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# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

I've been on the road again, in Washington, DC, at a Models for Change conference sponsored by the MacArthur Foundation. Louisiana was very well-represented, with one of our own being honored as a MacArthur Foundation Champion for Change. **Dean Sharon Guy Hornsby** of Northshore Technical/ Community College, in Greensburg, was recognized for her work and her commitment to improving juvenile justice. Northshore and Hammond OJJ have partnered, through a grant from the MacArthur Foundation, to help ten at-risk youth further their education, rather than dropping out of school. Several of the youth have already earned their GEDs, as well as certificates in various trades. Not only that, but Louisiana was highlighted in a plenary session, where the panelists included our own **Asst. Secretary Sean Hamilton, Judge Sharon Marchman** of Monroe and Lincoln Parish **ADA Andy Shealy**, and moderator **Dr. Debra DePrato** (our own recent Champion of Juvenile Justice winner). There was also a sizable Louisiana delegation that met while we were all here. It's very helpful to meet with other people, and see what we are all doing. It's good to share ideas and concerns, and to coordinate our plans going forward for the next few years.

But now it's back to Louisiana and reality – and the reality is that this is the time of year that I love to dread. (Confused yet?) Christmas shopping! It's still a little early for me, but I know that some of you (okay, a lot of you) have already finished shopping, decorated the house, put up the tree (and trimmed it, no less!), AND you've put cookie dough and full meals in the freezer. Hold on, I'll catch up! But I've looked at my schedule for next week and I think I'll need to hire some of Santa's elves to help me get er' done.

Here's an easy gift idea that is one-size-fits all and is always correct. December is Read a New Book Month. I love to read, it's entertaining, opens new horizons and lets me learn about things that are not familiar. That's something we should nurture in our children. Most people I know read for enjoyment, whether it's an old fashioned hardcover book or some electronic gizmo. Well, I know a lot of people have electronic gizmos, but I guess I'm old fashioned, I still think that nothing will ever replace the satisfaction of turning the pages of a real book. So, here's an idea for us all – and for the children in our lives. Give a kid a book for Christmas. And, let's take that thought to the logical conclusion and give each one of OJJ's kids a book, too. I know Christmas is around the corner, but we can do this if we work together. We have about 370 kids in secure care between our three facilities and the girls' program at Ware. Books never go out of style, so if you have a handful at home that are in good shape (gently used) (and in good taste for youth!) that you wouldn't mind passing along to our kids, identify the books and we'll let you know Monday how we are going to organize this effort. I'm going to ask each of our Regional Directors to coordinate a book drive for the facilities in their regions. Please look for their instructions Monday. We will work on finding some donations as well. Let's give our kids a book this Christmas.

At least while we're trimming the tree and decorating the house this weekend, we can tune in to some good football. The high school state championship games are this weekend, and there's always a college game somewhere. Can those bowl games be far behind?

Well, while I'm thinking about the weekend, let me wish each of you a good one, with my thanks as always, for each of you in every OJJ location, for all you do, every day, to meet the mission.

Sincerely,

“Doc” *Dr. Mary Livers*

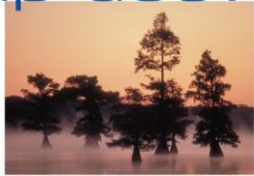
Mary L. Livers, MSW, PH.D, Deputy Secretary

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