of-Restraint Review Process

If not, how do you ensure staff development, documentation, reporting, and review processes occur? N/A

**Tool & Equipment Control:**

Is there a written policy to ensure the adequate control of keys?  Yes  No

Is there a written policy to ensure the adequate control of tools?  Yes  No

Is there a written policy to ensure the adequate control of culinary utensils and equipment?  Yes  No

Is there a written policy to ensure the adequate control of medical equipment?  Yes  No

Is there a written policy to ensure the adequate control of supplies?  Yes  No

Is there a written policy to ensure the adequate control of vehicles?  Yes  No

**Weapons Control:**

Are weapons of any types permitted in the facility?  N/A  Yes  No

Is there a weapons locker on site?  N/A  Yes  No

**Discipline:**

Does the facility have written policies that describe the discipline process?  Yes  No

If yes, Do the policies include Culturally Competent and Evidence Based practices?  N/A  Yes  No

Are measures taken to ensure that due process is preserved?  Yes  No

What percentage of discipline grievances/appeals are resolved in support of the Youth?

Casa de Amparo does not currently track this specific data. 100% of grievances are responded to as described in the agency's policies and are reviewed monthly by the Quality Assurance Committee of the Board of Directors.

**Contingency/Emergency Plans:**

Are there written plans in place for the following contingencies/emergencies? Check all that apply.

- Contagious disease outbreak (Tuberculosis, Flu, etc.)
- Earthquake
- Fire

- Power outage/failure
- Unit Disturbance or Riot
- Other: Safety and Security Management Plan
- Other: N/A

## **HOSPITALIZATION, ASSAULT AND AWOL HISTORY:**

### **Peer-to-Peer Assaults in Calendar Year:**

Total number of Peer-to-Peer Assaults: 32

Total number of Peer-to-Peer Assaults resulting in injury requiring treatment: 7

Total number of Peer-to-Peer Assaults resulting in referral to:

\_\_\_\_\_ Community Based Organization

\_\_\_\_\_ Social Worker

\_\_\_\_\_ Probation

15 Law Enforcement

\_\_\_\_\_ Other:

Total number of Peer-to-Peer Assaults resulting in youth being removed from the facility by:

1 Law Enforcement

\_\_\_\_\_ Probation

\_\_\_\_\_ Social Worker

### **Resident-to-Staff Assaults in Calendar Year:**

Total number of Resident-to-Staff Assaults: 20

Total number of Resident-to-Staff Assaults resulting in injury requiring treatment: 4

Total number of Resident-to-Staff Assaults resulting in referral to:

\_\_\_\_\_ Community Based Organization

\_\_\_\_\_ Social Worker

\_\_\_\_\_ Probation

16 Law Enforcement

\_\_\_\_\_ Other:

Total number of Resident-to-Staff Assaults resulting in youth being removed from the facility by:

5 Law Enforcement

\_\_\_\_\_ Probation

\_\_\_\_\_ Social Worker

***Please be prepared to discuss the following areas with JJC Inspection Team***

### **Serious Incidents During the Calendar Year:**

Number of suicides: 0

Number of attempted suicides: 0

Number of deaths from other causes: 0

*\*Please provide written policies and procedures related to Suicide and Suicide Attempts.*

### **Hospitalizations:**

Number of instances of injury that required: first aid, medical intervention, or hospitalization in Calendar Year: 90

Number of Youth Hospitalized due to Mental Health reasons in Calendar Year: 11

Average length of stay in Hospital: 2 days

Number of Youth that returned to the facility after hospitalizations: 9

*\*Please provide written policies and procedures related to Youth Hospitalization.*

**AWOLS**

Number of Instances: 306 (reflects duplicated number of all youth involved)

Number of Youth (non-duplicated): 182 (non-duplicated AWOL incidents)

Does the facility have written policy and procedures regarding AWOL?

