
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

Well, it looks like we made it through another busy week, and we are going to keep busy this weekend due to tropical storm Karen. I guess our hurricane season has been pretty quiet so far, and luckily our staff is prepared for any coming storm. Please take time to get your home and family ready if Karen is heading in your direction.

At this point, it looks like Bridge City is going to shelter in place for the weekend. As usual, everyone has pulled together to make sure that we have everything in place should they get some nasty weather. Most importantly, Ms. Zelma and Chef Sonnier have informed me that we have plenty of food in the pantry and fridge, so no need to worry about snacks.

I am sure that many of you, like me, saw articles in papers this week about some state agencies providing their employees with merit increases. As you all know, this is the first year in many years, when state agencies have been able to provide merit increases for their staff if they can find money within their current budgets to accommodate the expense. This favors agencies that have a more diversified revenue stream, unlike OJJ that relies primarily on state general fund dollars to operate. We are not letting that stop us from looking at everything we can to try to provide this benefit. We will be looking at our budget again for ways to provide you with much deserved merit increases. Please know that if there is any way we can responsibly approve merits, we will certainly do so. I wish that I had better news for you, but I am not giving up yet.

I want to let you know that your work is appreciated, and I would like to commend you for continuing to support rigorous reform efforts during these tough budget times. You all participate in training, continuing education and organizational meetings so that you can learn new ways to work with youth. And you do all of these “extra” activities while still maintaining your “normal” job duties.

I was able to see that again first hand when I visited Bridge City and Jetson this week for our Celebration of Change events. As usual, our staff and youth did a great job of setting everything up for the events. We had quite a few distinguished guests including Orleans Parish Sheriff Marlin Gusman, former Chief Justice Kitty Kimball and her husband Clyde Kimball. We honored Judge Patricia Evans Koch from Rapides Parish as our 4th Louisiana Champion of Juvenile Justice. Judge Koch has truly been an advocate for youth from the juvenile bench and within her community as an active citizen.

Most of all, I enjoyed visiting with staff and youth in the facilities during the Celebrations. I don't feel that I can thank our staff enough. Your willingness to serve OJJ youth is evident in their success.

Have a great weekend and try to stay dry and safe!

As always, thanks for all you do, every day to meet the mission.

Sincerely,

“Doc”

Dr. Mary Livers

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

Office of Juvenile Justice • PO Box 66458 • Baton Rouge, LA 70896 • e: Whatsupdoc?OJJ@la.gov • www.ojd.louisiana.gov