
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

With all the planning and preparations we have been making to celebrate OJJ's five year anniversary, and other events and issues, I sort of forgot - until I was reminded - that I recently celebrated an anniversary myself. Yours Truly has been OJJ's deputy secretary for a whole year already. While it's been fast, and at times furious, this past year has been challenging, yet rewarding. Is there a way to put five years into a one-year time span? That's what I feel like – it's hard to believe that it's been only a year since I was named permanent deputy secretary.

In reviewing the past year, I want to start by giving credit where credit is due. First and foremost, I am very appreciative of the confidence placed in me by the Governor's office. The Governor and his staff have been extremely supportive, engaged and involved with us. I also want to thank the members of JJIC and our stakeholders: the District Attorneys, the judges, and others. Many thanks to the MacArthur Foundation and their many consultants for their continued support. We have also had strong support from some key elected officials. And last but certainly not least, thanks to OJJ's committed and dedicated staff. I continue to be impressed with the talent and professionalism that we have within OJJ.

A lot has been accomplished during the past year, due to the hard work and dedication of our staff. We recently celebrated our five-year anniversary as a cabinet-level agency, and we also celebrated our agency's many accomplishments. We have a lot to feel good about. And what we can feel best about is the future. With the support of our stakeholders and sister agencies in state and local government, as well as the hope of our youth, we are on the way to becoming one of the best, if not THE best, juvenile justice systems in the country.

We achieved some major milestones during the past year. One of the biggest is that we gained the confidence of the legislature, which voted to allow us to transform Jetson into a smaller, regional therapeutic facility. La MOD has been fully implemented at Jetson, interior fences and razor wire has come down, and the whole facility has a different feel. During this past year, we implemented the SAVRY assessment tool, which will give us more information on which to base individual treatment needs for all our youth. We have implemented a program of leadership training to ensure that our leadership staff develop effective management skills, as well as the ability to groom their staffs to become the next generation of OJJ leaders. And, another huge accomplishment is that, after long last, we are well on the way to establishing the Acadiana Center for Youth, our first state-of-the-art regional facility. The leadership of St. Landry Parish is working with us to establish the new facility and will welcome us with open arms.

We are not the same OJJ that we were last year. And we will be an even better OJJ at this time next year. We will continue to make progress day by day, month by month and year by year. OJJ is a work in progress, and I am honored to be a part of the process as we continue to grow and learn. I am honored to serve alongside our staff, who exemplify our mission and vision every day in every facility and office.

Thanks to each and every one of you for making this past year one of my best, professionally speaking, in my 32 years as a professional. And – thanks to you all for everything that you do, every day, to meet the mission.

Sincerely,

“Doc” *Dr. Mary Livers*

P.S. Have a safe and happy Halloween, and don't forget to turn the clocks back Saturday night/Sunday morning. It's time to “fall back” as Daylight Savings time ends until next spring.

Mary L. Livers, MSW, PH.D, Deputy Secretary

Office of Juvenile Justice • PO Box 66458 • Baton Rouge, LA 70896 • e: Whatsupdoc?OJJ@la.gov • www.ojd.louisiana.gov