Yes  No

*\*Please provide a copy*

## **FACILITY BACKGROUND**

### **Other Inspections** (please list most recent inspections and dates):

Community Care Licensing: 10/3/2022

Fire Marshal: 8/22/2022

Department of Environmental Health: DEH Unified Program Facility Permit (4/1/2023-3/31/2025)

Other: The Joint Commission Behavioral Health Care & Human Services Accreditation (3/11/2021 – 3/11/2024)

Other: Department of Health Care Services (12/21/2022)

Date of Last Fire Drill: 3/13/2023

Date of Last Lock Down Drill: 4/19/2023

### **Resident/Staff Composition and Communication:**

During the hours of 7:00 am – 10:pm, there is at least one direct care staff for every four residents (1:4 ratio). During the hours of 10:00pm – 7:00am, there is at least one staff to every six residents (1:6 ratio). While these staffing levels are always maintained in compliance with Community Care Licensing regulations, the actual staffing ratios for Casa de Amparo is much lower due to the integrated support of additional clinical staff, management, and support staff. Communication takes place in a variety of ways including communication logs in each cottage suite, observation note documentation, use of walkie-talkies, mobile and land-line phones, email, in-person dialogue, team meetings, training, and shift changes.

### **General Facility Condition:**

The Casa Kids Campus opened in 2012 on 11.5 acres in Twin Oaks Valley, San Marcos. The campus is home to Casa de Amparo's Residential Services, comprised of 32 total treatment beds for foster and probation youth requiring intensive care in a Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) setting. Residential Services is comprised of three cottages and a transition preparation program located above the administration building to assist youth prepare for their transition from the program and increase independent living skills. Preventative maintenance and oversight of the campus is overseen by Casa de Amparo's Facilities Department and Facilities Committee of the Board of Directors.

### **Housing/Sleeping Accommodations:**

Cottages A is licensed for 9 youth; Cottages B and C are licensed for 8 youth each; and Cottage D is licensed for 7 youth. Cottages A and D are able to serve pregnant and parenting youth and their babies (birth to 2 years). The program maintains single bedrooms for youth across the campus.

### **Storage:**

Two main on-site storage spaces, with additional storage off-site.

**Facility Capacity:**

Casa de Amparo has two 16-bed STRTP licenses with a total capacity of 32 for residents ages 12-18. This does not include any infants of parenting youth, who may live with their mother while receiving intensive treatment services at facility STE A&D.

**Average Length of Stay:**

Average length of stay is approximately 9 months



**TRAINING, PERSONNEL, AND MANAGEMENT**  
*[Please be prepared to discuss during the inspection.]*

**Child Supervision and Staffing Levels:**

Casa de Amparo maintains staff to child ratios required by Community Care Licensing (CCL) and may increase staffing as necessary based on the individual needs of residents. During the hours of 7:00 am – 10:00 pm, there is at least one direct care staff for every four residents (1:4 ratio). During the hours of 10:00 pm – 7:00 am, there is at least one staff to every six residents (1:6 ratio). While these are always maintained, our actual staffing ratio averages approximately 1:3 with the lowest ratios during daytime and evening hours when there are the greatest number of residential staff, clinical staff, managers and directors on-site. On the weekends and overnights, while residential staff maintains appropriate ratios, there are usually fewer residents on-site due to family and community passes.

**Training:** *[Specify types, frequency and what roles are required to attend]*

Casa de Amparo provides training to direct service and mental health program staff in accordance with Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) Mental Health Program protocol, Community Care Licensing (CCL) Standards and Title 22 Regulations requiring that all direct care staff complete initial and annual training. Initial training includes 24 hours of orientation. Annually, staff receive a minimum of 40 hours of training and in-service education including, but not limited to topics listed below. These trainings are facilitated by qualified professionals across the organization and qualified outside organizations.

- Child development, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression
- Permanence, well-being, and education needs of children
- Best practices for caring for and supervising youth and non-minor dependents
- Neglect and abuse issues
- Behavioral interventions
- Psychological disorders/mental health and therapeutic interventions
- Substance abuse issues and treatment
- Developmental disabilities
- Cultural diversity, competence and sensitivity
- Child empowerment
- Transition services and emancipation
- Importance of sibling and family relationships
- Placement agencies and the placement process
- Needs and Service Plans and treatment planning and review
- Employee training handbook
- Attachment, Self-Regulation and Competency (ARC)
- Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Ending the Game (CSEC)
- Motivational Interviewing (MI)
- Seeking Safety
- Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT)
- Principles and implementation of trauma-informed care
- Pro-ACT
- Awareness and identification of commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC)
- Special Incident Reports (SIR)
- Medication and health care procedures
- Compassion Fatigue and Self-care
- Universal precautions
- Medical emergencies
- Mandated child abuse reporting

