
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

Vol. 1, No. 37. May 15, 2009

Hello, Y'all:

For what we expected to be a rather quiet week, this week has turned out to be a bear. A big hairy one with a capital B. We're so stressed out here in Baton Rouge that we can barely take time to say hello to one another. But at least (and at last) it's the weekend so we can all get home and let our hair down.

The good news is that Senate Bill 302, that allows us to convert a portion of Jetson into the Capital Area Center for Youth, passed from the Senate to the House and we are optimistic that the bill is on its way to passage. We are really looking forward to creating our first regional treatment center.

The not-so-good news is that the House budget committee recommended a \$200,000 reduction to our proposed budget that was not in the Executive budget. Well, it's not over til it's over, so we will continue to present our case, keep our optimism up and take care of kids.

Many thanks to the Regional Managers who met last week here in Baton Rouge to put their heads together to brainstorm on an assessment of our community-based programming. They prioritized local programs in each region so we can provide the most effective continuum of care in each service area. When resources are slim, we have to maximize our most important one – brainpower – to make the best use of what we have and what we will be given, so we can provide the best possible services for OJJ kids.

Communications Director Jerel Giarrusso and Marc Goldstein of Creative Video Productions spent a day at Swanson, videotaping scenes for a new video program entitled Orientation to Secure Care. The DVD will be given to parents of youth as they come into secure care, to provide information about the secure care environment, what to expect with treatment and programming and how parents can help their kids succeed. We had no idea that Swanson staff – and youth – were such talented actors and actresses. Many thanks to the Swanson video committee who put together a schedule of scenes, including Director Jerry Ward, Deputy Directors Lynne LeBlanc and Calvin Hawkins, Adm. Assistant Linda Harrell, Program Manager Jean Ann Black, Dorm Manager Dusty Teer, Chaplain Rev. Ricky James, Principal William Lee, Master Sgt. Otisstein Franklin, Sgt. Casheila Martin, and Recreation Therapist Gwen Gene. We will be taping at Bridge City and Jetson very soon, so y'all hone your acting skills!

Next week, Lt. Governor Mitch Landrieu will make a presentation to BESE (Board of Elementary and Secondary Education) on a request that he and Chief Justice Catherine "Kitty" Kimball have proposed to have education funds follow the child from the public K-12 system to our system when the youth is placed in our custody. Having those funds would allow us to provide better services to our secure youth, in line with their identified educational needs. Again, it's all about taking care of our kids.

Well, those are the high spots for this week. I hope you all have a relaxing weekend and stay dry with storms expected statewide. As always, thanks for everything you do to meet the mission. .

Sincerely,
"Doc"

Dr. Mary Livers

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