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# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

The legislative session opened Monday and I was happy to be present for Gov. Jindal's address to the Legislature. His remarks were very inspiring, and you can read the transcript on our website under Current News on the home page.

Tuesday I had the pleasure of touring Bridge City once again with some important visitors from the MacArthur Foundation. Our guests were Dr. Robert L. Gallucci, President of the foundation, Laurie Garduque, Director of Juvenile Justice, Sean Knierim, Chief of Staff, Candice Jones, Program Officer, and Dr. Debra DePrato, Project Director for MacArthur's Models for Change program in Louisiana. Assistant Secretary Girard Melancon, Deputy Assistant Secretary Philippe Magloire, Director of Education Kim Mims and Health Services Administrator Kelly Smith, were also present. I was very pleased to be able to spend some time with the head of the MacArthur Foundation and show off Bridge City. Chef Ron Sonnier and the Culinary Arts Program youth presented an outstanding meal, as good as any I have enjoyed in fine restaurants. I was there three weeks ago and they prepared a great meal then, but I saw so much improvement – the kids have learned so much in just three weeks! The meal was great and the service was as good as in an upscale restaurant. Lots of the young men joined us and they all looked so nice in their white shirts and ties. We also toured some dorms and the MacArthur folks observed group processes, including a check-in, and de-briefed with staff. After reading Dr. Gallucci's biography, some of our staff joked that they thought he was the person who sat next to the famous "red telephone" in the President's (of the USA) office...with his extensive background in national security.

Wednesday I drove to Monroe and met with Dr. LaDonna Ford, medical director of E.A. Conway Medical Center. It had been years since Dr. Ford had seen the medical site at Swanson so we took her for a tour and meeting there. Kelly Smith, our new Health Services Administrator, arrived just in time to meet with Dr. Ford. Kelly left New Orleans very early that morning and was on her way to Arkansas when she realized she was a little lost and had to turn around. I hear that's not the first time that has happened to someone on our staff – welcome to OJJ, Kelly!

In addition, I was privileged to speak at the Northeast Louisiana Juvenile Justice Summit at ULM. It was very well attended and I was glad to see quite a few of our Probation and Parole staff there, along with a number of areas judges that we don't typically see at our regular judges' meetings. It was good to meet the judges in person. I want to commend 4th District Judge Sharon Marchman for her leadership and for being such a great juvenile justice partner in the northeast region.

I had the pleasure of being with the Swanson staff at their town hall meeting, where they talked about a number of issues and concerns. They are really looking forward to the future. I want to commend the staff for their commitment to the mission, and the job they are doing. With the number of youth at the facility, the staff is facing a much larger challenge, and in the midst of that they are moving the new culture forward and transforming Swanson with the LA MOD model. I want the Swanson staff to know that we support their efforts and will do whatever we can as an organization to support their efforts.

Then it was on to Shreveport, where I saved the state a few dollars for room and board by staying with my parents. I am happy to report that on the way back to Baton Rouge today, I felt very safe on our highways, thanks to the number of state troopers that are patrolling. You can be assured that there will not be a lot of erratic driving that will go unnoticed this holiday weekend.

I always talk about your commitment to the mission, and I have been asking folks when I meet them if they know it. I know we are working to meet the mission, but some people have gotten a little rusty, so let me repeat that I want to challenge everyone in every office and facility to know the OJJ Mission and how they fulfill the mission: **The Office of Juvenile Justice protects the public by providing safe and effective individualized services to youth, who will become productive, law-abiding citizens.**

Thanks to each of you for striving daily to meet the mission. Wishing you and your loved ones a safe and happy Easter weekend.

Sincerely, "Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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

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