- Teamwork and communication
- Transference and counter transference
- Resident expectations
- Resident Discipline Policy and Procedure
- Emergency Intervention Plan and appropriate use of Law Enforcement (AB 388)
- Runaway/AWOL Plan and runaway prevention
- Children's adjustment to congregate care
- Nutrition principles
- Food preparation and storage
- Bullying
- Relationships (maintain respectful peer and intimate relationships)
- Teen violence
- Domestic violence
- Body image and eating disorders
- Dual diagnosis
- CPR/First Aid (provided in addition to annual training)

Casa de Amparo has continued to use Relias, an online training platform offering trauma-informed trainings in compliance with STRTP requirements. The training curriculum improves the agency's ability to meet the needs of 24-hour professional development and training resources.

**Staff Background and Reference Checks:**

- Do staff members have an initial background before they are hired?  Yes  No
- Do staff members have reference checks before they are hired?  Yes  No
- Do staff members meet with a psychologist before they are hired?  Yes  No
- Do staff members undergo drug testing before they are hired?  Yes  No
- Do staff members undergo periodic criminal history checks after they are employed?  Yes  No

If yes, date of last periodic background check: 4/1/2023

If no, what safeguards are in place to capture staff criminal conduct?

N/A

## GRIEVANCES, REPORTING INCIDENTS AND STAFF MISCONDUCT

### **Problems/Complaints Affecting Facility During the Calendar Year:**

- Court Orders Affecting Facility (please have available, if applicable):  Yes  No
- Pending Litigation:  Yes  No
- Does the facility have a formal grievance policy?  Yes  No

### **Grievances:**

Number of Written Complaints / Grievances Involving:

- Residents (youth): 137 grievances from facility youth during 2022 were received and responded to by facility staff. Grievance topics were mostly requests to change cottages/bedrooms and regarding peer conflict.
- Attorneys: N/A
- Family Members: N/A
- Medical: N/A
- Other: N/A

- Are written grievances reviewed daily?  Yes  No
- Are grievances tracked in some manner that would permit facility leaders to observe trends in grievance reports?  Yes  No
- Is there a method for youth to be able to express concerns about the facility to a staff member who is not assigned to their cottage?  Yes  No
- Are youth made aware on a routine basis that they can express concerns about their placement to their case worker, social worker and/or attorneys?  Yes  No

### **Reporting of Incidents:** *[Please be prepared to discuss with JJC Inspection Team.]*

Resident grievance forms are in every cottage suite and collected daily, recorded and reviewed with facility management for follow up and resolution.

### **Staff Misconduct:**

- Are there written policies for addressing staff misconduct?  Yes  No
- Have there been any allegations in the calendar year of a staff member physically assaulting a youth?  Yes  No
- Have there been any allegations in the calendar year of staff member sexually assaulting a youth?  Yes  No
- Have there been any allegations in the calendar year of a staff member verbally threatening a youth?  Yes  No
- Have there been any allegations in the calendar year of a staff member touching a youth in any inappropriate way?  Yes  No
- Have there been any allegations in the calendar year of a staff member commenting on the physical appearance of a youth in a manner that is outside

the scope of the staff member's job duties?  Yes  No

Have there been any allegations in the calendar year of a staff member entering a youth's sleeping room for any reason that was outside the scope of the staff member's job duties?  Yes  No

If the answer is yes to any of the inquiries related to allegations, is there written documentation of the incident, follow-up, and responsive action?  Yes  No

Please describe the circumstances related to any of the allegations noted above:

There was one allegation that staff hit a resident. San Diego IEU's investigation was closed without recommendations or findings and Community Care Licensing's investigation is pending completion. There was one allegation that a resident was being mistreated by facility staff. That investigation was closed by Community Care Licensing as Unsubstantiated.

### **CLASSIFICATION**

*[Please be prepared to discuss during the inspection.]*

Describe how youth are identified and appropriately placed within the facility:

*\*Please provide written policies and procedures*

Cottage assignments are based on many factors which most often include age, risk factors, history and commonality of needs with current youth. After the resident is placed with Casa de Amparo and assigned their Cottage, there is also flexibility if a change is requested or needed.

