
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

Vol. 7, No. 9. October 31, 2014

Happy Halloween, Everyone:

Today is All Hallows Eve, the day before the traditional Christian holiday that remembers the saints and our departed loved ones. It's turned into a fun day to wear silly-scary costumes and stuff ourselves with treats. I hope you will all enjoy the day, with too much sugar, or a harvest theme. Please be careful this evening if you are taking kids out to trick or treat or attend a fall festival. Here at central office, Halloween means a feast of goodies. A vampire is prowling around, but I like the t shirt that reads "You can't scare me, I have grandkids."

I've been down with a nasty bug this week. My head feels like it's about to explode and I feel like I've been swimming in the ocean. Being under the weather caused me to miss one of the highlights of the year. I look forward to the facility Celebrations of Change, and I've never before missed the one where we present the Champion of Louisiana Juvenile Justice Award. This year we moved the award presentation to Swanson-Monroe to honor Fourth Judicial District Judge Sharon Marchman on her home territory. I was so sorry to miss it, but I heard that the Swanson staff did an outstanding job. Asst. Sec. Sean Hamilton stepped in and made a wonderful presentation to Judge Marchman. Service pins were presented to staff members for years of service broken down by 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 years. At Swanson, quite a number staff earned those high number pins, including one with 33 years of service. Congratulations to everyone at Swanson for an impressive event, and thanks to everyone for your years of dedicated service.

I was able to make it to the leadership meeting in Bunkie Wednesday. Leaders from around the state gathered at the Cecil Picard Educational and Recreational Center that was transferred to OJJ from the Dept. of Education during the last legislative session. It's a beautiful facility, with 160 beautifully manicured acres of land, cottages, pavilion, auditorium, an Olympic-sized pool and other amenities. I was glad that staff could see the center and start getting ideas of how it can be used by our staff, youth and families. It's just a few miles away from the site where the Acadiana Center for Youth is under construction (yea!). The agenda was packed with excellent information that the leaders took back to their staffs, regarding changes in our electronic monitoring program (EMP) and good statistics on recidivism. Thanks to Chief of Operations Ellyn Toney and Staff Development Director Fran Martin for organizing an outstanding program, and to Chris Hines, Director of the Center, and his staff, for hosting us.

I hope many of you had the chance to vote early so you can enjoy your holiday next Tuesday. If not, I hope you'll go to the polls Tuesday and cast your vote. It's our civic duty to vote for the candidates we think best represent our views – it's not just a fun thing to do, but a hard-fought right. I never take for granted the right to vote.

There was a little faux pas last week in my lineup of gridiron events around the state. I heard from a number of people that Southern University's matchup with rival Jackson State was missing, and my apologies to all you Jag fans out there. The Jags pulled out a win and returned to the Bluff with the Jackson State Tigers at home whimpering. This weekend SU meets Alabama State at home, and we will be pulling for the Jaguars' victory.

We are going to see some real changes this weekend – the temperature is going to take a plunge AND it's time turn the clocks back an hour. I think I'll change my clocks before the wee hours and get it over with. Wishing you all a wonderful autumn weekend, with my heartfelt thanks to you all, wherever you serve, 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