
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

Well, y'all, the snake stories keep coming in. Contract Grants Manager Amy Curry recently killed a coral snake in her yard near Clinton (at least it was outside) and we just heard that CQIS Program Coordinator Katie Kirkpatrick was surprised by a snake in her bathroom – and her house is right in the middle of town. Ray Clary, Swanson Investigative Services, tells us his daughter built a house on the edge of a wetland and recently called her daddy to dispatch a pair of water moccasins lurking at her back door, only to discover a 12-foot alligator in the backyard pond. I guess all this rain has driven the reptile population out of hiding, but these are some unusual sightings. Please be careful out there!

Central office had mandatory training sessions this week in accordance with ACA requirements. I've heard good reports that staff enjoyed the training and gained good information about topics important to OJJ. Presentations included PREA (the Prison Rape Elimination Act), use of interventions, infectious diseases/flu prevention, La MOD, Code of Conduct, Communication/Interpersonal Relationships and Human Resources information/employee handbook. All the presenters were staff. I am proud of OJJ staff who are experts in their fields and able to share their knowledge with their peers. Thanks to Staff Development Director Fran Martin and Program Manager Nancy Gautreau for their work in putting the program together and coordinating the day-long training events.

We continue to make progress in the effort to make the Acadiana Center for Youth a reality. This week we met with the architects and had a site visit to the land we are proposing to obtain for the facility. It's a slow process but at least we know the goal is in sight.

Last week, we had a leadership meeting right after the five-year celebration at Jetson. I asked the leadership team to help me spread the news about the good work we are doing throughout OJJ, and I invited them to take the opportunity to get the word out and to promote our work in the community. If you have ideas on how we can promote the work that our staff is doing and the positive direction that OJJ is taking, let us know. Give the information to your supervisor, or email me at Whatsupdoc?OJJ@la.gov – we want to hear your ideas. It really is up to us to let our communities know who we are and what we do, and to find out how we can better serve their needs.

In fact, we are planning a listening tour that will begin early next month. We are inviting parents and family members of OJJ youth to join us at meetings in local churches throughout the state, so we can hear from them about the good things their children are learning while in our care and custody, and also how we can make our services to youth and their families even better.

Deputy Assistant Secretary Carolyn Lewis and I enjoyed our visit to the Hammond Regional Office this afternoon, and I also had a few minutes to stop in and say hello today at the Baton Rouge Regional Office. It's always good to get out and see people in the field – it's always good to get a reality check.

Wishing each of you a wonderful weekend, and my thanks to you for all you do every day to meet the mission. And I hope that all your wild thing sightings are furry rather than scaly!

Sincerely,

“Doc” *Dr. Mary Livers*

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