

## Monroe, LA – News Star Columbia unveils secure care facility

Swanson satellite to relieve overcrowding

May 24, 2013 |



From left to right: Vickie Shoecraft, Swanson Center for Youth at Monroe director; Kim Rushing, Swanson Center for Youth at Columbia deputy director; Carolyn Lewis, regional director of the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice; Mary Livers, deputy secretary of OJJ; and Sean Hamilton, assistant secretary of OJJ unveil the new Swanson Center for Youth.

Written by [Sarah Eddington](#)

**COLUMBIA** — Representatives from the Office of Juvenile Justice will officially unveil their newest secure care facility for delinquent youth on Friday.

The Swanson Center for Youth at Columbia will serve as a satellite facility of Swanson Center for Youth in Monroe to prevent either facility from becoming overcrowded, and therefore less effective, said OJJ Deputy Secretary Mary Livers.

“We’re trying to ensure that none of our facilities are real large, because we know that’s not what works with getting kids turned around,” she said Thursday during a media tour of the facility.

“With smaller facilities closer to home, you get better outcomes.”

The 10-acre Columbia facility currently houses 19 youth, who arrived last week from the Monroe facility. The center is prepared to house up to 48 juveniles and 68 staff members, Livers said.

The new Swanson Center will provide a therapeutic, secure setting where youth will receive treatment services and rehabilitation, using the state model of therapeutic secure care.

An on-site, state-approved Pinehill Alternative School will provide educational opportunities for the resident youth, including academic instruction and life skills training. Daily therapeutic groups will address identified needs, such as anger management and substance abuse.

The site originally served as the former DHH/Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities' Columbia Community Residential and Employment Services. In 2005, DHH began to comply with the congressional mandate that individuals with developmental disabilities receive residential services in community-based, rather than institutional, settings. The property was transferred from DHH to OJJ in 2010 for use as a secure care center for youth.

Since that time, about \$2 million worth of renovations have been made to the facility, such as the addition of a perimeter fence, security cameras and secure doors and locks, according to Livers.

OJJ Assistant Secretary Sean Hamilton said an important aspect of the Swanson Center program is the trips the youths will take into the community. The trips are always supervised and are earned through good behavior.

"We really have an opportunity to prepare these kids to be successful when they go back into the community, because the reality is virtually all of our kids will return to the community, and so providing them these types of opportunities really sets them up to be successful," he said.

Livers said treatment and rehabilitation is more effective when the services are administered close to home because it allows for more family involvement and for youth to maintain ties with the community to which they will return.

"We're real excited about what's going to happen here," she said. "It's all about changing lives and helping kids turn their lives around."

The official grand opening will take place Friday at 11 a.m. The facility is located at 132 Louisiana 850 in Columbia.

## **Monroe, LA – KNOE TV Swanson Center attempts to help reduce recidivism**

<http://www.knoe.com/story/22411440/swanson-center>

*Posted: May 23, 2013 6:31 PM CDT Updated: May 23, 2013 6:38 PM CDT*

Posted By Hilary Hunt, Reporter -



COLUMBIA,La. (KNOE 8 News)-When you enter the grounds of the Swanson Center for Youth at Columbia you see young men dressed in khakis and polo's, smiles and fresh paint. For boys like John, this is a paradise compared to where he was a week ago.

"It's like more friendly you know you don't have to watch your back and stuff like when your doing something" says John

It is the little things like new dormitories, personalized staff, and a smaller community that counselors here say will change the behavior and mindset that landed the boys in Swanson.

There will be nearly 80 employees, allowing for lots of one on one interaction and rehabilitation.

"The Swanson Center at Columbia will house 48 youth and stresses the importance of rehabilitation that involves family and role models" says hunt.

This rehabilitation program focuses on youth who have committed non-violent offenses.

The smaller community allows for more personalized attention and integration into the community. Things such as family dinners off site or trips to the movies, but the boys are always accompanied by staff.

Officials say this makes for an easier transition after the sentence is served.

"It is a smaller facility it is more compact it doesn't feel like a prison it doesn't look like a prison it is a place where people can embrace everything we have to offer" says Livers.

She also believes youth who embrace the program at the center will not likely be repeat offenders. The Office of Juvenile Justice hopes it can provide a safer environment and continue to help mold boys like John into successful young men by building more centers like this.

## **Alexandria, LA – Daily Town Talk**

### **Juvenile center in Columbia will share load with Monroe facility**

May 24, 2013 7:55 AM |

**CENTER OPENS FRIDAY**

A grand opening will take place at 11 a.m. Friday at the Swanson Center for Youth at Columbia, 132 La. Highway 850 in Columbia.

