



John Howard Association of Illinois

300 West Adams Street, Suite 423 Chicago, IL 60606
Tel. 312-782-1901 Fax. 312-782-1902 www.john-howard.org

“CHARTING CHANGE”

PROGRESS IN THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

IYC CHICAGO

MODELS FOR CHANGE INITIATIVE
JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION
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The John Howard Association of Illinois provides critical public oversight of the state's prisons, jails, and juvenile correctional facilities. As it has for more than a century, the Association promotes fair, humane, and effective sentencing and correctional policies, addresses inmate concerns, and provides Illinois citizens and decision-makers with information needed to improve criminal and juvenile justice.

As a partner in the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Models for Change juvenile justice initiative, the John Howard Association of Illinois has been tasked with observing first hand each of Illinois' eight Youth Centers, the secure correctional facilities operated by Illinois' new Department of Juvenile Justice, and to report on the Department's progress toward reforms consistent with Models for Change goals. Progress will be measured according to "performance measures" proposed for each Youth Center and for the Department overall.

This report describes one Youth Center and the performance measures proposed for it in 2007. The report also describes first steps that have been taken by the new Department of Juvenile Justice to improve conditions and operations, as well as particular obstacles associated with the Youth Center. Collectively, the reports on all eight of Illinois' Youth Centers are intended as a resource for policymakers, advocates, Models for Change partners, the media and the public who seek to understand secure confinement as it exists for youth in Illinois and the challenge of bringing about change in the ways that Illinois now incarcerates troubled youth. Individually and collectively these reports provide a base-line reference for annual updates on the Department's progress at each Youth Center and on periodic reports on issues such as education, staffing, disciplinary practices, reentry or "aftercare" for youth, and the Department's budgetary needs.

This report draws upon the observations of volunteer citizen visitors who through the John Howard Association provide public oversight of prisons, jails, and juvenile corrections facilities. These visits bring people from many walks of life into closed institutions where they can observe activities and conditions and speak with residents and employees.

This report was written by and under the direction of Malcolm C. Young with Patricia Connell and with contributions from John Howard Association of Illinois staff members Charles A. Fasano and Jannifer Nevilles.

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Malcolm C. Young, Executive Director
John Howard Association of Illinois
300 West Adams Street – Suite 423
Chicago, IL 60606
(312) 782 -1901
www.john-howard.org

CHAPTER THREE: “CHARTING CHANGE”
PROGRESS IN THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE
IYC CHICAGO

IYC Chicago

IYC Chicago appears just another warehouse or small factory, set back from Western Avenue just south of the Lake Street “el” line in an area of commercial establishments, abandoned buildings and empty lots. It is not only within Cook County and the City of Chicago, but accessible by car, CTA rail and bus service to family and friends of the boys inside. But a visitor has to know the address. Signs identifying this youth correctional center are hard to spot from the street.

IYC Chicago is in fact a converted warehouse retrofitted to use for youth corrections in 1999. True to the spirit of juvenile justice at the time, it was purposefully built as a maximum security-level facility with enough security to safely confine the anticipated tsunami of dangerous juvenile offenders, the feared “super predators” predicted by self-described criminologists in the late 1990’s.¹ Little attention was given to the kinds of amenities appropriate for detained youth, such as windows admitting light or with a decent view, access to the outside or outdoor recreational areas of any size, sufficient classrooms for all residents, and any kind of warmth or sense that what was being constructed was much more than a strong and clean cage. The one departure from the usual corrections security motif is the lack of high razor-ribbon-topped perimeter fences that surround six of the other Department of Juvenile Justice Youth Centers. These were omitted because the building also accommodates additional state and local offices.

The Youth Center is primarily located on the second and third floor of the building. Entrance is from the parking lot through a secure entrance on the first floor and a remotely operated elevator to the second. The ground floor also includes a secure sally port for vehicles which doubles as the outdoor recreation area, and can be described as small, and concrete paved with one basketball hoop and surrounded by a twenty foot brick wall.

On the second floor of the building there are two single bed housing units, a small confinement unit, a five classroom school and library, a gym, a cafeteria, health care unit, visiting room and administrative offices. The third floor has two larger housing units.

