
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

I love getting out of central office and visiting with staff all over the state. This week I was able to visit the Shreveport office and Swanson. It's always great to see everyone and to communicate with staff.

I had an interesting conversation that reminded me that sometimes we get too busy to make the effort to communicate with people within a frame of reference that we all understand. I asked a staff person if they knew what "What's Up, Doc?" is. The person said, sure, it's a movie. True, but not quite the answer I was looking for. Well, it's what that silly rabbit says. Also true, but... I finally framed the question a different way and, of course, the staff person knows our weekly message. Sometimes we have to remind ourselves to take the time to communicate so people understand what we mean, and not jump to conclusions that we know that someone else is hearing what we think we are saying. Good communication takes effort, and it's also a two-way street.

My visit to the Shreveport office was....very interesting. It was raining when I arrived at the state office building that houses our regional office, and the building had just been evacuated. I was able to find our staff out on the lawn, but that was not the best time to quiz anyone to see if they could recite the mission statement. I hear that some staff were disappointed that I didn't get the chance to ask anyone that question.

Things are not always perfect all the time in any organization, and OJJ is no different. We are in a constant state of working to improve ourselves, and I think it's a byproduct of our culture that we often focus on what's broken rather than on the positive things we are doing. On Wednesday, Swanson held a great event to honor staff and youth who have made significant contributions to the community by volunteering to work with non-profit organizations. I am so proud of all the folks at Swanson for highlighting the positive things going on there.

We celebrated Community Partnerships and Positive Attitudes. Four area community organizations came out to honor the staff and youth who have made a difference, including Habitat for Humanity, the Northeast Louisiana War Veterans Home, Relay for Life, and the Food Bank of Northeast Louisiana. We were joined by several state legislators, including Representative Andy Anders, Representative Charles "Bubba" Chaney, Representative Frank Hoffman, Representative Rosalind Jones, Representative Kay Katz, Representative Sam Little, Senator Neil Riser, and Senator Francis Thompson, as well as Tammy Woods, Assistant Chief of Staff to Governor Bobby Jindal.

We were able to acknowledge the positive impact that our staff has on our kids, that our kids have on the organizations with which they volunteer, that the organizations have on the local community, and that the community has on our youth and staff. No one operates alone. Everything we do has an effect on others, and the cycle continues.

So, let me communicate this very clearly. Thanks to each of you, in every OJJ office and facility, for all you do every day, to meet the mission. Next time I see you, give me a hearty "What's Up, Doc?" Have a great weekend.

Sincerely,
"Doc"

Dr. Mary Livers

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