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# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

Well, the official start of summer is not until late June, but here in Louisiana it already feels like summer. The thermometer is edging towards 90 degrees. The cicadas are singing us to sleep (or keeping us awake). The kids are wrapping up their school years with graduations, field trips and parties. And everyone is getting ready to celebrate the long Memorial Day weekend.

We don't slow down much for the summer at OJJ. After our busy week at the Governor's conference, I headed out to Lake Charles this week for a few meetings and got to spend some time in the Lake Charles regional office visiting with staff. It was a great visit. It is always good to get a chance to see staff in the regions.

I am sure that many of you have family or friends that are celebrating graduation(s), and I have even heard about a few of you graduating – more on that in the next Inside Scoop.

We officially kicked off graduation season at OJJ today with Swanson holding its ceremony. I want to congratulate all of the youth on their achievements. Thanks to the staff for pulling together the ceremony. We often think of graduation or commencement as a conclusion, but it is also important to recognize it as a new beginning, a stepping stone to the next phase. This is an especially appropriate message for our youth who are doing the hard work to return to their communities. Celebrating their accomplishments and guiding them to envision their future success is a very important part of what we do.

We have a three day weekend to celebrate Memorial Day. I for one am looking forward to relaxing in my flip flops this weekend. Memorial Day is the national holiday set aside to remember the sacrifices of members of the military and to honor the service of our veterans and those who died in our nation's service. Memorial Day began in 1868 to honor soldiers buried at Arlington National Cemetery. In 2000 Congress passed the [National Moment of Remembrance](#) resolution asking Americans to pause for a moment to "voluntarily and informally observe in their own way a moment of remembrance and respect." As I was walking into the Capitol this afternoon, I noticed a group of people gathering on the front lawn which was covered with American flags.

Please take some time out this weekend to recognize any veterans that you may know, and let them know you appreciate their service and sacrifice. As ever, I'd like to recognize the fighting men of the 487th Air Expeditionary Wing, 8th Air Force, and WWII veteran George Livers – my Dad. Thanks, Dad, and your comrades-in-arms, for your service to our country.

A lot of staff will be off Monday for the holiday, while secure care staff will be taking care of our youth. I'll close with my sincere thanks to all current and former members of our military, and to all of the members of the OJJ team, in every location, for working with the youth every day helping them to meet their goals. Have a safe holiday weekend!

Sincerely,  
"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

Mary L. Livers, MSW, PH.D, Deputy Secretary

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