
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

Vol. 5, No. 27. February 22, 2013

Hello, Everyone:

As some of the staff here at central office know, I've been busy with getting my Mom and Dad moved. They have taken a brave and bold step to move to Baton Rouge to be closer to me, which means I will no longer have a free hotel room in Shreveport any more. That's okay, I will still get to north Louisiana anyway. Welcome to Baton Rouge, Doris and George. The move was quite an experience. Ever heard the expression "busier than a one-legged furniture mover?" Me either, but it's as good as some of the others I've heard.

We've had quite a few folks busy this week. Chief Operations Officer Ellyn Toney held a statewide PREA meeting. As I expressed to members of the committee, I'm very proud of the progress that we are making as an agency toward all efforts related to PREA. I know that all of our PREA coordinators are committed to doing everything possible to work with their teams to provide healthy and safe environments for our youth while they are in OJJ's custody. We also had a ribbon cutting last Friday for the Second Chance Kennel at Swanson. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend, but Asst. Sec. Sean Hamilton and Regional Director Carolyn Lewis related to me that it was very good. I saw the press coverage, and was very pleased to see the good community support. Congratulations to Director Shoecraft and her staff and youth for making this wonderful program a reality. Stay tuned for updates as our canine charges "graduate."

The executive budget was presented to the Appropriations Committee today, and Undersecretary Connie Percell and I will be sharing with the executive staff what the proposed \$13 million budget cut mean to us and how we will manage going forward. At this time I know everybody is worried about layoffs. While we don't anticipate any layoffs at this time, I'll keep you updated. As you know, this is the beginning of the budget process, and we will know exactly what it means in about three months, after the House and Senate collaborate and pass the 2014-15 budget.

Never in my wildest dreams, when I first started in this area, did I think I would be dealing with multi-million dollar budgets. I was not an accountant and I'm still not an accountant. My interest was not the big picture. But yet here I am. I still remember even though it was 36 years ago, what it felt like to tour the very first lockup facility that I ever went to. Which, by the way, was Angola State Penitentiary, when I was a social work student at LSU. But I was thinking just today about our new employees, who are just being hired and going through training. Whenever possible, I try to stop in and talk to the training classes. But here's what I remember about my first job in a facility. I felt greener than a gourd. I felt vulnerable. Truth be known, I was a little scared of being expose for not knowing what to do and how to do it. But here's what I have to say to everybody, whether you are a brand new employee or newly promoted, or presented with a situation that you've never been presented with before – we can't all know everything all the time. It's okay to not know what to do sometimes, or how to do it. And here's what else I remember - how nice it was when a person with experience and confidence came along to help me out. It made all the difference in the world. And then I could say, "that's how it's done, I can do that." No matter what stage you are in, in your career, brand new, newly promoted, new situation, if you don't know, you can ask for help. Reach out to somebody who has been there before. And if you're one of those experienced people, lend a hand. That's how we build our team; that's how we get the job done. And it's okay to be a little scared too. Sometimes managed fear can be your friend.

So, wherever you are in your career with OJJ, wishing you a wonderful weekend, with my thanks, as ever, for all you do, every day and everywhere within the agency, 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