
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

Another short week has passed, this time with workdays on Monday and Wednesday-Friday, punctuated by Veterans Day on Tuesday. When we recognized our staff who have served in the armed forces, we somehow managed to miss a couple of names, Belinda Thompson Thomas, an Army veteran who serves at Bridge City, and John Thomas, a National Guardsman at Swanson-Columbia. I hope that all of that have served have gotten a card from me by now. We were trying to get them to you by Tuesday, but the post office had other ideas.

We all got to celebrate Veteran's Day (brought to you courtesy of unselfish Americans who have served, and continue to serve, in the military), complete with gorgeous weather for the day. That may be the last nice weather we see for a few days. Can you say "polar vortex?" "Bomb cyclone?"

All over the country, we are feeling the effects of unusual storm systems that arose in the Pacific area when Super Typhoon Nuri, one of the year's most powerful tropical cyclones, rammed into the polar jet stream last weekend over Alaska's islands. Nuri was called a "record breaking monster storm" that banged into the islands with hurricane force winds and 50 foot waves. (And we think our hurricanes are monsters!) Then it caused a "bomb cyclone" when the weather system in the Alaskan Bering Sea met the polar vortex, a normal system of super-cold winds that spin around the Arctic, causing super-unseasonably cold across the northern U.S. that is now pushing east. (Got that?) At least the cyclone isn't coming, too – just super cold air. What's the bottom line for us? We can expect a hard freeze over most of the state, so we have to protect our pipes, pups and plants.

Well, nasty weather or not, Bridge City had a successful Celebration of Change Thursday. The theme was "Harvest Your Opportunities for Change," and the gym was beautifully decorated with fall color. It was an uplifting program that opened with a precision-perfect posting of the colors by the Bridge City Color Guard. The keynote speaker was Judge Jude Fanguy, who is retiring as Houma City judge, presiding over juvenile court. Judge Fanguy's message was spot-on for our young people (and really for all of us) when he stressed that our choices have consequences. He urged the youth to make the most of their stay at Bridge City and to return to their communities ready to be law-abiding citizens who will make healthy choices. I want to personally thank Judge Fanguy for his 34 years of service to the Houma community and especially the juveniles who have come before his court. He has always treated the young people in his court with fairness and compassion. Judge Fanguy will be missed, and we wish him the very best as he retires and begins a new chapter in his life.

The Celebration of Change programs give us a change to do just that – celebrate the dramatic changes that have taken place throughout our system, as well as recognize staff for their contributions to the agency's success. Our staff is the backbone of the agency, and you have pulled together all over OJJ to make systemic change a reality. The Bridge City program continued with presentation of service pins recognizing milestone years (5,10,15,20,25,30, 35 and 40 years). Plaques were presented to staff who participated in transferring youth from Jetson to Bridge City and Swanson, back in January of this year. The program ended with a beautiful luncheon presented by Chef Sonnier and the Culinary Arts students, who we heard began preparing the food about 4:30 a.m. It started with a colorful salad, Mardi Gras Chicken breast topped with crawfish etouffee as the entrée, and finished with cheesecake with strawberries, it was a feast. Many thanks to RD Susan Miller, Director Angela Sutton and everyone at Bridge City for presenting a wonderful Celebration of Change.

With that, I'll close with my sincere thanks to you all, at every OJJ office and facility, for all you do every day, to meet the mission. Have a great weekend, and stay "super" warm!

Sincerely,

"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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