

**Executive Summary
Paint Creek Youth Center**

For Lighthouse Youth Services, Inc.

By

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Paint Creek Youth Center is a privately operated facility located in southeast Ohio. The facility has been in operation since 1985 and was originally funded by OJJDP. The treatment facility has the ability to house up to 33 male offenders at one time. Youth are referred to the treatment program by the Ohio Department of Youth Services.

In 1988, the RAND Corporation evaluated the program. The sample included 75 youth admitted to Paint Creek and 75 youth admitted to an Ohio training school. Results of that study indicate the youth admitted to Paint Creek Youth Center experienced less drug use, had fewer rearrests (although not statistically significant), higher rates of employment, and reported having more friends than youth sent to an Ohio training school.

Although the study provided some positive findings there were several limitations: (1) the effects of sampling the first youth to enter a new program which has many intricate components, (2) the length of time used to measure recidivism, and (3) the inability of the research to take an in-depth look at certain quantifiable components of the Paint Creek program (number of problem areas and treatment phase of release)¹. The current evaluation addressed the above issues in an attempt to provide a more precise look at the overall effects of the Paint Creek program.

The current study included a follow-up of the original RAND samples, as well as all youth sentenced to Paint Creek form 1988

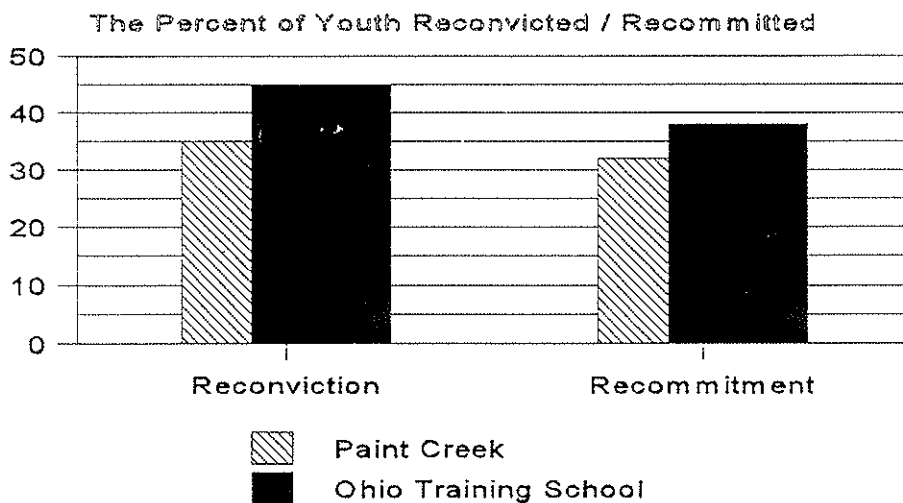
through 1995. Four hundred and eighty youth were included in this study; 150 original RAND cases, and 330 post-RAND cases. In addition to the original control group, a matched comparison group was selected from youth admitted to an Ohio training school.

Three research questions were addressed in this study. The following questions and results were obtained:

Do Paint Creek youth have a lower likelihood of reconviction or recommitment compared to the youth admitted to an Ohio training school?

- Although Figure 1 shows the number of Paint Creek youth reconvicted or recommitted is slightly lower than youth sentenced to Ohio training schools, these results were not statistically significant. The same results were found when the RAND sample was examined alone.

Figure 1: All Youth



- The types of offenses which the two groups were recommitted for are as follows:

	Experimental Group	Comparison Group
Property offense	32%	23%
Personal offense	44%	47%
Drug offense	12%	18%
Other offenses	11%	12%

The Paint Creek youth commit slightly more personal offenses than the comparison group. However, the majority of youth from both groups tend to engage in property offenses upon release.

Are there any components of the Paint Creek program which have an influence on recidivism?

