
what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

Are you stuffed to the max? I know it was hard to get back to work after the big Thanksgiving feast. (I hope all of you were able to enjoy a feast with family and friends.) I know I had had my share of food. And oh my, desserts for days. Now - what happened to your leftovers – did you make turkey burgers, turkey soup or gumbo, turkey chili, turkey stew? As soon as we get over Thanksgiving, Christmas is knocking at the door. Many of you probably went shopping on Friday, which paves the way for Christmas. Standing in line to save a few dollars on a television, etc. No thanks, I like my beauty rest.

Did you know that Thanksgiving is called “Gray Thursday” in the retail world? Of course everyone knows about Black Friday - the big shopping day when merchants’ bottom line is “in the black.” Then after Black Friday came Small Business Saturday, which has only been around for four years, where shoppers get special deals at small, local shops. Something fairly new is Goodshop Sunday, (Sunday after Thanksgiving) when thousands of merchants all over the country offered deals and coupons, and donated a percentage of the cost of the purchases to shoppers’ favorite nonprofit or school. Over 100,000 non-profits participated, including some local causes, and you get to choose which cause you want to support. So far, this shopping event has raised over \$11 million for non-profits. Of course, there was Cyber Monday for all the internet shoppers, and since 2012, there is Giving Tuesday, a national campaign to encourage charitable contributions by individuals, groups, companies, etc., with some organizations matching the donation. Giving Tuesday is a day designated to make a difference throughout the country. Something to think about for next year.

We had a JJIC meeting Wednesday, and the stars were the youth who spoke to the commissioners. Reginald W. from Bridge City, Michael M. from Columbia and Derrick P. from Swanson-Monroe stole the show with their comments about their experiences at their facilities. They described how the staff is always there to encourage them, and help them re-direct their lives so they can become productive, law-abiding citizens. (Sound familiar?) They talked about going to school at the facilities and how the teachers and counselors help them to learn and make good decisions about their educational future. It was certainly music to our ears to hear the young people praise OJJ and our staff, and the commissioners were very attentive and appreciative of their comments. Well done, everyone! You just can’t buy that kind of compliment from the youth we serve – it has to come from the heart and be honest. I know all of you work hard every day to help our kids turn their lives around, and hearing from them that you are being successful in meeting the mission does more to impress the policy-makers and stakeholders than anything we can say. Thanks also to Director of Education Kim Mims for her testimony about the education process in our secure facilities, and to DAS Beth Touchet-Morgan for creating the PowerPoint presentation that brought our comments to life by allowing the commissioners to see what Columbia looks like, and what goes on in our classrooms at all the facilities. Stay tuned, JJIC will be meeting again early next year.

If you have not taken advantage of the opportunity for early voting, don’t forget to go to the polls tomorrow to cast your ballot for the candidates of your choice. Voting gives each individual a voice in our government. It’s not just a privilege, it’s also our responsibility as citizens. I hope all of you will be able to get to the polls to make your voice heard.

BTW, the Bayou Classic was played last weekend. Congratulations to Southern, which beat Grambling 52-45. And that is ALL I’m going to say about that. Sooooo, my sincere thanks to every member of the OJJ team, in every facility and office, 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