

GRS 4164/8 Unit 3, File 14/6/1, Eden Park Boys Home (Salvation Army) Mt
Barker (Wistow) 5251

DEPARTMENT FOR COMMUNITY WELFARE

50 GRENFELL STREET, ADELAIDE, SOUTH AUSTRALIA 5000
TELEPHONE 217 0461 - TELEGRAMS "WELFARESA"
POSTAL ADDRESS, BOX 39, RUNDLE STREET, P.O., ADELAIDE 5000
OUR REF. RAS:LL YOUR REF.



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

IF REPLYING PLEASE CONTACT

17th November, 1982

Capt. F. Meaby,
Manager,
Eden Park Boys Home,
MOUNT BARKER. S.A. 5251

Dear Captain Meaby,

CONFIDENTIAL

OPERATION OF EDEN PARK

Following our recent discussions I have listed below the major concerns of which I am aware regarding the operation of Eden Park. I have also made suggestions as to how changes could be made to improve the situation. I hope these suggestions will be of use to you and that we can use the theme as a basis for our next meeting together.

The major areas of concern are:-

Programmes

1. Lack of properly constituted programme panels and documentation of their findings for future use, including presentation to Review Board. Suggest that programme panels comprising of residential care staff, social worker and school staff be convened soon after admission of a child and thereafter conducted on a regular basis and the programme be adhered to or if changes are required, that these are the subject of discussion at a programme panel, rather than an individual members decision.
2. Lack of individualised programme. Suggest that greater emphasis needs to occur by programme panels and all staff at developing programme for boys and their families which reflect the individualised needs of both parties. This will require more efforts in assessing and diagnosing their needs and having a unified action between the staff of Eden Park, the school and the social worker.
3. Difficulties in obtaining outside involvement of professional input from consultants. Suggest that greater efforts be undertaken to organize consultancy services from C.A.F.H.S. and the Adelaide Children's Hospital, Departmental psychologists and other relevant Departmental staff.

Management

1. Difficulties in communication and consultation between staff of the Home, social worker and school staff. Suggest that regular meetings between yourself, the school principal and the social worker occur so that there is a freer flow of information and improved co-ordination of each other's efforts. Also these discussions would be useful to identify specific problem areas and ways of tackling them. By meeting regularly for specific purposes, relationships between yourself, the School Principal

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1. (Cont.)

and the social worker would improve and there is likely to be a more united effort between the three of you.

2. Staffing levels. Suggest that with the reduction in the number of boys being cared for, that the staffing levels and the nature of staff be reviewed as a matter of urgency.

Staff

1. Some of the staff employed have been inexperienced and/or basically unsuitable. Suggest that in future greater attention be given to appointing staff who either have relevant experience, qualifications or suitability to work with the boys. I would be quite prepared to work with you to prepare a person specification so that the desirable qualities that one is looking for in residential care staff are adequately summarized to enable better staff selection in future.
2. Limited in-service training programmes. Suggest that an in-service training programme be established. I would be quite prepared to discuss the nature of the training programme, resource people who would be prepared to discuss issues with your staff and suggest different services which would be of use for your staff to visit.
3. Recent high turnover of Residential Care Workers. I would suggest that some of the staff have left for other reasons rather than just the uncertainty of the future of Eden Park. It is important to acknowledge these other factors and determine what changes are required to obtain capable staff and reduce the turnover rate.
4. Lack of females. Suggest that greater efforts be made to have more involvement between the boys and the women at Eden Park or alternatively that some female staff members are employed.

Actual Care

The main concerns regarding the care of the boys focus around the following matters:

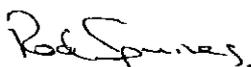
- punitive and controlling philosophy of care,
- limited supervision at night,
- limited budgetary allowance for clothing and inadequate arrangements for clothing,
- inappropriate bed times,
- limited amounts of pocket money,
- inconsistent use of weekend contacts between the boys and their parents,
- limited use of the property.

It is considered that the overall philosophy of care is based on a staff philosophy which reflects emphasis on control and punishment rather than more modern and appropriate styles of managing difficult children.

I certainly do acknowledge the sincerity and dedication of staff at Eden Park. What now exists is a gap between the way that Eden Park has and currently operates and the desired manner in which many staff and various organizations would like it to operate in the future.

I look forward to discussing these matters with you at our next meeting.

Yours sincerely,



ROD SQUIRES
A/SUPERVISOR
RESIDENTIAL AND FOSTER CARE