While participating in residential treatment, youth showing excelled responsibility, leadership and independent living skills may be referred to one of the program's apartment-like living arrangements. Youth nearing transition age are able to improve their community-readiness skills as they learn to maintain their living space, budget for and prepare meals, go to work and/or school, all while still receiving the essential treatment and support they need in the program. The highly supportive environment increases each youth's ability to cope with the stress of increased independence by targeting their understanding of new freedoms and improving their ability to cope and have the skills needed for positive decision making.

### **COUNSELING AND CASEWORK SERVICES**

*[Please be prepared to discuss during the inspection.]*

Casa de Amparo's STRTP provides intensive mental health services for a unique and vulnerable population of teenage youth for whom family reunification is often not possible, or very unlikely. Evidence-based treatment is provided to adolescents ages 12-18 struggling with PTSD, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, self-injurious or high-risk behaviors, and/or suicidal ideation. In October 2016, Casa de Amparo was selected to benefit from a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant providing innovative evidence-based programming within the agency's residential treatment programs. Through this intensive training and consultation, Casa de Amparo has implemented the organizational framework of Attachment, Self-Regulation and Competency (ARC). ARC is a framework for intervention with youth and families who have experienced multiple and/or prolonged traumatic stress. The framework addresses the trauma needs of both residents and staff by creating a culture that recognizes the value and necessity of caring for the entire system. Casa de Amparo has partnered with the Trauma Center at Justice Resource

Institute (JRI) and Suffolk University on a National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative-Category II Training and Technical Assistance Services Center Grant: The Complex Trauma Treatment Network. Casa de Amparo is a national service center to implement ARC which was created by the Trauma Center at JRI. ARC is used to treat STRTP residents with a variety of trauma-related diagnoses and is flexible for use with residents of various cultural backgrounds, diagnosis and levels of development.

ARC identifies three core domains frequently impacted among traumatized youth: *Attachment*, with the goal of building a safe care giving system that can support youth development; *Self-Regulation*, which fosters a youth's ability to safely regulate and tolerate experience; and *Competency*, which provides support in the mastery of an array of developmental tasks crucial to resilient outcomes. These three domains encompass the building blocks for the overarching goal of ARC which is trauma experience integration.

ARC is utilized daily by all residential counselors and clinical staff to provide all aspects of care and treatment within the program including individual and group therapy, crisis intervention, targeted case management, medication support services, caregiver education and support, staff training, and milieu services. Clinical services are provided on-site through milieu-based psychotherapy by BBS registered clinicians, medication monitoring, basic medical services from an on-site nurse and recreational and art therapy. Teens participate in individual and family therapy, individual psychiatry sessions, and daily groups such as Anger Management, Seeking Safety, Life Skills, Mindfulness, Healthy Relationships, and more. Through individual and group therapy, teens learn the skills necessary for distress tolerance, emotional regulation, interpersonal effectiveness, and achieving balance. Dialectical Behavior Therapy and Cognitive Behavior Therapy integrated with experiential therapies: art, music, fitness, cooking, yoga, and more. We also provide academic support to help youth progress with their educational goals. All mental health services are provided on site through an EPSDT Outpatient program. Casa de Amparo's two facilities provides consistency from Residential Managers, Residential Counselors, Clinical Managers and Program Therapists are assigned to specific facility cottages and provide clinical services, groups, trainings, and sessions each day and work collaboratively to meet the needs of their youth.

## **PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES**

*[Please be prepared to discuss with JJC Inspection Team.]*

### **School Program:**

Casa de Amparo facilitates stability and educational opportunity in the best interest of each child. To this end, Casa de Amparo encourages public school attendance for residents, creating a normalized educational experience. Casa de Amparo allows each resident to remain in the school where they were previously placed, with staff providing transportation, when it is in their best interest. The resident's educational rights holder advises the Program Case Manager as to where the resident will continue their education. Casa de Amparo staff ensures that the resident, educational rights holder, and other pertinent parties participate in collaborative decision making regarding the resident's education.