The predicted wave of hard-to-control violent super predators failed to materialize. Administrators redefined IYC Chicago’s purpose to serve as a transitional center for boys from Chicago and the collar counties who are approaching parole dates and expecting to be released. The two larger units on the third floor sleep 86 boys in IYC Chicago’s general population two to a room. One of the two special 22 bed units on the second floor is reserved for youth in a substance abuse treatment program operated by the Wells Center. The other houses the “Half Way Back Program” for boys who “voluntarily” return to the Department’s secure custody having begun to fail to meet the conditions of their parole. They are provided with more

¹ John J. DiIulio, Jr. “Fill Churches, not Jails: Youth crime and ‘Superpredators,’” a statement submitted to the Senate Judiciary Committee 28 February 1996. DiIulio proclaimed to a receptive congress and enamored press: “No one relishes the thought of locking up more juveniles. But it must be done....OJJDP and the rest of the federal juvenile justice establishment needs to get out of its anti-incarceration time warp....”

counseling and strategies for meeting parole expectations and returned to the community in 10 to 30 days.

IYC Chicago has a rated capacity of 130. Consistent with its new mission, IYC Chicago is now classified a minimum security institution.

Performance Measures for IYC Chicago

A. **Physical Setting**

IYC Chicago, built as a hardened maximum security prison for violent juveniles but now classified as minimum security, is a juvenile correctional sheep in wolf's clothing. IYC Chicago's design is totally at odds with the population it holds.

IYC Chicago has the aura of adult-level security and isolation in the middle of a city. The remotely controlled elevator that brings visitors to the second floor removes them from sight of the street and inserts them into a sealed hallway and reception area. Locked doors and security check points control entrance to rooms beyond the entrance hallway and movement within the Youth Center. Doors open and close to the sharp slam of electric deadbolts. Walls are bare, shining linoleum covers the floors, metal framed security-weight windows open into other rooms or passageways. Light comes from fluorescent ceiling fixtures.

Youth in general population at IYC Chicago are double bunked in their cells. Cells have flat hard featureless walls. Cell doors are solid, heavy, sound-dampening metal with small narrow windows. Doors are heavily locked. The inside of each cell has a stainless steel combined toilet and sink, hard plastic bunks, desks and stools which are fixed to the floor, and a small outside window. Some of the windows look out onto an empty lot cluttered with junk, enough land for a recreational area should any boy think of that. Each living unit has its own showers. Rooms on the third floor open onto a long bare internal corridor. A day room with a raised security consul at one end contains tables and chairs.

On the second floor each 22 bed unit contains a large common area furnished with more plastic chairs than necessary for the population, some tables and a television. In each of these units there is also office space for treatment staff. The cells themselves ring the outside of the building so that each is equipped with a window which admits some natural light.

Being new, IYC Chicago is in excellent repair. It is kept clean. But it is unmistakably a prison without even some of the amenities of most adult prisons.

The sole outdoor recreation area is a cement walled pen without a hint of nature, no grass or a bush or tree. It is more like a dog run than a place in which kids can have a good time and get exercise. Outdoor activity is hardly possible at IYC Chicago as there is not even the occasion for boys to walk across a yard to a dining hall or to school. Boys at IYC Chicago spend virtually all their time inside from November until May.

The Department of Juvenile Justice tries to offset the physical severity and environmental austerity built into IYC Chicago by allowing youth more hours of time than they would have at other Youth Centers out of their rooms, giving them liberal phone and visiting privileges, later bed times and extra time for recreation inside. But allowances, such as extra time out of rooms, is a modest benefit at best since the time is spent with other boys who also have very little to do. In so far as altering the physical setting, it is not obvious to lay visitors what could be done to economically make a significant difference at this facility.

1. IYC Chicago should increase the amount of displayed art work, inspirational posters, notices of achievement and bulletin boards on the living units, confinement, treatment and to a lesser extent dining and classroom areas.

IYC Chicago is one of the most sterile of all Department of Juvenile Justice facilities. Although there are a number of posters and other wall decorations in the school, library, gym, medical and substance abuse treatment unit, there is very little in the administrative portions or common living areas where youth spend the most time. Some change is underway. The substance abuse treatment unit has allowed youth to paint on the walls to commemorate youth achieving completion of the program. Other youth have completed colorful murals on the walls of the facility's gym. So there is a model for decorating the Youth Center and breaking up the near-clinical sterility of the design.

*It may be useful to seek ideas about ways to put some life into this facility from the "artist in residence" at IYC Warrenville or from an art teacher or artist. It should be possible to find an individual or arts group or program, perhaps community-based, within Chicago who might assist IYC Staff with a plan to decorate in a way that has some impact on the people who work at and live in IYC Chicago. As a **performance measure**, IYC Chicago will develop a program to bring art work, notices of success or achievement, and the like to the Youth Center to alter its austere and hard design.*

2. Repainting walls in common areas in lighter, brighter and varied colors.

*The walls inside IYC Chicago are painted with light shades of color. There are no bright or contrasting colors. The lack of outside light makes it important to choose colors and textures that offset white fluorescent light. Visitors thought that carpet, cloth on the walls, natural materials and wood shelving might all be used to help humanize this Youth Center for both staff and the boys assigned to it. As a **performance measure**, IYC Chicago should obtain advice on ways to modify the color scheme, use of wall space, furniture and furnishings to increase naturalness and warmth and decrease the sense of austerity, institutionalization, and dedication to a level of security that is much higher than appropriate to the population.*

3. Taking steps to reduce noise.

The building does not seem terribly noisy. It may be that the ceilings absorb more noise than at older facilities. To date nothing has been done to reduce noise levels at IYC Chicago.

