
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

Boy oh boy – okay, I'm right back in the saddle again after my little mishap last week. I am moving like a turtle...shoot a turtle can out-run me now. I am still feeling very sore. It hurts to walk, laugh, lie down, heck, I hurt just because the sun is shining. But I still have work to do. I have been like a kid playing a video game with all of my gadgets – BlackBerry, personal cell and iPad.

I missed the ACA conference, but we did have some staff who attended. From what I understand, it was a very good conference and I'm sure there will be some good things that will come out of it. I heard there were rumors of a barbecue and a huge, life-size model of a bull. Maybe we can ask RM Ann Vick if she can confirm those rumors. Rumor has it she posed for a picture with the bull.

Another thing I missed was a conference held yesterday in Baton Rouge by the LSUHSC Institute for Public Health and Justice, to discuss the progress of juvenile justice reform in Louisiana and where we all will go from here. Among the speakers was Melodee Hanes, Acting Administrator of the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Since I was supposed to speak, and could not make it, good old Asst. Sec. Sean Hamilton had to fill in for me. Sean spoke on my behalf, and I am told that he did a really good job. I appreciate that, because I know Sean really does not like making speeches. Thanks, Sean, for taking one for the leader.

We had two - TWO! – tours at Jetson today. Many thanks to Asst. Sec. Sean Hamilton, Regional Director Johnny Qualls, Director Angela Sutton and her staff for their efforts to welcome our visitors. The first was Nancy Campbell, a Special Master for the state of California, who is working with the California juvenile justice system to meet the requirements of the settlement agreement they have reached with the U.S. Department of Justice over unconstitutional conditions in their juvenile facilities. Sound familiar? Ms. Campbell came to visit Jetson to see what we have done to transform the facility and learn about the process, the staffing, the training, etc., to take back to the state of California. She walked around the school and some of the dorms and visited with youth and staff. I understand she was very impressed with what she observed. It's nice to know that we can stand as a role model to other states.

The second tour was a group of seven people from all over the world, a program of the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program. The group is traveling in the U.S. for three weeks to explore the U.S. judicial system pertaining to legal structures to protect children. The visitors included a judge from Costa Rica, the director of the Child Care and Protection Agency of Guyana, a legal staffer from the Institute of Social Welfare in Haiti, Chief of Policy and Strategy, Child Protection Department of Romania, the head of the Intelligence and International Cooperation Unit from Nigeria, senior assistant director of the Ministry of Community Development in Singapore and the legal advisor of the American Bar Association Rule of Law initiative in Tunisia. They were very impressed with campus, the staff and the kids they met. They appeared to enjoy engaging with the youth they visited.

I'd like to extend sympathy to our sister agency, the Department of Corrections, which just lost one of their own in an unfortunate tragedy. Adult PPO Jay Poss passed away this week, with over 20 years of service to the state. I want to extend our heartfelt condolences to Jay's family and colleagues. We heard that a fund has been set up for a scholarship for Jay's sons – when we get the information we will pass it on to you if anyone would like to make a donation in honor of a fallen colleague.

On a more cheerful note, it's Superbowl weekend! Time to eat lots of delicious, totally not-nutritious snacks while we cheer for our team. Since I lived in Baltimore for 5 years I am definitely rooting for the Ravens. I was a Ravens fan while I lived there, and I went to some of their games. No dome in Baltimore – they play outside. In the winter. In the cold. And up there it's sooooo cold!

Another important event this weekend – Saturday is Groundhog's Day. More winter? Early spring? Stay tuned. Whatever you do this weekend, and whatever you celebrate, I hope you enjoy your time off, with my thanks to each of you, everywhere, for all you do every day, to meet the mission.

Sincerely, "Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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