

From: Sheila Mattimoe Riedy ✉
Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 12:27 PM
To: Clerk of the Board
Subject: Non-Police Response Pilot Program

PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO EACH MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Dear Supervisor:

I am writing to express my support for the Miles Hall, County-Wide Non-Police Response Program. I did not know Miles nor have I known the many other victims of police gun murder but I feel strongly that police officers do not get the training they should have to deal with a person having a mental health incident. And, frankly, I don't think they have the temperament to act with good judgment. They are trained to shoot to kill.

I don't expect you to solve the problem of gun violence but I would like to think that you can see the value in this police funding realignment. Please support the movement to make Contra Costa County a mental health-friendly community.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,
Sheila M. Riedy
Walnut Creek
925 938 2621

From: Maram Bata <
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 5:50 PM
To: Clerk of the Board; Supervisor Candace Andersen
Subject: Byron Ranch

Dear Supervisor Anderson:

I want to voice my concern regarding possible closure of Byron Ranch. As I understand it is a budget issue but history tells us these youth if we do not rehabilitate them they will cost the system much more and also no tag for saving a life from the awful system of prison! For a better kinder society, please consider keeping it open.

Sincerely

Maram Bata

1 Kenmore Ct, Orinda CA 94563

925 899 3952

Associate Broker, BRE# 01435229

Coldwell Banker, Orinda

From: kkuchman@v
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 5:06 PM
To: Clerk of the Board
Cc: 'Sandra Graham'
Subject: Regarding the Proposed Closure of the Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility
Attachments: Letter to the Board of Supervisors Regarding OAYRF.pdf

Dear Clerk of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors:

Please find attached a letter which I would like to be submitted to the Supervisors for their review.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

Best regards, Ken.

Kenneth Kuchman

Bernard E. & Alba Witkin Charitable Foundation

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Berkeley, CA 94707

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Regarding The Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation
The Byron Boys Ranch
July 10, 2020

CCC Board of Supervisors
Dear Board Members,

I'm writing in regard to the possible closure of the boys ranch in Byron, California.

I'm asking that the *ranch remain open for the sake of the at-risk boys* who are sent there. I worked for several years as a volunteer there. Once a week a group of us seniors boarded a bus from Rossmoor and spent the day at the ranch with a boy who had been assigned to us. Usually, I mentored the same boy for several weeks or months until his "graduation." In time, I got to know "my boy" pretty well. On the day that he was to "graduate" from the ranch, we mentors held a small graduation ceremony. Many a time, this was an emotional experience. The boy had come a long way while in custody. He had grown and changed, especially in his way of seeing. He was more responsible and more willing to do the hard work to change his ways. Believe me, when the day came that he was to leave the ranch, happy tears flowed freely.

While the boy is confined to the ranch he learns a routine, something that he might never have had before. With set hours for meals, and set time for school, and set time for recreation, and set time for bed the schedule establishes a sense of dependability. This is given to him in an atmosphere that promotes self worth. His life does matter.

When I met my boy for the first time I did not ask him what was his crime. In stead I told him how lucky he was to come to the ranch because the ranch represented a

new start, a new beginning where he could get his life back on track. I stressed the value of education, of learning, of books—I always gave the boy a book of his own to take home.

Please, the ranch gives these troubled boys a chance. Please keep it going. Our young men need it.

Sincerely,

Allene Graham

Allene Graham

1241 Leisure Ln #2

Walnut Creek, CA 94591

From: Donna Johnke <
Sent: Monday, July 13, 2020 1:39 PM
To: Clerk of the Board; Supervisor Candace Andersen
Subject: Proposed County budget cuts that will increase our school to prison pipeline

Dear Supervisor Anderson,

I first want to thank you for the transparency and up to date information with regards to the COVID 19 pandemic that is having a very detrimental effect to our public health. The health and safety of our communities must take precedent over short term economic loss. Without healthy people, our economy cannot thrive.

Today however, I want to voice my concern regarding the possible closure of the Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Center, better known as Byron Ranch. These programs are exactly the tools we need now more than ever to provide youth with a chance to become productive members of society. By closing this facility down, these young people are destined to feed into the school to prison pipeline system that has created a population of people who can never join our communities as productive members of society. It is programs like Byron Ranch that the public is demanding through the continued peaceful protests and advocacy over the last two months to redirect funds away from militarizing a police force to creating programs that address mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence or neglect. Strengthening these programs creates a sustainable investment of rehabilitation into a productive society for the most vulnerable.

The COVID pandemic has torn the veil and shined a light into the darkest evils of our societal systems. The militarization of our police force is a result of decades of cuts to corrections, rehabilitation programs, and therapy services. The weaponizing of ICE and propagation of for profit detention centers for immigrants has also taken funding and compassion away from safer and more JUST measures in law enforcement. We are not meeting the needs of our communities and we are doing a dis-service to our police force by requiring them to carry more of a burden than they are trained or compensated for. They cannot be a peace officer, therapist, paramedic. Nor should they be judge and jury when it comes to excessive police violence; the unfortunate outcome from the cycle outlined above.

May I give a personal testimony. My husband has a cousin who spent years in and out of the prison system for substance abuse. He is a talented finish carpenter, musician and artist. His crime, was his disease of alcoholism. He spent many of his most productive adult years languishing in prison, at the expense of the state rather than get the adequate treatment needed to help him overcome his addiction and return to becoming a valued member of society. Which makes more humane and economic sense? Prison or treatment? I grew up in Contra Costa County, I knew a couple of high school students who were sent to Byron Ranch in the 1970's. They got the counseling and drug therapy they needed, and were able to complete their high school degrees at Del Oro continuation school in Walnut Creek. A much more beneficial outcome to themselves, their families and our community.

