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# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

This WUD will be just a little different this week because Doc has asked me to guest write for her. So you don't have to read all the way to the end, it's Asst. Sec. Sean Hamilton here. Thinking about what to say and all that's gone on in a week, I realize that this is hard work! And Doc does it every week wherever she is and whatever is happening – amazing. So, here goes, I'll give it my best shot.

The highlight of the week was our visit to the LSU School of Social Work to address an undergraduate class. Our team included RD Johnny Qualls and Jetson Director Angela Sutton as well as myself, but the star of the show, hands down, was Jetson Youth Kyle. L. Kyle stole the show with his calm, poised manner of speaking and he truly spoke from the heart. The students and the professor were so impressed with him. Kyle literally had only two hours to prepare, but he was so well-spoken and composed that he looked like he was highly experienced at public speaking. I'd like to share with you some of the comments from the email that the instructor sent us: "Thank you so much for the inspirational and educational message your talented staff and exceptional youth provided to our social work class...The work you are doing at OJJ is admirable, and clearly making a tremendous, positive impact in the lives of so many of our state's youth experiencing great need for support and a pathway to improved life outcomes. Several students have expressed interest in sharing their appreciation and support for the young man who shared his story and experiences. The youth's judge may see those messages as an affirmation to his level of maturity and contribution to our community. Many students stated this was the most meaningful classroom experience they have had during their time at LSU. What a privilege it was to have you all visit." The experience itself was truly a privilege for all of us, but hearing the feedback from the students brought us all a huge smile. Many thanks to the LSU School of Social Work for allowing us to present to them who we are at OJJ and the work we do.

This week, COO Elynn Toney conducted a PREA Steering Committee meeting that was very well attended by OJJ staff from various programs around the state, including the P&P offices, the facilities and central office. It was a very productive meeting, as we are gearing up for full implementation of the federal PREA standards. The Steering Committee is tasked with ensuring that we will be successful with our first audit for PREA compliance, that will take place in August 2014. I am very pleased to note that we are well ahead of the curve on implementation of standards in our secure facilities and contract non-secure residential facilities, thanks to the hard work of people throughout the agency who work at the facilities and monitor the group homes.

This week we celebrated Bosses' Day throughout the agency, and the central office Morale Committee pulled out the stops to express appreciation for all the managers. We had a lovely, full breakfast with all the fixings and colorful fall decorations. All staff were invited to share in the feast and the fellowship. The entire committee pitched in to set up and serve the breakfast, but special thanks to our receptionist, Jean Buffington, who cooked all the food herself. It was a wonderful event for all of us and we appreciate all the efforts of the Morale Committee, to well, keep up our morale.

This week there was a bittersweet happening in Baton Rouge, when a precious 11 year old boy went to Heaven after battling cancer since he was 5. Trevor Sims' desire to help the homeless inspired a huge city-wide drive. After years of treatment, Trevor was declared terminally ill several months ago, and his mother and the hospital staff asked him what he wanted to do before he died. One thing he really wanted to do was to feed the homeless, because he recalled that he and his mother went hungry when she could not work while she took care of him, and they could not afford to buy food. Trevor felt that nobody should have to be hungry, and people at Healing Place Church who heard him speak organized "Trevor's Wish," a citywide donation drive for the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. The drive raised a huge amount of food and monetary donations, from all over the country after Trevor's story was shared on social media. I'm pleased to say that central office did its share. Everybody who heard about Trevor wanted to help make his dream come true, and Trevor lived to see a successful drive that will be repeated annually on his birthday. As an agency that works with young people, OJJ applauds the unselfish final wish of this wonderful little boy.

To wrap it up, I'd like to thank every member of the OJJ team in every location, for all you do every day to meet the mission.

Sincerely, *Sean C. Hamilton*, Assistant Secretary

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