If the decision is made to enroll the resident in the local school district where Casa de Amparo is located, the resident's Program Case Manager contacts the San Marcos Unified School District's Student Services Coordinator to advise the District of the new student and to have a referral sent to the transportation department, as needed. The Program Case Manager contacts the FYSC to ensure that residents enrolling in a new school are immediately enrolled regardless of immunization record transfer status. FYSC works with the Program Case Manager to ensure residents receive partial credit from their previous school and do not reenroll in courses previously completed. The Program Case Manager works collaboratively to ensure residents are enrolled in the most appropriate school setting within one school calendar day of admission into the program. Transportation to and from school is provided by Casa de Amparo staff. To promote independent living skills, high school students may be encouraged to use public transportation, if approved by their county social worker and/or probation officer.

Casa de Amparo understands that many residents have existing Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or may need to be assessed for an IEP to determine if they have a disability that interferes with their educational progress. If Casa de Amparo staff recognize that a resident is struggling academically or emotionally at school, staff request a Student Study Team (SST) or IEP assessment or notify the resident's educational rights holder to request a SST or IEP. When a resident is assessed for an IEP, and the assessment determines that the resident does not qualify for special education services, Casa de Amparo staff request services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to determine necessary accommodations to meet their educational needs or notify the resident's educational rights holder to request these services. For residents with existing IEPs, the Program Case Manager contacts the San Marcos Unified School District liaison to activate the IEP in the District and to collaborate with the resident's educational rights holder to select an educational setting that best meets the IEP needs of the resident. Casa de Amparo partners with FYSC and local school districts to meet the educational needs of youth requiring these services.

All residents are enrolled and attend classes when school is in session. Excused absences are communicated to the school, in advance whenever possible, by Casa de Amparo staff. The Program Case Manager is responsible for fostering relationships and consistently communicating with residents' schools. Information regarding academic progress, challenges, and behaviors is brought to Casa de Amparo Treatment Team meetings to ensure that the Needs and Services Plan and Client Plan are updated accordingly. When concerns arise related to a resident's educational placement or behaviors, Casa de Amparo collaborates with the FYSC, school district, and resident's educational rights holder to find a solution in the best interest of the resident. The Program Case Manager advocates on behalf of the resident's needs. Casa de Amparo staff ensure that each resident has a school liaison through FYSC, that the resident understands a FYSC liaison is their right, and that the resident has the means to access their liaison. Casa de Amparo understands that educational support services exist for foster youth through the San Diego County Office of Education and various school-based programs and staff support residents in accessing these resources.

The Program Case Manager or Program Therapist regularly update the Youth Status Report to reflect the resident's progress in achieving educational goals outlined in the Needs and Services Plan and Client Plan. This Report is provided to authorized representatives, and members of the CFT, as appropriate, and includes information such as attendance, on time arrival, academic and extracurricular activities, concerns relating to school matters, behaviors, issues with health or well-being, suspension and discipline, academic performance, grade level, and credits not earned but needed for graduation.

Casa de Amparo ensures that each resident has access to the same academic resources as all students, such as school supplies, tutoring, and items needed for participation in extracurricular and enrichment activities, including transportation. In coordination with FYSC, residents are offered support in completing required homework and utilize weekly tutoring provided at the Casa Kids Campus. Every effort is made to match resident and tutor personalities and residents may request a different tutor if they feel the match is not beneficial. Casa de Amparo staff encourage residents to become involved in extracurricular and enrichment activities to foster exposure to age-appropriate life experiences in school and in the community and to increase meaningful connections with others. Residents are encouraged to participate in activities that are culturally relevant, developmentally appropriate, and focus on furthering their personal interests including sports, clubs, school dances, yearbook, and religious and community activities of their choice.

During individual case management and/or Life Skills Group, residents receive assistance with vocational and/or college preparatory tasks which may include, but are not limited to, completing admission and financial aid applications through FYSC and Independent Living Program (ILP), as well as preparing for entrance exams, as appropriate. Program Case Managers support residents in identifying themselves as foster youth to their prospective college by assisting the resident in accessing the appropriate individual(s) at the college and requesting assistance in obtaining college fee waivers, grants, other available financial assistance and employment opportunities.

