

22 February 2016
268 Twisp River Road
Twisp, Wa 98856

Dear County Commissioners, Secretary, and Juvenile Director,

I am writing to you to express my concerns about moving our county juvenile detention center to Medical Lake. I have worked, as a Room One employee, with the teen students of the Independent Learning Center in Twisp for the past 9 years. Over these years, I have known several teens who have spent time in the county juvenile detention facility. I know that it is crowded and is in need of attention. I also know how important it is that the teens maintain their connections to friends, family and goals outside of their detention,

I think that moving these kids so far from their families and their communities is a very big mistake.

Studies show that:

“It is well-established that removing system-involved youth from their communities can, and often does, have devastating impacts on their futures. It impedes critical links to families that all youth need to thrive. In addition, these youth are more likely to reoffend, are less likely to reconnect to school and work, and often see more health challenges.” -National Council on Crime and Delinquency

I hope that our shared goal as citizens of Okanogan county can be one of support and reform for our youth. This goal will be more difficult to achieve if the teens are 3 ½ hours from their hometown and families. It is expensive and time consuming to drive to Medical Lake and those barriers would translate to friends and families not being able to visit the offending teen.

Please show your constituents that supporting our youth is something that Okanogan county stands behind and will do whatever it takes to keep our youth close to home.

Thank you,

Kelleigh McMillan