

SAN FRANCISCO PUBLIC DEFENDER

MANOHAR RAJU – PUBLIC DEFENDER
MATT GONZALEZ – CHIEF ATTORNEY



March 2, 2021.

Dear Chief Fletcher,

My office is very concerned to learn that Cameo House, an excellent residential rehabilitation program for women in San Francisco, is in jeopardy. We urge you to work with the Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice (CJ CJ) to ensure that this residential alternative sentencing program continues being funded at a level that supports not only the women who live there, but also their children.

Cameo House is one of the only programs in San Francisco that allows women to live with up to two children. Cameo House provides an environment that is structured, strict and nurturing. The presence of mothers with children help create a place where the young women residents, who have suffered great trauma, can heal.

My office has represented many people who have benefited from Cameo House and we very much want this option to remain for the people we serve. Current residents have told our attorneys and staff that they have established strong relationships at Cameo House, and don't want to be forced to leave. Our clients are fearful of losing the stability they have achieved. They are also worried at the prospect of being evicted during a pandemic due to potential exposure to COVID-19.

To be clear, Cameo House is not an "easy" program. The director of Cameo House, Rebecca Jackson, is a graduate of Delaney Street and was on staff there for 12 years. She expects and requires the women in her program to stay active and accountable.

While much is expected of the women in Cameo House, they are given the support needed to help them achieve their goals. The program has onsite case management and staff work with the women to develop individualized case management services. While at Cameo House, residents work and or continue their education. They are given guidance as they deal with issues that naturally come up as they go about their daily responsibilities. Cameo House helps women learn to live independently with their children. This allows families to stay together while giving residents the skills needed to raise their family and achieve their personal goals.

For these reasons, I am asking that the San Francisco Adult Probation Department continue funding this valuable program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Manohar Raju".

Manohar Raju
San Francisco Public Defender

Cc: Mayor Breed

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Community Justice Center
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Bayview Magic
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