COLUMBIA, La. -- COLUMBIA — Representatives from the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice on Friday will officially unveil a secure-care facility for delinquent youth.

The Swanson Center for Youth at Columbia at 32 La. Highway 850 will serve as a satellite facility of Swanson Center for Youth in Monroe, said OJJ Deputy Secretary Mary Livers.

"We're trying to ensure that none of our facilities are real large, because we know that's not what works with getting kids turned around," she said Thursday during a media tour of the facility. "With smaller facilities closer to home, you get better outcomes."

The 10-acre Columbia site houses 19 juveniles, who arrived last week from the Monroe facility. The center is prepared to house up to 48 juveniles and 68 staff members, Livers said.

Swanson Center will provide a therapeutic, secure setting where juvenile offenders will receive treatment services and rehabilitation, using the state model of therapeutic secure care.

An on-site, state-approved Pinehill Alternative School will provide educational opportunities for the resident youth, including academic instruction and life skills training. Daily therapeutic groups will address identified needs, such as anger management and substance abuse.

The site originally served as Columbia Community Residential and Employment Services, a state office under the Department of Health and Hospitals.

In 2005, the department began to comply with the congressional mandate that individuals with developmental disabilities receive residential services in community-based, rather than

institutional, settings. The property was transferred from the health department to the Office of Juvenile Justice in 2010 for use as a secure-care center for juveniles.

Since that time, about \$2 million in renovations have been made to the facility, such as the addition of a perimeter fence, security cameras and secure doors and locks, according to Livers.

OJJ Assistant Secretary Sean Hamilton said an important aspect of the Swanson Center program is the trips the youths will take into the community. The trips are always supervised and are earned through good behavior.

“We really have an opportunity to prepare these kids to be successful when they go back into the community, because the reality is virtually all of our kids will return to the community, and so providing them these types of opportunities really sets them up to be successful,” he said.

Livers said treatment and rehabilitation is more effective when the services are administered close to home because it allows for more family involvement and for youth to maintain ties with the community to which they will return.

“We’re real excited about what’s going to happen here,” she said. “It’s all about changing lives and helping kids turn their lives around.”

## **West Monroe, LA - [KMSStv.com](http://KMSStv.com)**

### **OJJ opens Swanson Center for Youth at Columbia**



State of Louisiana

Wednesday, May 22, 2013 - 1:54pm

Columbia, LA (KMSS) — Columbia, LA - The Columbia area welcomes a new friend in a familiar setting, as the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) opens a secure care facility for delinquent juvenile males on the site of the former DHH/Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities' Columbia Community Residential and Employment Services (CCRES).

The new facility is Swanson Center for Youth at Columbia (SCYC), a satellite facility of Swanson Center for Youth in Monroe. Another familiar friend is Columbia native SCYC Deputy Director Kim Rushing, who will be responsible for daily operations, while Swanson-Monroe Director R. Vickie Shoecraft will have oversight.

CCRES originally housed residents with developmental disabilities, and served day clients with vocational programming. In 2005, DHH began to comply with the Congressional mandate that

individuals with developmental disabilities receive residential services in community-based, rather than institutional settings. All clients were transitioned to community-based care with private providers several years ago, and the facility was closed. The property was transferred from DHH to OJJ in 2010 for use as a secure care center for youth.

The new OJJ facility houses 40 youth and 68 employees, who moved from Swanson Center for Youth in Monroe to the Columbia facility after renovations to the 10-acre campus were completed. SCYC will provide a therapeutic, secure setting where youth will receive treatment services and rehabilitation, utilizing the nationally-acclaimed Louisiana model of therapeutic secure care. SCYC's on-site, state-approved Pinehill Alternative School, will provide educational opportunities for the resident youth, including academic instruction and life skills training. Daily therapeutic groups will address identified needs, such as anger management and substance abuse.

“As part of a systemic reform of Louisiana’s juvenile justice system that began a decade ago, OJJ’s goal is to open small, regional facilities for our adjudicated youth population, as we move away from the previous system of large, institutionalized corrections facilities,” said OJJ Deputy Secretary Dr. Mary L. Livers. “Today OJJ provides youth with treatment and rehabilitation services closer to their homes, to enhance family involvement in their treatment and to allow youth to maintain ties with the community to which they will return. We are extremely pleased to become a part of the Columbia community as we open this new, regional facility to serve area at-risk youth.”

OJJ serves youth who have been adjudicated delinquent or Families in Need of Services (FINS). The agency is responsible for youth assigned to its care and custody by the court system, either for probation supervision, or custody in residential placement or secure care.

For more information about OJJ, please visit our website at [www.OJJ.LA.GOV](http://www.OJJ.LA.GOV).