- The number of problem areas was a significant predictor of reconviction and recommitment when examining the entire sample, however, the number of problem areas was an insignificant predictor when examining the RAND sample only. These findings indicate that the youth who were evaluated as having a higher number of problem areas tend to have a higher likelihood of being reconvicted or recommitted for a new offense.
- Consistent findings were revealed when the youth's phase of release was considered. The results indicate that the Paint Creek youth have a lower likelihood of being reconvicted of an offense or recommitted to an institution when they successfully complete the treatment offered at Paint Creek. These results were also found when examining only the sample used in the RAND study.
- The results for treatment phase of release also revealed the probability of being reconvicted or recommitted decreases as a youth progresses through the treatment phases. The probability of being reconvicted of a new offense is 28% for youth transferred from Paint Creek², 17% for Phase one, 10% for Phase two, and 6% for those released on Phase three. Additionally, the probability of being recommitted to an institution is 30% for youth transferred from Paint Creek, 21% for Phase one, 14% for Phase two, and 9% for youth who successfully complete all treatment phases.
- Overall, these findings signify the treatment program established at Paint Creek does have the potential to reduce future criminal activity. Examination of the characteristics of the Paint Creek youth by phase of release indicates there were no major differences between the youth released from the facility on various phases.

Do the youth who successfully complete the Paint Creek program have a lower likelihood of reconviction or recommitment than youth who are admitted to an Ohio training school?

- The goal of this analysis was to determine if Paint Creek youth have a lower likelihood of reconviction and

recommitment when released on Phase three compared to youth of similar characteristics sentenced to an Ohio training school. The results reveal youth who were successfully released from Paint Creek (Phase three youth) have a lower likelihood of reconviction and recommitment than youth of similar characteristics who are admitted to other Ohio detention facilities.

- More specifically, the probability of being reconvicted of an offense is 16% for the Paint Creek youth who completed the program and 33% for the comparison group. The probability of being recommitted to an institution is 17% for the Paint Creek youth and 35% for the comparison youth.

Conclusions and Recommendations

These findings support the contention that penetration in the Paint Creek program had a significant effect on outcome. Youth that completed treatment were more likely to be "successful" than youth who did not complete the program. This effect appears to be due to the structure of the Paint Creek program.

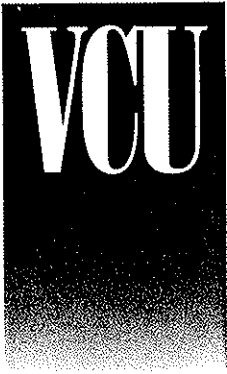
Although some positive results were uncovered, there are a few recommendations which could enhance the overall effectiveness of the program. Based on the foregoing findings we offer the following recommendations:

1. In order to determine what type of youth successfully completes the program, it is important to gather more information on the youth. The literature suggests three key areas which will impact the overall effectiveness of a program. The areas are risk, need, and, responsibility. Therefore, it is recommended that the Paint Creek program implement the following:
 - a. A risk assessment instrument which will classify the youth into a category of low, medium, or high.
 - b. A needs assessment instrument.
 - c. A personality assessment instrument (in order to classify the offender's abilities and learning style).
2. The overall effectiveness of the program may also be improved by offering "booster sessions." The Paint Creek program teaches the youth about his criminal cycle of offending and how to identify it but fails to offer an avenue to receive additional help once the youth is discharged from aftercare. Providing "booster sessions" allows individuals who received the Paint Creek treatment to receive refresher sessions when the individual identifies he is having a problem.

ENDNOTE

1. The number of problem areas refers to the assessment of a youth's criminal thinking errors. The assumption is, the more criminal thinking errors a youth possesses equates to a higher level of anti-social attitudes rather than pro-social attitudes. Therefore, youth with a higher number of problem areas will have a higher likelihood of recidivism. The second quantifiable component is the treatment phase of release. Paint Creek has three treatment phases of release with each phase having individual goals and objectives. The youth released on Phase three of the program have received the full range of treatment provided by the facility. Therefore, the assumption is, the youth released on Phase three should have a lower likelihood of recidivism than youth released on Phase two, Phase one, or transferred to another institution.

2. This finding (youth transferred from Paint Creek) applies to youth who were admitted to the facility but at some point were placed into an Ohio training school. Removal from Paint Creek could occur because a youth refused to follow the structure of the program, for disciplinary reasons, for attempting the escape the facility, or for not progressing in the program.



Robert Mecum
Lighthouse Youth Services, Inc.
1527 Madison Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45206

September 17, 1996

Virginia Commonwealth University

Dear Bob,

I received a fax from Ed Latessa concerning the re-funding of the Paint Creek grant. I have enclosed copies of papers which have been presented at various conferences. Phase 1 of the Final Report should be complete by November 1. I will send it to you as soon as we are finished. Please let me know if you need anything else from us.

Thank you for your time. Please do not hesitate to call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jill A. Gordon".

Jill A. Gordon, Ph. D.
Assistant Professor
Project Directo

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