### **Parenting Classes:**

Casa de Amparo utilizes the Nurturing Parenting evidence-based curriculum, providing young parents with the necessary knowledge, skills, resources, and services to prevent future abuse and neglect. It builds upon parenting strengths to help parents increase their understanding of past trauma and how past dysfunctional family interactions have negatively influenced their current parenting beliefs and potential substance involvement. Staff learn to increase parents' sense of self-worth, personal empowerment, empathy, bonding, and attachment, increase the use of alternative strategies to harsh or abusive disciplinary practices, increase parents' knowledge of age-appropriate developmental expectations, and reduce risks of abuse and neglect.

### **Recreation and Exercise:**

Casa de Amparo utilizes Attachment, Self-Regulation and Competency (ARC) and Motivational Interviewing evidence-based practices to help residents look at their behaviors and routines in an effort to improve their overall health and well-being. Recreational activities are provided both on and off site and include, but are not limited to, dance, yoga, swimming, hiking, bicycling, basketball, kickboxing, aerobics, trampoline activities, roller-skating, and volleyball. Recreational activities are offered multiple times per week and during youth's leisure time. Casa de Amparo recently completed renovation of an on-site gym with support from EōS Fitness. Residents participate in the program's Workout Incentive Program, encouraging each youth to get outside and achieve personal improvements for incentive rewards. The program has been a huge success with program residents and another way the organization helps youth safely make progress in their treatment.

**Religious Program:**

Casa de Amparo provides each resident the option to attend church or worship services of their denomination in the community on a weekly basis. All religious activities are provided in the community and are completely voluntary. If a youth is interested in participating in church or worship services, staff work with the resident and their Child and Family Team to ensure participation is a positive experience for the youth where they feel safe and supported in their individual beliefs. Casa de Amparo does not provide religious programming.

**Work Program/Vocational Training:**

Casa de Amparo does not provide a formal work program/vocational training opportunity for youth on site. As appropriate and based on the individualized needs of youth and as determined by their Child and Family Team, a youth's Program Case Manager may work with the youth to connect them to a work opportunity or vocational training program in the community.

**Visiting:**

Casa de Amparo promotes resident involvement with their family and understands the value of positive resident and family interactions. Casa de Amparo has visitation guidelines to facilitate healthy visits that promote the well-being of the resident, a safe relationship with their family and inform visitors and residents of the expectations surrounding visits.

Prior to admission, Casa de Amparo requests information about a resident's existing approved visits and passes in an effort to make arrangements to seamlessly continue existing approved visits and passes immediately following the resident's admission. If a resident does not have approved visits or passes upon admission, the Program Therapist works with the resident and their Child and Family Team to identify appropriate visit and pass opportunities. All visits and passes must be approved by the resident's county social worker/probation officer prior to the visit or pass and must encourage the resident toward achieving the goals outlined in their Needs and Services Plan. Casa de Amparo understands that a resident may have a court order outlining visit and pass restrictions or requirements, which program staff strictly adhere to.

Staff advocate on behalf of the resident and collaborate with the county social worker/probation officer to ensure the resident's safety, well-being, and cultural needs are met during each visit or pass. If cultural relevancy during visits or passes is a concern, the Program Therapist brings this to the Child and Family Team for discussion. Staff support and encourage LGBTQI+ and gender expansive residents to visit with adults who affirm their sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression as this supports the resident's ability to develop and express themselves.

Visitation rules are visibly posted for residents and visitors. A copy of the visitation rules is included in the Resident Handbook which is reviewed with each resident upon admission. A list of individual's who should or should not be allowed to visit the resident is maintained in the resident's chart. Passes are reviewed and approved internally by the Clinical Case Manager in coordination with the Program Manager. Visits are in accordance with the resident's Personal Rights and Needs and Services Plan.



**Correspondence:**

Casa de Amparo staff encourage and assist youth in contacting individuals outlined in their Personal Rights as requested. Youth are reminded of their Personal Rights routinely during Community Meetings and individually. In addition to correspondence outlined in their Personal Rights, Casa de Amparo works with each youth's county social worker or probation officer and members of their Child and Family Team to determine correspondence that is appropriate for the youth based on their individualized needs. This includes determining individuals who the youth may correspond with, how the correspondence may occur, and at what frequency.