4. Taking steps to increase youth access to light, fresh air and recreation

The staff and visitors agree that increased access to fresh air and an outdoor exercise area is a priority. Nothing has come of it. The design of the structure frustrates any attempt to provide boys any kind of outdoor exposure or exercise.

*Assuming that the empty lot visible from cell windows is unavailable for use by the Department of Juvenile Justice, IYC Chicago should make use of area recreational facilities, including Chicago's parks and forest preserves. A **performance measure** would be satisfied if the Department considered the parameters of a recreational program using public resources. A **second performance measure** would be satisfied if IYC Chicago established a program of escorted access to recreational facilities for the minimum security boys assigned to it, many of whom are slated to return to the community in a short period of time.*

5. Meals and food service

At one time IYC Chicago secured its food service under contract with a company called ARA Services. As a result of complaints about the quality of the food and the methods of operation that contract was terminated. Food is now prepared and served by Department of Juvenile Justice employees and incarcerated youth on work details. Boys and staff told us that the quality and quantity of the meals has improved.

Youth eat in a cafeteria at common tables with others from their living unit. Food is served from a cafeteria line which offers limited choices. Youth tell visitors that the food is “not bad.” The atmosphere seems fairly relaxed. Boys are permitted to talk in low voices in the cafeteria.

*At IYC Chicago, a performance **measure** will be met if the improved quality of the food service is maintained over the next year and beyond.*

*For the Department, one **performance measure** might be to consult with a dietary and nutritional expert to determine how well the adult menu (identical to that used for the Illinois Department of Corrections save for the addition of milk) meets the needs of youth, both boys and girls.*

*Probably because of its location and mission, operations at IYC Chicago seem to be conducted fairly independent of operations at the other Youth Centers. Never the less, a **performance measure** at IYC Chicago, as at other Youth Centers, would be met if Youth Center cooks and food service providers met to discuss recipes, food preparation methods, the state menu, and ideas on employing youth in kitchens or in providing them training and academic or vocational training credits at the same time.*

6. Increasing and maintaining landscaping efforts and the development of recreational fields.

This area is pointedly not available for improvement at IYC Chicago; see our previous recommendations to make use of public parks or recreational facilities in Chicago.

B. Youth at Facility; Classification

1. Can the facility document the demographic profile and delinquency history of youth at the facility, and is documentation consistent with that provided by other Youth Centers?

The Superintendent provided John Howard Association of Illinois visitors with reports or computer printouts showing the profile of youth at the facility, including race, reason for commitment, and security classification. The reports are consistent with those provided at other facilities. These reports do not break down the reason for the commitment by race or age.

*A **performance measure** for IYC Chicago will, as at other Youth Centers, be satisfied by a review of the assignment criteria and a reconsideration of the level or seriousness of the offense, the appropriateness of programming, and of the role of location within the state as factors in assigning boys to IYC Chicago. But see comments immediately following.*

2. Criteria for assignment to Chicago and consistency with practice in the facility.

Except for those in the Half Way Back Program, all boys at IYC Chicago must be from the city or the collar counties, be within three to six months of their scheduled release date and be suitable in a minimum security facility. Boys who are deemed not to have successfully completed substance abuse treatment and still in need of treatment will be assigned to the Wells Center Unit. Boys in the Half Way Back Program have “voluntarily” returned to IYC Chicago rather than having their parole revoked. Typically these are boys who have begun to fail in meeting the terms of their parole and this provides an opportunity to explore what additional steps they must take and whether the Department of Juvenile Justice can do more to help them make their return home successful. The program is operated by TASC whose staff works with the youth, his parents and the parole agent. When the boy returns home his case manager remains available to help solve problems and broker services.

