
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

Vol. 3, No. 20. December 17, 2010

Hello, Everyone:

Greetings from Swanson Center for Youth. This edition of What's Up, Doc? is coming from the desk of Kristi Walker. I am here to help celebrate the many changes that have gone on in juvenile justice around the state and here in Monroe at Swanson. We had a very well attended event here. The regional managers and PPOs from several offices joined us – Kristi Martin from Shreveport and her staff, Ruth Stephens and her staff from Tallulah, Randy Hill from Natchitoches and of course, Patty Newman and staff from Monroe. DAS Carolyn Lewis was here as well. We also had 36 former employees and retirees who received certificates in appreciation for their contributions. I know that Swanson has a rich history and we were treated to a history lesson complete with a lot of photos depicting the history of the facility, by Jan James. Jan traced the history from the beginning of the facility to current times. She did a lot of research, and it was very interesting and enjoyable.

Our youth were well turned out in their polo shirts and khakis and they all looked very nice. They were very respectful during the celebration program. In fact, the kids were exceptionally well behaved and they really impressed our visitors. It was great seeing all the staff who were there. I have to say the lunch was outstanding as usual. That means extra time on the treadmill for me.

DAS Sean Hamilton and I went to Bridge City Monday, and met with Mark Steward and Pele Robinson from MYSI. My compliments to the Bridge City staff – they did not know we were coming. And to be hit with visitors without notice must have been quite alarming. Mark and Pele did a thorough tour of the facility and visited with youth and staff. They were pleased to see group meetings in process and also saw team meetings going on. Mark went back to Missouri on Tuesday but Pele Robinson remained for the rest of the week to work with Sean to further check out the LA MOD processes at Bridge City and Jetson.

I am very appreciative of Mark Steward and his very able staff, who have helped us develop and implement the therapeutic model. Mark has served as a very important resource, and he has been personally very helpful to me. He has been encouraging and his wisdom and voice of experience have been instrumental in helping our agency move forward. Thanks, Mark.

I was invited to attend the statewide purchasing association's meeting with Elaine Buzbee and some of the central office staff. We should be very proud of Elaine, as she is an officer in the association. I've been invited back as a guest speaker, and I am happy to do that. I never pass up a chance to talk about the great work that our staff around the state is doing.

Yesterday at central office, we recognized the first group of staff who completed the Juvenile Justice Certificate. I am happy to say that all of them plan to continue their education and pursue their degrees. That is outstanding – this is exactly what we hoped would happen. Please congratulate the first recipients: Martha Barnes, Erica Duhé and Kelly Johnson, all from Jetson, and Col. Louis Hyatt, Lt. Col. Chad Wells and Gwen Brinkley from central office. I encourage all of you who are thinking about furthering your education, just take it one step at a time. Just get started. I appreciate the partnership with Northshore Technical College for making this possible.

Well, next week is the final showdown to the big day of Christmas. Be careful out there if you still have shopping to do. The worst place for fender benders is the parking lots as people fight over parking places.

That said, wishing you all a wonderful weekend, with my thanks to each of you in every OJJ location for all you do every day to meet the mission.

“Doc”

Dr. Mary Livers

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