
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

With Veterans Day coming up next week, I want to reflect on the positive relationships between some of our youth and community partners that have grown and flourished during the past year. What started last year as a Veterans Day visit by some of our secure care youth to the Louisiana War Veterans Homes has become an ongoing relationship for youth at Bridge City and Swanson. The Jetson choir receives many invitations to perform at community events, including the City of Baker Veterans Day program this Sunday.

At the recent Community Partners event at Bridge City, a representative from the Southeastern Louisiana War Veterans Home said the BCCY youth who volunteer really brighten the day of veterans they visit. She described the youth as respectful, well-behaved, and a testament to the great job being done at the facility. One of the kids talked about how he benefits from the volunteer program and the opportunity to help others. Darnell H. said volunteering gave him a special appreciation for the sacrifices made by veterans. "When I visited the war veterans home," he said, "I was told I was making a difference in the community, but I felt a difference in me."

At a Community Partners program held at Swanson, a representative of the Northeast Louisiana War Veterans Home said the youth help build morale for the residents by visiting with the veterans. "Swanson youth perform many services at the War Veterans Home and have learned to give back to the community, so they will become productive citizens when they are released," he said.

I want to extend a sincere thanks to the many OJJ staff who are military veterans, as well as those who are active service members. As a nation we are still engaged in active military conflicts in the Middle East and Afghanistan, and our service men and women, together with their families, are still making great sacrifices daily for our country. You deserve our heartfelt thanks.

We should also extend our deepest condolences to the families of the service personnel who lost their lives or were injured in yesterday's tragedy at Fort Hood, where a military doctor unleashed a barrage of gunfire. Once again, this proves that violence is not the answer to frustration and the issues we all face sometimes. As a nation, we need to practice what we teach our youth - that nothing that happens to us is so bad that we should resort to violence. There are other appropriate responses to the negative emotions that engulf every one of us at times.

My thanks to all of our OJJ staff, in every office and facility, for the daily sacrifices you make to meet the mission. Wishing each of you a pleasant Veterans Day.

A special shout-out to my dear Dad: Thanks for your service in WWII, Dad!

Sincerely,
"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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