

## 7 agencies praised for juvenile homeless program

By Aaron Burgin

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The Monarch School

The county's multipronged approach to fighting juvenile homelessness and a county department's effort to cut red tape were among the efforts applauded by a San Diego County Grand Jury report on Monday highlighting public agencies that provide stellar public service.

Entitled "Civic Successes: Public Service at its Best," the report acknowledged 13 agencies in fields ranging from planning to medical examination.

"There are those areas that once examined, come through as prime examples of excellent service worthy of being acknowledged and called to the attention of the public," the report said.

The grand jury's report gave a nod to the following agencies and efforts:

- The County's juvenile homeless assistance network. Seven agencies received commendation, according to the report, for exhibiting "an extraordinary level of communication within and among the different organizations as well as a very high degree of cooperation. "What impressed the grand jury was the level of passion and dedication shown by all involved," the report said. These agencies include the [Child Welfare Services](#) division of the county's [Health and Human Services](#) agency, the San Diego County Commission on Children and Families, the San Diego County Office of Education, San Diego Regional Task Force on the Homeless, South Bay Youth Services, South Bay Community Services and Toussaint Youth Villages.
- San Diego County Sheriff's Office Crime Lab. The grand jury toured the facility in September and offered a glowing report, commending the department for its efforts in resolving unsolved crimes.
- Monarch School. The downtown San Diego campus charged with educating homeless children received high marks for the academic progress many of its students make and the high attendance rate.

- Polinsky Children’s Center. Grand jurors commended the center, which provides a safe haven for the county’s at-risk youth, for the high level of cooperation between the public agencies and private parties involved with the center’s operation.
- The San Diego County Department of Planning and Land Use. The agency was commended for reducing red tape involved with one of its most complex services, subdividing land for future development. According to the report, the department has vastly improved its ability to estimate the time and cost of projects as well as resolve complaints.



The new county Medical Examiner's building

- The San Diego County Medical and Forensic Center. The grand jury noted the building’s appearance and level of service despite budgetary pressures.
- United Through Reading. The grand jury spoke highly of the volunteer program, which allows jail inmates to record themselves reading books and then send their children or siblings a DVD of the reading and a copy of the book. The group recommended the program be expanded to all detention facilities.

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