*A **performance measure** for IYC Chicago will be a review of the assignment criteria with an eye toward converting this Youth Center into a true “reentry” or “aftercare” facility at which boys live for a very short time, perhaps one or two months. A planned short length of stay might make the environmental shortcomings of this facility far less important than at present.*

It makes sense that IYC Chicago’s mission of serving as a half-way point for boys returning to Chicago, and the Half Way Back program of proactive intervention on behalf of boys having trouble on parole be merged and intensified, so that the entire Youth Facility provide intense, short-term “aftercare” styled services to youth with the objective of returning them to their communities in as short a time frame as possible, and with continued support following the Half Way Back model, which might permit more rapid release. The harshness and sterility that is built into this facility, the lack of outside recreation, and other shortcomings become far less important if boys who are assigned here are engaged in activities focused on returning to their homes or to placements over a matter of weeks instead of months. The clinical aspects of the Youth Center become almost an advantage if the mission of the place is to provide direct counseling and assistance with a return to school, a search for employment, or negotiations with family members.

C. Behavior Management and Discipline

IYC Chicago probably had less far to go in terms of changing policies to come into line with the new Department of Juvenile Justice standards for discipline and behavior management. IYC Chicago sets high standards of behavior for its youth, and for the most part they are met. The Superintendents and senior staff seem intent on instituting positive behavior management techniques. Boys are commended and achievements highlighted. The staff generally takes a positive approach to boys at IYC Chicago. This may be easier because all IYC boys are minimum security, but it extends to boys in the Half Way Back Program who have had difficulties in the community.

*A **performance measure** for IYC Chicago would be to expand and fully integrate its efforts to positively reinforce good behavior into an intense reentry or “aftercare” program with the objective of giving boys maximum motivation to behave appropriately once they are released to their communities.*

1. Modifying behavior management and institutionalizing balanced and restorative justice principles.

The administration at IYC Chicago maintains a healthy range of alternatives to the use of confinement for rule violations. A boy may be assigned an extra work duty, or asked to write a letter of apology or a composition in which he can describe how to better handle a situation. In some instances the administration has brought the parent or parents into play by calling and meeting with them in an effort to positively influence the youth.

2. Increases in awards and recognition for good behavior.

Without having much to work with the institution has tried to increase the number and type of rewards available to youth to promote positive behaviors. In addition to rewarding good behavior, the facility has tried to have one academic contest each month, promoting a particular talent or skill. Recognition is given for participation and a prize of some sort is given to the winner of the contest.

3. Modifications in placing youth into confinement.

As described above, at the time of our first visits, IYC Chicago was already sending far fewer youth to confinement than in the past, and for much shorter periods of time. Most misbehavior in the facility falls far short of warranting the use of confinement. The confinement unit has 11 beds, but at the time of our last visit only four were set up for use and only one boy was actually in confinement. The Superintendent and his designee visit the confinement unit at least once daily and frequently release youth prior to serving their complete confinement time.

4. Conditions on the Confinement Unit

A variety of institution staff visit all youth in confinement each day. They include the Superintendent or his designee, the youth's counselor, someone from the school and any treatment staff who regularly work with the boy. Chemical restraints and waist-belt restraints are still present in the confinement unit but do not appear to be being used.

D. Restorative Justice

At the time of our visit in 2007, the Superintendent had instituted a program called "I Intend." Boys are instructed to identify goals for each day. At the end of the day they are given time to reflect on their success or failure in improving behavior and otherwise meeting the goals. We spoke with boys who told us their goals and their pleasure at succeeding in meeting them.

At IYC Chicago as at other Youth Centers, even though elements of restorative justice are apparent in the approach which has been developed to behavior management and discipline, staff members other than the Superintendent and senior officers were unfamiliar with the term "Restorative Justice."

1. Formal training in Restorative Justice principles and their application

There is no formal training on BARJ, or its principles, at IYC Chicago. The “I Intend” program helps youth learn to take responsibility for their actions and to positively reinforce their success in doing so.

*A **performance measure** at IYC Chicago would be met if staff were provided a formal introduction and training in behavior modification and restorative justice principals as the Department intends to implement them.*

*A **performance measure** for the Department of Juvenile Justice would be met by conducting an assessment or evaluation of the effectiveness of the “I Intend” program and, depending upon the outcome of the evaluation, consideration of extending it to other Youth Centers or modifying it for continued use at IYC Chicago.*

*Previously some youth left the institution to perform simple acts of community service. That has not taken place in many years. A **performance measure** would be met if youth once again performed community service outside the institution.*

2. Use of restorative justice principles to resolve disputes and in discipline procedures

While IYC Chicago does not make formal use of restorative justice-styled peer panels or “circles” counselors and security staff have attempted to have boys who argue or fight sit down together and resolve differences peaceably through negotiation. The staff have added a number of alternative sanctions and means of disciplining youth that are similar to some of those recommended in formal BARJ programs including writing letters of apology or requiring youth to call home and explain why they may be released later than expected.

