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# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

Well, I got to start off my week doing one of my favorite things -- bragging about OJJ and the great work going on in our facilities and communities. I was asked to be a part of a panel at the judges' summer school. We spent Monday morning discussing how to improve outcomes for youth in Louisiana. The panel was made up of national experts and state agency representatives in child welfare, juvenile justice and behavioral health. I am always happy to hear about new national trends related to our work, and even happier to report that we are already implementing many of these practices.

Progress is also being made to aid us in further implementation of the therapeutic model, we reached a major milestone in the Acadiana Center for Youth project this week. Late last week we opened the bids that were submitted for construction of our new facility in Bunkie. This week, we were able to formally accept one of those bids and take the next step towards starting construction. The capital outlay/construction process can be lengthy, but Team OJJ is staying on top of this one so that we can have our new facility open in 2016, which is not that far away. We will be planning an official groundbreaking in early August.

The new campus in Bunkie will assure a secure, purpose-designed facility allowing for a more treatment-focused regime for the first time in this region of the state. In addition, the new campus will be designed specifically to meet the needs of OJJ youth and staff, based on the LAMOD treatment model which you work so hard every day to implement in our current facilities, placing youth on the path to productive citizenship.

OJJ's work with youth continues to get recognized for being a model. The documentary crew headed up by film maker Victoria Mills is back at Bridge City filming for the next few days. We got a sneak peak at a film trailer earlier this spring, I am anxiously awaiting the final film. We will have to put on a premiere party – get the popcorn ready! The old Jetson campus was also on film this week. A film crew was out at the facility filming scenes for an independent film called Evan's Crime.

We wrapped up this week with ring and graduation ceremonies at Bridge City. It is always good for our youth to see families and staff come together to celebrate their accomplishments. We welcomed back a familiar face for graduation at BCCY, former Assistant Secretary Girard Melancon was on hand to deliver an inspirational message for the youth.

I'll close with my wish for you all to enjoy the weekend, with my heartfelt thanks to each and every member of the OJJ family, wherever you serve, for all you do every day and everywhere, to meet the mission by helping our young people see they can succeed.

Sincerely,  
"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*

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

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Office of Juvenile Justice • PO Box 66458 • Baton Rouge, LA 70896 • e: Whatsupdoc?OJJ@la.gov • www.ojd.louisiana.gov