**Access to Legal Services:**

Casa de Amparo staff encourage and assist youth in accessing legal services as outlined in their Personal Rights and as requested by the youth. Youth are reminded of their Personal Rights routinely during Community Meetings and individually. All residents have access to their attorney via telephone, email, or in person visits, as appropriate, and their attorney may be a member of their Child and Family Team, as appropriate. Staff encourage youth to engage with their attorney, as appropriate, to help them achieve the goals outlined in their Needs and Services Plan and advocate for their individualized needs.

**HEALTH SERVICES**

*[Please be prepared to discuss with JJC Inspection Team.]*

**MEAL SERVICE**

Are kitchen staff members trained regarding sanitation and food handling procedures?  Yes  No

Have kitchen staff members received any training in the calendar year other than training given to newly hired employees?  Yes  No

If yes, describe what the training included:

n/a

Do youth work in the kitchen?  Yes  No

If yes above, have they been trained?  Yes  No

Describe the types of work youth perform: n/a

Are meals served cafeteria style?  Yes  No

Are youth permitted 20 minutes or more to eat?  Yes  No

Who/what agency maintains the kitchen area? Casa de Amparo's Cottages each have home-like kitchens and eating areas. Residential Staff and the Nutritional Residential Counselor maintain the spaces.

**Adequate and Varied Meals:**

Is there a weekly menu posted?  Yes  No

Does a nutritionist, dietitian, or other health professional participate in the creation of the menu?  Yes  No

How many calories per day does a youth who eats all of the standard meals provided consume? 2000-2200

What approximate percent of calories are from the following:

Protein: 35 %

Carbohydrate: 40 %

Fat: 25 %

Are weaker youths protected from having food taken from them?  Yes  No

**Special Diets:**

Can special diets be accommodated when medically necessary?  Yes  No

Was the facility unable to accommodate a special diet based on medical reasons during the calendar year?  Yes  No

If yes:

A. What accommodations was the facility unable to meet?

N/A

B. What modifications to accommodate the youth?

Casa de Amparo has successfully accommodated youth with special health care needs, diabetic youth, those with food allergies, and youth with special diets due to preference.

Can special diets be accommodated when based on a youth's religious practices or beliefs?

Yes  No

Was the facility unable to accommodate a special diet based on a youth's religious practices or beliefs in the calendar year?

Yes  No

If yes:

A. What accommodations was the facility unable to meet?

n/a

B. What modifications to accommodate the youth?

Casa de Amparo has successfully accommodated youth with special diets including residents that did not eat meat or other types of food or beverages. Appropriate alternatives were provided and meals were planned based on their individual diet. Residents also worked with Casa de Amparo's Nutritional Residential Counselor to discuss preferred substitutions, which were incorporated into meals.

### **SANITATION**

*[Please be prepared to discuss with JJC Inspection Team.]*

#### **Clothing and Personal Hygiene:**

Are youth provided with personal hygiene products upon entry to the facility?

Yes  No

If yes, what policies are in place to ensure Culturally sensitive products are provided accordingly? Casa de Amparo is committed to ensuring the provision of culturally competent, respectful, and diverse services throughout the organization. The organization maintains different types of hygiene products to help meet the diverse needs of residents, including options for hair and skin care. In addition to items provided directly to youth by the program, residents receive hygiene allowance to purchase items that meet their individualized needs and preference. Casa de Amparo recognizes the importance of good hygiene in the promotion of health, comfort, self-esteem and overall well-being. While in the program, youth are connected with hair stylists, including those specializing in protective hair styles including braids, wigs and glue/sew-ins. By creating a safe, positive and nurturing environment, the program seeks to move beyond simple tolerance to embrace and celebrate the rich dimensions of diversity contained within each individual youth.

If no, are youth provided a stipend to purchase their own products?

N/A  Yes  No

#### **Bedding and Linens:**

How often are clean linens provided to youth? New linens are provided to youth upon admission to the program and staff assist residents with creating healthy laundry hygiene practices. Should a resident require new items, Casa de Amparo provides additional linens as needed.

How often are clean blankets provided to youth? New blankets are provided to youth upon admission to the program and staff assist residents with creating positive laundry hygiene practices. Should a resident require new items, Casa de Amparo provides additional linens as needed.