*We repeat: a **performance measure** at IYC Chicago would be met if staff were provided a formal introduction and training in behavior modification and restorative justice principals as the Department intends to implement them.*

3. Efforts to promote interaction between youth and crime victims.

Crime victims from a group called In My Shoes visit IYC Chicago shortly before each Parole Board date. The victims meet with boys who are scheduled to go before the board and boys speak with this visitor in general terms about victimization.

*Because of its location, IYC Chicago is one of the best-suited facilities in which true victim-offender reconciliation could be practiced. The John Howard Association of Illinois visitors are cautious about recommending victim-offender reconciliation on a large scale or as a condition of sentence or parole, because many victims do not wish to meet a person who injured or damaged them, and many crimes, such as drug sales or use, are not appropriate to victim-offender reconciliation. Research is mixed on the actual efficacy of victim offender reconciliation. Accordingly, a **performance measure** would be satisfied if the Department of Juvenile Justice reviewed successful victim-offender reconciliation programs, particularly any which involve juveniles, determined the advantages of such a program, and if merited designed and implemented a program at IYC Chicago. A victim-offender reconciliation project could be*

an important element of the intense reentry or “aftercare” program and mission we have recommended Department of Juvenile Justice consider for IYC Chicago.

E. Community and Family Contact

About 60 % of the youth get regular visits and many of the rest get no visits at all. This is a surprising disappointment since parents and family for most boys at IYC Chicago live relatively close and public and private transportation to the Youth Center is not difficult.

1. Steps to increase parent contact

While IYC Chicago is fairly flexible in its visiting policies, at the time of our 2007 visit no special steps are being made to increase parent visiting.

*A **performance measure** would be satisfied if the number of youth at IYC Chicago who receive regular family visits increased to the point that only youth with no functional family received few or no family visits.*

2. Flexibility in admitting family visitors

Although formal visiting hours are set on Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays from 10 to 4:30 staff demonstrated flexibility in scheduling other times for parents unavailable during the pre-arranged times.

3. Increasing the activities available during visits

Given the physical configuration of IYC Chicago, and the visiting room in particular, it is difficult to imagine what steps the facility could take to increase informal activities during visitation inside the building. However, if as we recommend IYC Chicago intensifies its aftercare functions, visits could be used as information-gathering, counseling, and planning sessions with the youth, family, counselors and program staff. The facility might also consider granting permission for visitors to meet with youth outside the institution’s walls.

*A second **performance measure** will be met when staff have given careful and creative consideration to ways to increase effective communications with parents, guardians or responsible family members as an integral part of an intense “aftercare” program at IYC Chicago.*

4. Surrogate or volunteer visiting program for boys who do not receive visits.

As of July 2007, there was no program involving ‘surrogate’ or volunteer visitors. Chicago seems to have an active pool of volunteers from who ‘surrogate’ visitors might easily be recruited.

5. Increased telephone access to parents, family or guardians.

Youth make no complaints about their access to family by phone. It is clear that as much access is possible is desirable, particularly during the months and weeks immediately preceding a youth's release.

F. Education

IYC Chicago has seldom had a viable educational program. Shortly after it was opened as a co-ed facility in 2002, IYC Chicago staffed two separate school programs. The girls' school was located within the facility and the boys' school was located across the parking lot in the partially used Healy School. Eight teachers provided class room teaching for approximately 100 students.

IYC stopped housing girls in 2004. Thereafter, its school had as few as one teacher for 54 students for a number of months. During that period the only boys receiving any formal education were the handful of special education students who each received a few hours of instruction each week. Others spent the normal school day sitting with the Youth Supervisor staff members, working on packets of "worksheets" or other activities designed by administrators.

The last time all enrolled students at IYC Chicago attended school for a full day was in the fall of 2006, which was, not coincidentally the last time the school had a principal to manage class and teacher assignments.

When the teaching staff diminished, IYC Chicago stopped sending any of its students across the parking lot to the Healy School. This consolidation eased security concerns which were triggered when a number of boys escaped during the walk across the open parking lot. IYC Chicago's response was to transport boys the roughly 100 yards from one door to the other in a bus.

The five classrooms in IYC Chicago are insufficient if the full allotment of seven teachers, a diagnostician and a principal were employed at IYC Chicago or if all youth are to attend school full time while the facility is near capacity. Unfortunately, the shortage of classrooms was not a limiting factor during our July 2007 visit since the school was staffed with only three teachers and a diagnostician. John Howard Association of Illinois visitors were told that when additional teachers are hired, IYC Chicago would again use classrooms in the Healy School.

Vocational education is an area of instruction that has been particularly lacking at Chicago. When originally opened it was contemplated that there would be a commercial custodial course available to the male population and a computer program available to the females. Although a classroom and equipment were devoted to the commercial custodial activity in the building across the parking lot, a vocational instructor was never hired.

