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# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Vol. 5, No. 39. May 31, 2013

Hello, Everyone:

It's been a really quiet week so I've been trying to catch up and make plans. Everybody is looking forward to the end of the session –legislators included! As you know, Senator Sharon Weston Broome sponsored a resolution praising OJJ for our work, and now Senator Neil Riser has sponsored a resolution to recognize our juvenile probation and parole officers for Probation and Parole Week. We appreciate Sen. Riser for sponsoring the resolution and we hope it will be passed so we can share it with everyone prior to P&P Week in June. We are busy making plans for our events around the state in every office. Stay tuned. We hope to be able to highlight the great work that our P&P staff do around the state.

The opening of the new facility at Columbia has strengthened my resolve to continue to try to replace the Jetson and Swanson facilities with modern, cost-effective, efficient, state-of-the-art physical plants. We are so excited, as Acadiana continues to move forward. We will be holding a ground-breaking ceremony this fall. Can you believe it? Pinch yourselves! This quiet week has given me time to think about these big ideas.

We have had our minds wrapped around PREA for the last couple of weeks. In fact, Chief of Operations Ellyn Toney and Program Specialist Yezette White just returned from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas, where they learned more about the PREA audits that will be scheduled. It sounds like the PREA audits will be much like an ACA audit, of course with some different details, but the process is familiar. Ellyn will be briefing the executive team soon on what she learned, and I'm sure you all will be learning the details as they are forthcoming. Being compliant with PREA and supporting a healthy and safe culture is something that we will never "arrive" at without hard work. Everything we do should be focused on a safe and healthy environment and positive treatment models, and all of this goes back to ...yes, you got it - meeting our mission. Our work continues and we are all about doing better today than we did yesterday – continuous improvement. We just keep on learning.

Shifting gears...I know some of you out there probably have relatives or friends in Oklahoma, like central office Administrative Assistant Mitzi Sonnier, whom many of you know. Mitzi has an 82 year old sister in Moore, OK. Her sister's house was about two blocks from the path of the tornado in Moore. She and her husband drove away from it safely. Her house is still standing, albeit there is a lot of damage. Most of her neighbors' houses are destroyed. All of my friends in Oklahoma escaped unharmed with their homes intact, however, five employees of the Department of Corrections had their homes destroyed. So, please keep these folks in your thoughts and prayers. We sure hope they don't get hit with any more tornadoes, as they continue to have severe weather warnings.

Many thanks to Baton Rouge RM Jacqueline Page and several staff from Baton Rouge OJJ, who volunteered this week at the Salvation Army office to assist in packing supplies being sent to Oklahoma to aid the tornado victims. Please let me know if any other OJJ groups have pitched in to assist our neighbors in Oklahoma. Here in Louisiana we know how it feels to see complete devastation as a result of natural disasters.

I'll close now, with my hope that you all will have restful weekend, with my thanks to each and every member of the OJJ family, in every office and facility, for the work you do every day, to meet the mission.

Sincerely,

"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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