
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

Good afternoon, OJJ - this edition of WUD is coming to you from Baltimore, or as it is said here, "Bal'mer." I have been in this area since Sunday. I flew from New Orleans to Washington, DC, Sunday (and, oh, by the way, so far my travel has been fairly uneventful this year: no major delays, no flight cancellations, AND my luggage has actually arrived at the same time I did). 2011 may be my best travel year so far.

But I had a work-related meeting Sunday night, and Monday morning, the McArthur Foundation Models for Change (MfC) annual event began. McArthur has gathered all of its grantees from various states every year to hear the latest research and accomplishments in juvenile justice reform across the states participating in MfC. About 30 people from various stakeholder groups in Louisiana attended. One important activity is the Louisiana delegates' session where we discuss major issues. The main topic of this year's delegation meeting was FINS and various reforms to the FINS system as it is currently constructed. I think we can anticipate, over the next few years, that this will be a major focus for Louisiana, and I think this will be a very exciting area for all of OJJ as we move forward. As you may remember, OJJ's **DAS Karen Stubbs** is a co-chair, along with **Karen Hallstrom** with the Louisiana Supreme Court, of the FINS Commission. The FINS Commission was created by the legislature to study FINS and make recommendations. Today is the last of their hearings, and they will be making recommendations for changes. I was also able to acquire some interesting information about effective truancy programs. As always I will share this information with our leadership team.

The conference ended at 2:30 Tuesday and I planned to take a couple of extra days to remain in the area to see friends and enjoy the cool weather. It is not snowing here, but they did talk of snow. But it is beautiful, sunny and cold. Which I hear is about the same in Louisiana.

Please help me in welcoming **Director Vickie Shoecraft** to the OJJ family. As you will recall, Swanson **Director Carolyn Atkins** left the agency in November, and she is replaced with Vickie Shoecraft from Oklahoma. We are pleased to have Vickie join us. She began December 5, and we are happy she has joined our OJJ family. You will be meeting her and learning more about her in the coming days.

As this is the busy Christmas season with parties and rude drivers and impatient shoppers, please be careful and remember the spirit of Christmas. Let's all try to be kind and patient and perform unexpected acts of kindness.

When I travel, I notice that TSA has a new slogan, and it says, "If you see something, say something." And I really like that message. What they are trying to get us to do is to report unusual events or behavior when you observe it. Normally after a tragic event, people always say, "Well, I knew that person was acting strange," or "I thought that was not right," or "I knew something like this was going to happen." TSA is trying to encourage us to speak up when our gut tells us something is not right; say something, for everyone's protection. Wouldn't it be good if we could take that message and apply it in every way, not just when travelling, but in our own organization? And in our communities. We would all be much better protected from harm. If we see something, say something. Just food for thought, after last week's passionate message about Penn State and Syracuse.

Time to end it – I have cooking to do for my friends here. It has been requested that I cook red beans and rice and a seafood gumbo today. Well, I will sign off so I can begin my chopping and my slicing and dicing. And as you all know, the secret is in the roux, and I cannot find any Tony Chachere's roux mix in Bal'mer. So I am going have to do it the old fashioned way - stir and stir and stir.

Wishing everyone, in all OJJ locations, a great weekend, and as always, my thanks to each of you, everywhere that you serve, for all you do every day to meet the mission.

Sincerely, "Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

P.S. Nita reminds us of a rare lunar eclipse tomorrow morning. Google "lunar eclipse" for details. Next eclipse: 2014.

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