IYC Chicago has been unable to obtain and keep teachers and a principal on staff. One reason assigned to this perpetual lack is that salaries for teachers in public schools in the Chicago area are higher than salaries paid by School District 428.

1. Teaching and school staff

In July 2007 IYC Chicago had three teachers one of whom was a certified special education instructor, and a diagnostician. The school was short staffed by four teachers and a principal. The facility needs its full allotment of teachers if it is to provide all youth who have not yet received a high school diploma or GED full time education. Less clear are the number of special education teachers needed for the current population, but one staff member estimated that one third of the residents of IYC Chicago have been identified as needing special education services. When youth are enrolled fulltime they are in five one hour classes each day. Staff at IYC Chicago could not provide John Howard Association of Illinois visitors a time table for filling the teacher vacancies at IYC Chicago.

*As at other Youth Centers with inadequate teaching staff, filling the number of teaching positions needed to provide full time classroom education, special education, and a complete curriculum is a most vital **performance measure**.*

2. Youth activities outside of school

Non-educational line staff, primarily Youth Supervisors, attempt to provide substitutes for formal class room teaching for the boys who cannot be in school during the school day. As they have done over the years that teaching positions remain unfilled,² security staff members spend some time during the day on the living units monitoring boys' work on "instructional packets." The staff attempt to provide additional recreation activities to fill the boys' time and engage the youth with additional work assignments.

Despite the fact that boys at IYC Chicago are classified minimum security and that they are all expected to return to the community within months, there are no group or individual activities for boys outside of the Youth Center's walls.

*A **performance measure** would be met if, in addition to providing full time school for all youth at IYC Chicago, the Youth Center provided supplementary activities to fill each boy's day. An additional **performance measure** would be met if IYC Chicago considered providing a regular program of educational or recreational activities for boys outside the facility.*

*Were IYC Chicago to serve as a reentry or aftercare facility, its mission might well define many of the supplemental activities and outside activities that would be provided for boys as they prepare to return to their homes and communities. Consequently, another **performance measure** would be met if youth activities outside of school, and outside the walls of IYC Chicago, were integrated into an intense reentry or aftercare program.*

3. Is there education for youth who have a GED or high school education

IYC Chicago has no educational resources for youth who have a high school diploma or a GED. The shortage of teachers and classrooms cannot excuse failure to attend to the educational or

² John Howard Association of Illinois visitors have repeatedly observed and reported severe shortages of teaching staff at IYC Chicago. Security staff members have administered "educational packets" of worksheets in math and sciences and engage youth in discussions of assigned books to boys on their units, but this is a completely inadequate substitute for the education to which Illinois youth are entitled. See, John Howard Association of Illinois report of a site visit to IYC Chicago on November 3, 2004.

vocational needs of youth who are soon to be back in their home communities. This population needs job readiness skills or should be beginning the process of post secondary education or trade instruction.

*A **performance measure** will be met when IYC Chicago provides vocational, job readiness, or an introduction to higher education to youth who have completed high school or have obtained a GED. It hardly needs repeating that an additional **performance measure** would be met if vocational, job readiness, an introduction to higher education, or other educational programming were integrated into an intense reentry or aftercare program.*

4. Vocational offerings

At the time of our July 2007 visit, IYC Chicago provided no vocational instruction. The last known vocational programming was in computer keyboarding, offered in the fall of 2006.

*If IYC Chicago is to continue to house boys for as long as six months, it should provide boys with a well-designed vocational program. Such a program might be designed to take advantage of Chicago-area resources, and could involve teaching or training at locations outside the youth Center. On the other hand, if IYC Chicago was to provide intense aftercare or reentry programming for 4 to 8 weeks, vocational programming might be inappropriate due to the short period of time most boys would spend at the Youth Center. Consequently, IYC Chicago would satisfy a **performance measure** if it carefully evaluates the need and design of a vocational program that best serves its mission.*

G. Health Services

IYC Chicago houses a healthy population with relatively routine medical needs. Youth who come here have undergone health screening at IYC St. Charles, including STD testing and, upon request, testing for HIV, and do not include boys with known serious medical or mental health problems.

*There has been no independent evaluation of medical services or of the procedures to be followed in the event of a medical emergency at IYC Chicago. As for other Youth Centers, a **performance measure** will be met when there has been a review of medical and mental health services at IYC Chicago.*

1. Who is providing health care; how many hours per week.

There is no overnight health care at IYC Chicago. Health Professionals Limited (HPL), which had the contract to provide health care services at IYC Chicago at the time of our 2007 visit, provided 5 nurses for 40 hours per week. Nurses are present at the Youth Center from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. every day of the week. A medical doctor is available 12 hours per week. A psychiatrist is available 8 hours per week. Emergencies are screened by on call medical personnel. If requested by medical professionals, youth are transported to one of the nearby hospitals.

