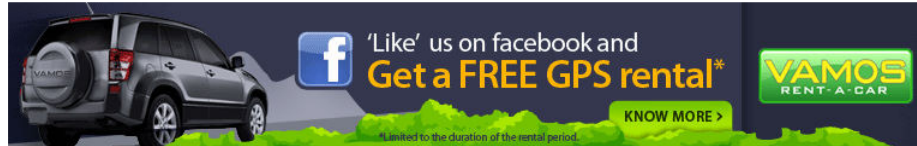


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## PANI Rescues 20 Young Americans Who Suffered Various Attacks

The Patronato Nacional de la Infancia (PANI) - Costa Rica's child welfare agency - says it rescued on Monday a group of 20 American minors who allegedly received psychological and physical abuse by managers of a reformatory in Puntarenas.



The academy "Teen Mentor" has been operating since 2010 in the Hotel Carra in Tarcoles de Garabito, Puntarenas.

The PANI took the action to intervene following complaints from three psychologists at the academy. Ten children were transferred directly to a PANI shelter, while the case is still in under investigation.

Parents paid from us\$600 per month to keep their children between the ages of 13 and 18 in the program.

PANI officials say all the youths found in the academy on Monday were all Americans.

Jorge Urbina, manager of the PANI, told the media on Monday that the U.S. Embassy in San José was in the process of notifying all the parents to come get their children.

The action by the PANI quickly reminds that of the "Dundee Ranch" academy back in 2004.

Academy at Dundee Ranch was a behavior modification facility for United States teenagers west of Orotina. It was promoted as a residential school, offering a program of behavior modification, motivational "emotional growth seminars," a progressive academic curriculum, and a structured daily schedule, for teenagers struggling in their homes, schools, or communities.

The facility was associated with World Wide Association of Specialty Programs and Schools (WWASP).

In May 2003, authorities in Costa Rica shut down due to claims of child abuse, and investigated the school and its managers. A new WWASP facility called Pillars of Hope was opened at the site of Academy at Dundee Ranch in 2004.

During its operation, Dundee Ranch was the subject of multiple allegations of abuse. Parents and enrollees claimed that food being withheld as punishment. Former students complained of emotional scars due to their stay there. A judgment in Louisiana caused Costa Rican authorities to investigate the facilities. A riot occurred at the facility in May 2003, leading to its closure. The Costa Rican immigration authorities found that 100 of the 193 children enrolled in the program did not have appropriate migration papers.

Narvin Lichfield, who was the director at the time of the facility's closure, was jailed in Costa Rica for a brief period at the time of the closure. He was later tried in Costa Rica on charges of coercion, holding minors against their will, and "crimes of an international character" (violating a law based on international treaties, specifically referring to torture).

On February 21, 2007 a three-judge panel found Narvin Lichfield innocent of the charges of abuse. During the trial the prosecutor told the court that there was insufficient evidence and testimony to link Lichfield to the crimes for which he was accused.

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Teen Mentor was also owned by the Lichfield family and almost certainly used the same methods. Narv... [More »](#)  
**Sam Jackson** 3/22



Sam, this is so sad and this family just keeps rolling along opening and closing centers. I looked W... [More »](#)  
**John** 3/22

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