



COUNTY OF YOLO

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Update on Office of Refugee Resettlement Placement in Yolo County

(Woodland, CA) – The County of Yolo provides the following update in the matter of a 14-year-old Honduran child identified as G.E. in San Francisco Chronicle articles published on March 5 and 12.

Media reports indicate that the child has been detained by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) at the Yolo County Juvenile Detention Facility. Those reports also indicate that the child received asylum on January 10, 2017. While ORR also operates a program for children with asylee status (the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor program) that provides housing and care for such children, Yolo County understands that participation in that program is limited and entirely within ORR's discretion.

On March 9, Yolo County requested written permission from ORR to take custody of the child and assume responsibility for the child's placement and care. Meanwhile, the county's Health & Human Services Agency (HHS) also began working in earnest to find a suitable placement for the child, outside of the Juvenile Detention Facility, with the expectation that ORR would grant the request.

This afternoon, ORR responded to the county's request for custody of the child. ORR stated that it would not provide services to the child through its Unaccompanied Refugee Minor program, that it would not otherwise provide any care or services to the child, and that it would transition the child to the State of California or the county for services and placement. A short time later, the California Department of Social Services advised Yolo County that it would not take responsibility for the youth.

Yolo County, through its HHS and child welfare team, thus immediately took on all responsibility for the child upon receiving ORR's notice. Acting quickly and consistent with the value of "doing right by others", the county has taken steps to place the child with a facility that can provide suitable care, housing and other services. HHS staff expect his relocation to a new facility to occur today. Yolo County will continue to oversee his placement and ensure that he receives appropriate care and services for the foreseeable future.

Yolo County recognizes the public's interest in this matter and the concerns expressed for this child. The county hopes the information provided above will help assuage those concerns by affirming that Yolo County has taken immediate, responsible steps to address his placement following his release by ORR earlier today. As this matter involves the safety and privacy of a juvenile, state and federal law preclude the county from commenting further or providing specific details regarding his placement and care.

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