

AUDIT FINDINGS

NARRATIVE:

The following is the report of the PREA audit conducted at the Woodward Academy, located at 1251 334th Street, Woodward, Iowa.

The audit visit was conducted over a three day period from March 9-11. In attendance at the initial meeting was Ryan Santi, Executive Director of Woodward, Tess Hughes, PREA Compliance Manager, Trent Fleshner, Group Living Director, Jennifer Sievert, Executive Director at Forest Ridge Youth Services (a Sequel Program in Estherville, Iowa) and Randy Copas, Executive Director of Albion Youth and Family Services (a Sequel Program in Albion, Michigan).

A tour was conducted of the entire campus, with various staff and residents answering informal questions along the way.

A total of 25 residents were formally interviewed during the audit visit. All seemed to have a good grasp of the zero-tolerance policies of the Woodward Academy, and knew well how to report. The questions regarding the intake procedures yielded answers that confirmed that staff were doing their job with respect to the vulnerability/abusiveness assessment.

A total of 21 staff were formally interviewed. Interviews went well, and for the most part indicated that training was being done effectively, with one exception, that being the first responder protocol. During the Corrective Action Period, additional training was conducted which strengthened the staff's understanding of the first responder protocol.

DESCRIPTION OF FACILITY CHARACTERISTICS:

The Woodward Academy is a Sequel Youth and Family Services facility located in Woodward, Iowa. The facility sits on land owned and operated by the State of Iowa Department of Human Services. Woodward is a staff secure residential academy. The buildings are approximately 100 years old, and therefore do not resemble any modern correctional or rehabilitation facility. However, the staff at Woodward seem to overcome obstacles that are to be expected in an old building by providing residents with a high level of supervision and accountability. At the time of the audit, there were approximately 262 youth at the facility. Of the youth interviewed, some had been there only a couple of months, some over a year, and one youth had been at Woodward for two years.

The complex of dorms are connected by a long hallway, which also leads to two cafeterias and administration offices. The school, gymnasium and program buildings are located about 100 yards from the end of the dorm buildings. A limited number of youth are brought in from nearby areas for a non-residential

school program. Those youth are separated from the residential students by the use of staggered school schedules. In the school area, staff are located both in the classrooms and outside in the hallways for heightened security during school. During class breaks, students were observed changing classrooms much like a regular school, but with all available staff monitoring movement.

The school has a sports program to be envied. The powerlifting program has earned recognition at the highest levels, as evidenced by the nine national powerlifting trophies in the showcase at the gym. During the audit visit, the basketball team earned the distinction to be the first youth academy team to ever play in the state championship tournament in the State of Iowa. School spirit was fantastic, and rivaled that of any other high school.

SUMMARY OF AUDIT FINDINGS:

The PREA Audit of the Woodward Academy was completed in March 2015, with the Corrective Action Period ending in September, 2015. By the end of the Corrective Action Period, the Woodward Academy demonstrated compliance with 100% of the PREA Standards. Several items were flagged during the initial report as being deficient, but the staff at the Academy were able to correct those items and meet their goal of compliance several weeks short of the 180-day allowed period of time.

Congratulations to the team at the Woodward Academy for achieving this great goal and making their facility safer for their residents.

AUDITOR CERTIFICATION:

The auditor certifies that the contents of the report are accurate to the best of his/her knowledge and no conflict of interest exists with respect to his or her ability to conduct an audit of the agency under review.



Auditor Signature

October 5, 2015

Date