
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

I start out every week by saying what a busy week it's been – but hey, when do we ever NOT have a busy week at OJJ? Soooo.....

I went to Greensburg Monday to meet with people at the Florida Parishes campus of the Louisiana Technical College to get an update on the pilot program for industry-certified vocational education they are creating as a model for juvenile justice-involved youth. We met with Dean Sharon Hornsby and Karolyn Pinsel-Harrell of the technical college, Dr. Debra DePrato and Beth Touchet-Morgan, representing the MacArthur Foundation, which is funding the program through a grant, DAS Carolyn Lewis and Hammond RM Sue Larisey. The program is doing very well thanks to the hard work of everybody involved, and will result in creation of a resource manual for other regions in Louisiana that want to adopt a similar program. I am very proud of the work they are doing - it is definitely making a difference in the lives of our youth. This appears to be a great partnership, and you will hear more about it in the future.

It had been a while since we had a statewide leadership meeting, and we hosted one on Tuesday. I have not seen the evaluation sheets yet, but I thought it went well. A lot of useful information was exchanged. Our Management and Finance team gave us some thoughts on the upcoming budget and discussed the new travel expense card, the new PPR process that is being put into place, and a initiative we are implementing for staff retention – a shift differential pay plan for secure care staff. We had a detailed session on our Data Warehouse by Will Paulson and Keith Poche, our CQIS data gurus, who explained how to mine for information in the volumes of statistics and data that OJJ keeps. We heard from CQIS on the new QA process, and Attorney Cynthia Eyre discussed the disciplinary process. Later we did an exercise concerning time management and goal setting. We also discussed what we – along with our community partners and stakeholders - can do to make a positive impact on recidivism and creating better outcomes for our youth. We also discussed our policy on escapes and runaways, to make sure everyone is familiar with the procedures for apprehending youth, which we will not need to implement in 2012.....right, everyone? Many thanks to Chief of Operations Elynn Toney and her staff for their work in putting on the leadership meeting.

Well I guess everybody is getting ready for the Superbowl parties this Sunday. There are two days each year where Americans eat the most food – Thanksgiving and Superbowl Sunday. I'm not that excited about the Superbowl this year, maybe because the Saints are not in it. But, I will watch the game just because of the crazy commercials. So, I guess I'll be cheering for Eli Manning – I hope he has a good game. So, enjoy the game and don't eat too much...oh, go ahead, and eat too much!

As you know, February is Black History Month, which commemorates the important contributions and legacy of African-Americans throughout our history. I recently learned that several other countries, including Canada, also celebrate Black History Month in February, and the United Kingdom celebrates it in October. Pres. Gerald Ford officially recognized Black History Month in 1976, as an "opportunity to honor the often-neglected accomplishments of black Americans in every area of endeavor throughout our history." I'm sure the regional offices and facilities will take the opportunity to have activities for youth to commemorate Black History Month.

This week we lost a notable personality in the entertainment world, Don Cornelius, who brought Soul Train to our living rooms and taught us all to dance. Come on, you know you danced to the music on Saturday morning TV when you thought nobody was watching. The show was one of the longest running TV shows ever, and had wide appeal to all teenagers. Soul Train brought people together and showcased some of the biggest musical artists in the country.

Watch for notices about CSoC/behavioral health training that will kick off soon. We will have video conferences – "human on-line training" – to make sure that OJJ staff are familiar with how the LA Behavioral Health Partnership will benefit our youth.

Well, I'll close now with my thanks to you all, everywhere in our world, for all that you do every day to meet the mission. And, as Don Cornelius would have said, "as always, we wish you love, peace and soul!"

Sincerely, "Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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