2. Number of hours a dentist and dental technician are on the grounds and the applied policy for prophylactic cleaning and dental care for youth at this Center.

Boys who need dental services are sent to the dentist or hygienist at IYC St. Charles. Boys are scheduled to have their teeth cleaned once per year. We have no indication that this arrangement is inadequate. DJJ should consider whether a contract arrangement with local dentists might be more efficient than transporting boys who need dental care to St. Charles.

3. Family participation in mental health, counseling or treatment sessions with boys.

A psychologist is present at IYC Chicago 30 hours per week. She conducts a variety of different programs with the boys which are described in the Additional Programming Section below.

Although the psychologist reports that she has tried to involve individual parents in treatment she also reports that she has not been successful in the past and that she makes few attempts to involve parents at present.

*A **performance measure** would be met if the mental health and counseling program were reviewed for the potential to integrate the psychologists' services, or if needed psychiatric counseling or prescription-writing for youth and even family members into an intense reentry or aftercare program.*

H. Recreation

1. Recreational activities

IYC Chicago has no Leisure Time Activity Specialist. The line staff plan and execute any recreational activities. Boys have a minimum of one hour in the gym each day. They play basketball, volleyball or indoor soccer. Shortly before our 2007 visit, staff put together a basketball tournament, matching boys from different living units against boys from another unit. There is a weight room adjacent to the gym and some youth spend recreation time there.

Boys spend a lot of recreational time in their day rooms. They play board and card games. Also before our visit, staff members had introduced word games and other educational or intellectual activities. The intent is good, but the result remains that boys have a paltry selection of activities to choose from when they are not engaged in formal activities.

Another well-intentioned effort provides boys with additional recreation or at least distractions through an active pool of volunteers. A person identified as Reverend holds sessions with some of the boys. Former Superintendent Dawn Hines conducts sessions with boys covering current events. In the past TASC, as part of its Half Way Back Program, brought speakers into the facility. But by 2007, state funds for these activities were eliminated.

2. Recreational areas

IYC Chicago's lack of outdoor space more or less requires that a lot of recreational time be spent in the dayrooms on the living units or in the main gym. A few times a year, the Youth Center holds a cookout on the small, walled in outdoor recreation area, which also has a single basketball hoop for boys to use.

Recreation at IYC Chicago is completely inadequate for adolescent boys who spend 24 hours a day in a locked environment. The problem is exacerbated by poor design, a lack of Leisure Time

Activity specialists, and the fact that they many boys at this Youth Center are not even engaged in academic classroom work for a full school day.

*A **performance measure** will not be met until there are at least two full time Leisure Time Activity Specialists on staff and IYC Chicago has designed and implemented a full recreational program that engages all boys, not just those who play basketball or lift weights. To address the lack of outdoor space and to offset the effect of incarceration in an overly-secure, sterile facility, another **performance measure** would be met if the use of city park or other outside resources are considered for use for the minimum security youth at IYC Chicago.*

I. Substance Abuse Treatment

The Wells Center operates a 120 day inpatient substance abuse treatment program at IYC Chicago.

1. Program Operation

At IYC Chicago, the Wells Center program applies a therapeutic community model in which boys live and work together while participating in treatment. Boys progress through four stages and then graduate from the program.

At our July 2007 visit, 22 youth were in the Wells Center program. From Monday through Friday they are involved in counseling, groups and activities. There is no programming over the weekend which means more unfilled time for youth. This was described as “getting a break.” Based on anecdotal experience staff consider the program effective. There is however no objective measure of the program’s short or long term impact on the youth who are enrolled.

*As at other Youth Centers, at IYC Chicago a **performance measure** would be met with an assessment of estimated need for substance abuse treatment programming, in terms of numbers of boys and types of treatment modalities that are indicated. In the instance of IYC Chicago, we would further recommend that substance abuse treatment programs be integrated into an intense reentry or aftercare program designed to return boys to the community in a relatively short time frame.*

*A second **performance measure** will be met when IYC Chicago actually establishes sufficient and sufficiently-intense substance abuse treatment programs to meet assessed needs. In addition to formal substance abuse treatment, the Department should consider implementing substance abuse counseling along the lines established at IYC Murphysboro, but focused particularly on the needs of youth who are soon to be returned to their communities in the Chicago area. Meeting this performance measure will no doubt require significant increases in staff and/or contracted services.*

2. Follow up in the community.

The Wells Center staff members at IYC Chicago attempt to follow up with all youth who are released. The program makes an initial referral to a substance abuse treatment program in the community. Staff members do not, however, accompany boys to a first meeting or assessment at the program to which they are referred. If a youth fails to make their first appointment, staff will make additional calls and /referrals until the youth is linked to some community agency.

