

For Immediate Release

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Contact Russ Reno, Communications and Legislative Services, (office) 402-471-8287 or (cell) 402-450-7318, or russ.reno@nebraska.gov

American Correctional Association Auditors Give YRTC-Geneva High Marks

Lincoln – Dan Scarborough, administrator of the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center in Geneva (YRTC-G), hoped a recent audit of the facility by the American Correctional Association (ACA) would do two things:

- One, provide positive audit scores that would help the facility move toward accreditation; and
- Two, give the staff something to feel good about.

It did both, he said.

When the auditors presented their findings recently, YRTC-G was found to be 100 percent compliant on 38 mandatory requirements and 99.69 percent compliant on 333 non-mandatory measurements.

It was the facility's highest ACA audit rating ever and Scarborough credits the YRTC-G staff for making it possible.

"All staff played a part in this, just by doing their job on a daily basis and doing it well," Scarborough said.

"Whether they knew it or not, they played a part, and I am very proud of the staff here in Geneva."

Three auditors from the ACA visited YRTC-G this fall. During a three-day visit of the facility, they toured the grounds and visited with staff members and youths.

"This independent view of the operation of the YRTC at Geneva reinforces the focus we've had on sharpening our efforts to help the young women there become contributing members of society," said Thomas Pristow, director of Children and Family Services at the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. "The obvious good work of employees reflects their commitment to this ideal, and we congratulate them for their efforts."

In general, the auditors were very impressed with what they saw. They said the purpose of the audit and accreditation process is to make sure staff are professional, accountable, and focused on the facility's program and residents. They found YRTC-G staff members are already doing these things well, he said.

They commended the staff's professionalism, program knowledge and communication. In general, they said they found YRTC-G staff to be very competent, friendly and "committed to the philosophy of the program."

The auditors also highlighted the facility's "My Journey" program, which allows youth to identify what they need to work on so they can achieve their individual goals. The auditors congratulated the facility on using a more individualized program, whereas many similar facilities use more generic, group-based programs.

YRTC's medical and mental health services, recreation and education programs, and facility maintenance were also complimented by the auditors who said the facility is very attractive, well-kept and impressive.

From their interviews with the youth, auditors found that the majority of them believed YRTC-G was providing them with skills that would be helpful to them when they return to the community.

Generally, the auditors felt that the youth were happy and very comfortable with the staff, which they said, "speaks highly of what your mission is, how you're doing it and how they view it."

The facility was found to be non-compliant on one non-mandatory standard which deals with perimeter security. However, the auditors found that, overall, YRTC-G's security is adequate for the type of residents the facility serves.

The auditors thanked the YRTC-G staff for their cooperation and hospitality over the course of the three-day audit. They said their suggestions and questions were well-received and all staff were welcoming.

For the next step in the accreditation process, Scarborough will appear before the ACA Commission on Accreditation for Corrections at its winter conference in February 2015 for a final determination of accreditation.

YRTC-G is in the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Children and Family Services.