
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Dear Colleagues:

It's been a fairly quiet week, although I know everyone has been working at full throttle, to quote some Central Office staff. We have a new president in Washington, the new year is off to a great start, and like most state agencies in Louisiana, we are undergoing a few changes.

Next week, a new Deputy Assistant Secretary comes on board. Please join me in welcoming Michelle Smith as DAS for Special Projects. Michelle is no stranger to OJJ – she was the contractor who helped create our Strategic Plan and worked closely with staff to develop, train staff and implement the Service Coordination Model that is transforming service delivery throughout the Regional Offices/Field Services Unit. Michelle will work closely with me on a variety of projects and will oversee Staff Development and Communications.

Chief of Staff Marlyn Goins-McCants has assumed a new title and new duties. As Family and Community Liaison, she will expand the duties of the Family Ombudsman. Marlyn will serve the public to include family and community organizations. She will advocate for youth and families, help them navigate the juvenile justice system, monitor complaints by youth and families, and supervise Volunteer Services in the facilities, working with the chaplains.

Just to keep you up to date, we have filed the Reduction in Force (RIF) plan for Jetson with Civil Service, and we expect to get it back from them in a few weeks. In the meantime, we will send out the General Notice of the layoff plan next week. It applies only to East Baton Rouge Parish employees.

A number of staff representing the secure care facilities and Central Office will travel to Missouri the first week in February to train with the Missouri Division of Youth Services and the Missouri Youth Service Institute (MYSI). This intensive training across many disciplines will better position OJJ to further develop and implement the Missouri Model in our secure care facilities. Assistant Secretary Prince Gray is coordinating the trip – a massive undertaking when 28 or so people are traveling together. This core group will spend several days in job-embedded, hands-on training, learning from the nationally-recognized experts. The knowledge they bring back will be shared with other staff as we work together to provide ever-better services to our youth and families.

We are in the final stages of development of a new website for the agency. It's been in the works for a while, but now we can see what the final product will look like and we can look forward to launching it in the near future. I hope you will be pleased with this project – it's a new look, professionally designed, and will be easy to navigate. We will keep you posted – when we are ready to launch, you will be the first to know, so you can take a look and become familiar with it.

Some of you may be aware that last weekend I had an unfortunate experience at home. I tripped and broke my arm at the shoulder. So if you see me wearing a sling and looking a little uncomfortable for a while, it's okay to say something, it's hard to ignore. The injury could have been much worse, and I am grateful that it hasn't slowed me down too much. The lesson here is to be very careful always and everywhere – statistics show that home can be a dangerous place – and that I need to slow down a bit – at home, anyway.

I look forward to visiting with you again next week. As always, thanks for all the hard work you do, in every office and facility, to care for our kids and families, and to meet the mission.

Sincerely,

“Doc”

Dr. Mary Livers

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