Thank you for taking the time to read my perspective on this issue on the upcoming budget proposals/cuts. Please take the opportunity to use this year as a model to build something positive for our community, by creating a justice system that focuses on focuses on rehabilitation, not punishment. The investment in more positive, science driven treatments, therapies, and education makes not only economic sense; it contributes to a more productive and humane society. Expand funding for programs like Byron Ranch, don't close them.

Sincerely,

Donna Johnke

From: VIATOR <
Sent: Sunday, July 12, 2020 2:33 PM
To: Clerk of the Board
Subject: [BULK] Closing the Boys' Ranch

Dear Supervisor Andersen,

I am a Rossmoor Senior Tutor who has been going out to the Byron boys' ranch each week for fifteen years. By now I know the program pretty well, and I am convinced that it works. It works because the boys and young men at the Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility **have the choice to flee or to stay there** and redeem themselves. They see it as their last chance to make good. The likely alternative is a life of crime punctuated by repeated stints in prison—the kind of lives their fathers, uncles, and cousins have been caught up in. They are desperate to succeed. The staff at OAYRF and we Senior Tutors provide them with role models for a different, better way of life. Being locked up in a windowless cell at Juvenile Hall is very different.

I know that the Supervisors face tough budget choices in this time of declining revenues and rising costs, and I understand that closing the ranch and selling off the property is a very attractive choice. But I beg you not to do it.

The boys and young men OAYRF serves are almost all people of color, already short-changed by a society that takes one look at them (or their names on a job application) and makes unfortunate assumptions about their desirability as employees.

PLEASE find a way to keep the boys' ranch a part of the Probation Department's tools for rehabilitation. It works! Even the boys who return for multiple programs are testament to the ranch's value—they return because the ranch provides security, structure, and the hope of a better future—things they don't find at home or on the streets.

Bob Viator
Walnut Creek

From: Sheila Gorsuch
Sent: Saturday, July 11, 2020 6:02 PM
To: Clerk of the Board
Cc: Sheila Riedy;
Subject: Byron Boys Ranch

For several years I traveled out to the Ranch with the Rossmoor busload of Senior Tutors. It was a very rewarding experience for me, but I believe especially so for the boys. This was possibly their only one-on-one experience with a mentor and I believe it was -- and is -- a vital part of their rehabilitation and education.

In today's environment, the Byron Boys Ranch is needed more than ever to help our disadvantaged youth. It would be a crime to close it now.

The Board of Supervisors, including Supervisor Candice Andersen, have been very receptive to the opinions from Rossmoor residents over the years and we trust they will hear us now. Please consider the Ranch an investment in the future of the young people of Contra Costa County who need our support.

Norman P Gorsuch

J [REDACTED]

From: wendy warner
Sent: Saturday, July 11, 2020 3:38 PM
To: Clerk of the Board
Subject: Save the Boys Ranch

Dear David Twa and the County Board of Supervisors,

My name is Wendy Roberts. I am a Juvenile Institution Officer at the Orin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility (OAYRF) which is also known as the Byron Boy's Ranch. I have worked for Contra Costa County's Probation Department for 22 years. I started my career at the original Juvenile Hall in Martinez in December of 1997 as a temporary employee. I became a permanent employee in January 1999 and was assigned to OAYRF.

Once I started working at OAYRF, I never wanted wanted to go back to working at Juvenile Hall. When I worked at Juvenile Hall, I felt locked up too. Being at the boy's ranch and getting to see the sky, wide open spaces, and nature surrounding you is awesome and something that is not taken for granted. The boys and I enjoy getting to see the sunrises, sunsets, the baby birds in their nests, the different animals like the crane eating the fish from the pond while we eat our meals, and more recently , the fireworks that can be seen from the surrounding areas on the Fourth of July. The boys will not get these experiences at the windowless unit at the old original Juvenile Hall.

The boy's ranch is a very special place with unique opportunities that the boys will not get if we move to a maximum security setting like Juvenile Hall. They will lose the ability to learn new work skills like landscaping, gardening, construction, janitorial, and small engine repair. They will lose the ability to earn credits through work experience to go towards their elective units at school. The boys often request to go outside to get space or calm down which are skills they have learned from our Cognitive based therapy classes like Thinking for a Change (T4C) and Aggression Replacement Training (ART) and they have really helped. They will not be able to do that at the old Juvenile Hall.

I strongly feel that the boys need the ranch to help them thrive. It gives them the opportunity to feel safe and to be able to act the age they are. It gives them the opportunity to be exposed to new things they have never gotten to do or see before. It gives them the opportunity to learn new skills and to catch up in school.

I have always been an advocate for these boys and want what is best for them. Over the years, many previous residents have told me how the staff and their experiences at the ranch have made a difference in their lives. Based on what they have told me and my own experiences, I strongly recommend that the ranch stay at it's current location.

Contra Costa County has been leading the state in Core Correctional Practices (CCP), which is supposed to be implemented in the least restrictive setting. The state says that juveniles should be rehabilitated in the least restrictive setting. OAYRF is the least restrictive setting. I feel relocating the ranch to the old original Juvenile Hall would be a step backwards instead of forward in our goal of achieving that.

Sincerely,

Wendy Roberts