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# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

What's up, indeed! This week has just blown by as usual. We are sneaking up on Christmas day. It will be here soon....like in a few days. Hope all ya'll out there are gearing up for a good holiday celebration. Have ya'll been eating a whole lot lately? I sure have. Every time I turn around, there is good food staring at me, and of course, I eat up like it is my last meal. I am going to have to get my cardio in soon or I will explode!

Monday I was able to attend the Christmas program at Jetson. It was very nice, but I must say that the mood there was very somber, and rightly so. Larry Shropshire, a 25 year employee with OJJ passed away the night before. Many of you probably knew him from over the years. Our thoughts go out to the Jetson staff and of course his family and friends. In spite of the dampened spirits, I think most youth and staff were able to focus in on the many gifts we have, and the true meaning of Christmas. Representative Pat Smith from Baton Rouge was the guest speaker, and she did a great job with her message to our youth. On that same afternoon, Ms. Fox Rich, also spoke to the youth as part of our "Get Caught Reading" program. I was so pleased to hear so many of our youth at Swanson and Jetson speak of the book they were reading as part of the program. Great job OJJ! You are making a difference.

Tuesday, budget meetings continue as we get closer to the legislative session. I know you are aware there will be more cuts this year. What and how much is uncertain right now, as soon as I know what it looks like for next year, I will tell you. As my little cousin, Cammie, says: "I just don't want to think about that right now."

Tuesday was a very busy day with many meetings, but the highlight of our day here was our Christmas program. Our central office morale committee did an excellent job planning a great lunch and entertainment for our holiday cheer. The executive team "choir" performed (*if that's what you call it*). We were also treated to a duet of "O Holy Night" by Gwen Jones and Ellyn Toney Peterson. We also were entertained with the rendition of the song "This Christmas" by Tony (Tony Square) and the Templets (Nita Franklin-Shanklin, Shaeki Shanklin, and Nyksha Franklin). Very entertaining!

I know you are all busy with work and kids and family, but please don't forget about those who will not be with their families this year for whatever reason. I know our kids in our residential programs will be missing their brothers, sisters, moms, and dads. Some of you will not be home with your families for your families' celebrations. For those of you who will be working, many thanks for being there and ensuring the mission is getting met during that 8, 10, or 12 hour shift!

**Merry Christmas to all of you. Thanks for all you do everyday to meet our mission!**

Sincerely,

Doc

*Dr. Mary Livers*

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

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