
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

Is it me or does it seem like baseball is now a year round sport? I think the baseball commissioner needs to take a survey about how people look at their sport. Opening day is in April, and there is still snow on the ground in some parts of the country. Here we are in November, and we are just now into game three of the World Series – and it snowed somewhere north of us. I remember growing up, the World Series was held in late August or September. How in the world have they managed to stretch their sport out for so long? And, I remember when families could afford to go to baseball games, eat hot dogs and drink whatever, but now it's outrageous. Tickets are \$35 to \$40, apiece, a hot dog is \$5.00 and a beer is \$8.00. But, still I see that stands are packed. Sometimes I wonder if the recession is still going on since a lot of people can afford to attend expensive sports events. But, baseball is still our national pastime and it's good to see people supporting their favorite teams. Yes, I am watching the World Series. I do not like cheering for Texas in any sport, but I am making an exception for the Rangers, since it's their first time to go to the World Series.

We had some great events this week. It started off on Wednesday with a Celebration of Change at Jetson. The gym was decorated in beautiful fall colors, orange, yellows, browns; the food was fabulous and we had a very nice crowd with a lot of guests. Our young men were dressed in their new uniforms - khaki pants with burgundy polo shirts. We gave out our first annual Champion of Louisiana Juvenile Justice Award to Chief Justice Catherine "Kitty" Kimball in recognition of her tireless efforts over many years, to reform Louisiana's juvenile justice system. Among our guests were state Senator/JJIC member Sharon Weston-Broome; state representatives Mack Bodi White, chairman of JJIC; Dalton Honore; Patricia Smith and Steve Carter. Guests also included Baker Mayor Harold Rideau; EBR Juvenile Court Judge Kathleen Stewart Richey; Judge Marilyn Castle of Lafayette and Karen Hallstorm, from the LA Supreme Court. Several guests attended from the Governor's Office, including Assist. Chief of Staff Tammy Woods, Communications Director Melissa Sellers, Press Secretary Kyle Plotkin and the entire staff of the Press Office. Thanks to Director Daron Brown and his staff, the youth, and the committee members who worked so hard: Frances Bailey, chair, Gloria Banks, Andrea Barnardez, Barbara Bell, Demetria Sheppard, Belinda Thomas, Barbara Williams, Leslie Jones from Baton Rouge OJJ, and from Central Office, Food Service Director Alethea Bornes, Deputy Undersecretary Marianne Buchanan and Communications Director Jerel Giarrusso.

We had a JJIC meeting on Thursday, where we were able to present an update on a lot of the good things we have accomplished over the last year, as well as initiatives to work on for 2011. There are two new members of JJIC, David Burton from the LA District Attorneys Association, and Clay Walker, with the Louisiana Public Defenders Association. The chairman is Representative Mack "Bodi" White, and we are looking forward to working with them, and all the members of the commission, as we continue moving reform forward. If you are interested in viewing the PowerPoint presentation that we showed to JJIC, you can find it on our website, under the link Data & Reports/Fact Sheets.

We wrapped up the week on Friday with another beautiful event, Bridge City's Celebration of Change. Director Linda London and her staff outdid themselves. Fall colors were everywhere in the gym, the food was outstanding, complete with desserts and a fruit display compliments of Chef Ron Sonnier and his Culinary Arts students. We were honored to have a number of special guests, including Orleans Parish Juvenile Court Judge Tracy Fleming-Davillier, Ms. Toyin Idewu from the Orleans Parish Juvenile Court, Kevin Riley, Supervisor/Chief Probation Officer, DYFS of Plaquemines Parish; Furusa Passmore, Rise "N" Shine; Brenda Johnson, Houma City Court; Betty Dufrene and June Washington, Youth Advocate Program. Thanks to the committee members who went the extra mile to present a wonderful event: Kim Hampton, chair, Sharon McClinton, Mistress of Ceremonies, Yolanda Page, Cherise Gougisha, Carolyn Dillon, Sharonda Smith, Veronica George, Darlene Anderson, Mary Gatlin, and Bella Berry, and from Central Office, Food Service Director Alethea Bornes, Deputy Undersecretary Marianne Buchanan and Communications Director Jerel Giarrusso.

Well, it's been a really good week, and I'm hoping for a great weekend. Wishing each of you a wonderful weekend, with my thanks to you all, for everything that you do every day to celebrate the changes in our agency and to meet the mission.

Sincerely,
"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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