
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

We've had an interesting week, with a three-day PREA summit in New Orleans. Under our PREA grant, we are able to host summits where top officials from five states can meet to discuss PREA issues and progress toward meeting the standards. States that participated were Texas, Kentucky, Georgia, Alabama and of course, Louisiana. The program addressed culture change and sustainability through PREA implementation. Each state gave an overview of some of the strategies they are implementing and provided an update on their activities.

Guest speakers included Dr. Allen Beck of the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, who presented on understanding data to enhance sexual safety. A presentation by Dr. Reginald Wilkinson brought the group a national perspective concerning PREA and the Review Panel. Another presentation by Jack Shireman and his wife Jane Parnell detailed understanding organizations and building systems. A very moving presentation on the role of trauma in understanding the dynamics of sexual safety in juvenile facilities was given by Dr. Joan Gillece and William Kellibrew. Wendy Leach, a PREA-certified auditor, provided an update on PREA audits and she talked about challenging standards and lessons learned. Ms. Mykel Selph presented on vulnerable populations in juvenile settings, centered on LGBTI issues.

We were able to share a lot of excellent information through exercises we went through as a group, and we also broke into state groups, as well as mixed groups, to strategize on several issues. Many thanks to Chief of Operations Ellyn Toney for handling all the logistics and ensuring that participants were able to enjoy a worthwhile, educational experience, as we all work toward successful implementation of the PREA standards. Following the summit this afternoon, Bridge City hosted a tour for the PREA teams from Kentucky and Alabama. They were impressed with the youth and staff they met and with the appearance of the campus.

For some reason, the holidays seem to have sneaked up this year. Everybody is saying that Thanksgiving sort of crept up on them and now Christmas is around the corner. We have only 12 days left to clean, decorate, put up that tree, cook ahead and fill the freezer (or make reservations for that catered dinner!) and finish buying gifts for everyone on the list. Or, start buying gifts for everyone on the list. Wow – where did 2014 go, anyway? Seems like I was just taking care of Christmas details and now it's a year later and I'm doing it once again. How about y'all? Are you ready – gifts wrapped and placed under a beautifully decorated tree? Menu ready to go? If so, I'm impressed.

I'll close for now, with my wishes for you all to have a great weekend, with my sincere thanks to every member of the OJJ team, in every office and facility, for all you do every day, to meet the mission. Because as you know, the mission is important, every day and everywhere!

Sincerely, "Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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