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# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

Well, I'm one-crutching it to Denver, Colorado. I am on my way to the ACA conference in Denver, and I hope this finds all of you doing well. Traveling with one crutch has turned out to be a good thing. I get all kinds of special treatment: wheel chairs in the airports, carts on the long concourse. They even let me load on to the plane before first class! I'm thinking about just keeping this crutch for every time I travel. LOL!

As you may or may not be aware, I have the distinct honor of being nominated as a candidate for President-elect of ACA. For those of you who are members, I hope that you will vote for me, and that I can count on winning at least in the state of Louisiana. The ballots will be coming out some time this fall - I will keep you posted.

Meanwhile back on the Ponderosa, we have been very busy. Of course, we've been busy addressing the challenges after the escape at Jetson. These events are always very upsetting, mainly due to the fact that when youth escape, that is a failure to meet the mission. We are very fortunate that we got those youth back in custody. Staff have been busy investigating the circumstances and looking at everything from our requirements for hiring and training, to operational procedures. As with all failures, we have to analyze what broke down and how we can repair it, and do better the next day.

To that end, we had a team of people come to central office to work with Gwen Jones (who has returned for a while to help with some human resources matters) to look at the job descriptions of the JJS series and come up with consistent job expectations for each level. This will assist in supervisors' ability to better write performance expectations. JJS staff have difficult jobs and are very diligent for the most part, so refining their expectations should help them to do an even better job. The team included **Lafayette RM Susan Miller, Alexandria RM Johnny Qualls, Director of Treatment Annette Arthur, Program Manager Arlona Morgan and Jetson Assistant Director Fouad Harb.**

A handful of staff were able to attend the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice Conference held in New Orleans this week. NABCJ offered a number of really good workshops. **Family Liaison Donna Bowie** noted that it was very worthwhile to get a wealth of information about what other people in her capacity all over the nation are doing. She said that people across the country are dealing with the same issues and concerns that we have in Louisiana and it's good to see how others do business. One of the presentations was on the Grambling/Swanson Mentoring Initiative – she was very pleased to see that program presented nationally.

We are soon going to be making a few changes to our organizational structure. I have been working with the executive team and Civil Service, and we have set a date of August 8 to hold a leadership team meeting to discuss the proposed organizational and structural changes.

So, from Denver – hope that all of you in every OJJ facility and office, have a wonderful, quiet weekend, with my thanks, as ever, for all that you do every day to meet the mission.

Sincerely,

“Doc” *Dr. Mary Livers*

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