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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90094

Joy Westrum, President,
Second Chance Program
8130 La Mesa Blvd. Suite 715
La Mesa, California, 9141

Dear Ms Westrum

I appreciate very much the opportunity you gave me to visit the Second Chance Program at the Tijuana State Prison. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to examine the structure and various elements that constitute the program, the therapeutic philosophy and the rehabilitative processes. I also reviewed outcome data from an evaluation from the Universidad Autónoma de Baja California.

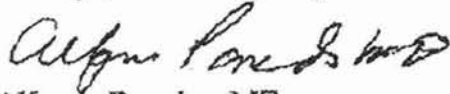
Following are some of my impressions. I will provide you with later with a more technical review.

It was particularly important to me to have interacted personally with the inmates, shaking hands, talking with them and asking many questions. I observed first hand the rehabilitative process and the responses of hard core drug abusers and law offenders to the program. I have had opportunity to do many site visits to substance abuse rehabilitative programs throughout the US for the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NAAA) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). I have had administrative responsibilities for statewide substance abuse rehabilitative systems as well as for programs in major academic institutions in the US. I have never been as deeply impressed as I was during my visit to the second Chance Program.

I was interested with the therapeutic philosophy of the program and the accessibility of the therapeutic techniques to the program participants. Your program is a unique systematic program of rehabilitation. The program includes an effective process of detoxification, it does not rely on habituating medications such as benzodiazepines or narcotic medications in the process of detoxification. The approach applied relies on nutritional substances and techniques such as the Sauna. This last device has been extensively used in Nordic countries such as Finland and in healing ceremonies by the aboriginal groups of the American continent.

The modules of rehabilitative procedures help participants to evaluate systematically, the impact of their behavior on their family and others in the community and to examine the beneficial as well as the noxious impact of peers. Participants learn to re-formulate and incorporate a constructive personal system of values that is humanistic and non-confessional. The impact of this process of re socialization is striking. No less dramatic is the reduction of illicit activities and aggressive behavior within the institution.

The low recidivism rates reported are striking. I was pleased to see within the penal system of Baja California a progressive approach of re-socialization that truly intends to and succeeds in rehabilitating substance abuse offenders. This program prevents the creation of a revolving door through which more and more men and women go through, increasing the public burden and the waste of human lives.



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