*An important **performance measure** for IYC Chicago will be met if boys referred to programs are taken to the program for assessments and if staff who worked with a boy at the Youth Center determinedly follow through, counsel and assist that boy in addressing substance abuse issues in the community, including by finding a good placement and sticking to outpatient programs and services. The approach taken at IYC Chicago through its Half Way Back Program, described in the following section, offers one model for this level of aftercare service.*

J. Half Way Back Program

In July of 2007 Half Way Back had space for 22 youth on the one unit assigned to it. Nine of these spaces were filled.

1. Half Way Back Program Operations

The Half Way Back Program takes youth who are on the brink of having their parole revoked for minor violations, and allows them to “voluntarily” return to IYC Chicago. There they are provided with an advocate, a TASC employee, who will work with the youth and his parole agent to help them meet their obligations when they return to the community. The staff of the program meet with the youth, his family, and the parole agent to determine what the boy’s problems are and how best to solve them. Parole agents who in Chicago are specially assigned to youth have an office directly across the street, which enhances their communication with boys in this program. Youth stay in the facility between 14 and 30 days under this program. The program is operated under contract with TASC who provides case management and advocacy services for the youth.

Youth are assigned to the Half Way Back Program for 10 to 30 days. They typically attend school two days per week. The rest of the time is given over to meeting with parents, therapists and parole agents. Thought was given to moving the treatment and meeting times to the weekend to make more school time available, but TASC’s program operators opposed that change.

*A **performance measure** important to the Department of Juvenile Justice as well as IYC Chicago would be met if the Half Way Back program was reviewed, evaluated, and considered both for modifications and for expansion. There are many questions, including the low enrollment in the program, the rationale for using this program only for boys who are having trouble while on parole (as opposed to using the program model for boys about to be released, some of whom have had a history of problems inside and outside Department of Juvenile Justice), and the advantages that might flow from allowing boys in the program to leave the Youth Center for appointments, interviews, counseling, school meetings, and to “test out” being on the street. There is also the possibility that the Half Way Back Program, like the Probation Revocation Program at IYC Joliet, could serve as a viable, affordable approach to aftercare or reentry for many more youth than those now served by it who will be leaving the secure custody of Department of Juvenile Justice.*

K. Additional Education, Vocational and Group Programming**1. Additional treatment programs**

At the time of our July 2007 visit, Dr. LaPietra led group sessions in crisis intervention, victim empathy, impulse control, and anger management. Dr. LaPietra works 30 hours per week, assisted by six interns from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology.

Youth who are about ready to be paroled attend a “Parole School” intended to provide an idea of the requirements and demands that they must meet to satisfy conditions of parole.

*An additional **performance measure** would be satisfied if the Department evaluated and assessed this “Parole School” and similar programs that operate at other Youth Centers. Assuming that the effort to help youth understand the obligations and challenges before them, the Department should shape a uniform curriculum and informational packet for instructors and youth and implement a program throughout the Department of Juvenile Justice.*

2. Possible additional programs

At the time of our July 2007 visit, IYC Chicago has no other programs. It was severely limited in its ability to provide any kind of program services by shortages in line staff, counselors, Leisure Time Activity Specialists, and teaching staff. The Youth Center does draw on a pool of volunteers it considers “large and loyal.” But clearly, the potential of a Youth Center located within Cook County to better fulfill its mission of assisting boys who will be released to Chicago-area communities, is great. But IYC Chicago’s potential can be enhanced only by expanding the few special programs that it now has, raising staff levels, and by careful planning based on objective information about program effectiveness.

*An important **performance measure** for IYC Chicago is to reevaluate and assess the range of programs and services which might advance its mission as, potentially, a Youth Center devoted to providing intense aftercare or reentry services for youth, links to schools and community resources, and a bridge to families and the homes to which boys will return when released.*

Table 1: Staffing Levels IYC Chicago

	2007	2008
Superintendents	1	1
Assistant Superintendents	0	1
Security Staff	51	49
Security Staff Supervisors	7	6
Educators	3	3
Leisure Time Activity Specialists	0	0
Counselors	2	2
Case Work Supervisors	0	0
Psychologists	0	0
Social Workers	0	0
Medical	0	0
Chaplain	0	0
Other Administrative*	11	13
Total	**	**

*This category includes maintenance, secretarial, business management, and food service.

**The total number of staff at IYC Chicago cannot be accurately calculated from these figures because the facility has medical, mental health, substance abuse treatment, and Halfway Back program staff who are employed contractually and are not included in these figures.