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# what's up doc?



by Dr. Mary Livers

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Hello, Everyone:

I hope you all had a great long Fourth of July weekend – remembering of course, our colleagues who were on duty at the secure care facilities, helping our youth have a nice holiday, and remembering what Independence Day means to all of us.

As ever, we have had a full week with lots of meetings, at the office and away. I need a GPS, not to mention roller skates. Sometimes I think maybe a rocket backpack like the comic book character The Rocketeer would be more up to date.

Monday I went to New Orleans to attend a statewide meeting of juvenile justice folks who have been engaged in reform efforts along with the McArthur Foundation. It's always nice to talk about progress, and boy, we have had some progress in the last 5 years. We originally received a grant from MacArthur that allowed us to work with the Children and Youth Planning Boards and learn more about evidence based practices and data, and as a result we have seen a lot of changes here at OJJ, such as use of the SAVRY to assess risk and treatment needs, and production of our quarterly data indicators report. We are thankful to the foundation for their vital assistance, but these changes would not have happened without the hard work and dedication of our staff. You have gone many extra miles to make these vital reforms happen.

we have an important milestone to celebrate this year. 2014 marks the anniversary of OJJ being created as its own agency. Act 1225, of 2003 called for sweeping changes in the way youth involved in juvenile justice were treated. OJJ now is proud of our dual approach to juvenile justice, that creates a balance between public safety and treatment. We've come a long way and we're not done yet – as I always say, we'll never be “there” – but we have made massive changes and we are on the right path. Every step we take now is toward reform and making things better for the youth and families we serve. And ultimately, that's all about public safety.

Well, while RD Susan Miller and the OJJ team were out at Jetson last week, cleaning, re-purposing, saving and inventorying stuff, Susan was able to save something other than office equipment. She managed to capture a tiny feral kitten, one of the small legion of Jetson cats. The little refugee was a pitiful, scrawny bag of bones. Susan handed it off to Comm. Director Jerel Giarrusso at central office, while Nita Franklin-Shanklin served as cheerleader. DAS Beth Touchet-Morgan kitten-sat for a bit and suggested kitten formula for good nutrition. Who knew you could buy powdered kitten formula, Jerel asked, but she bought a can and fixed it at home for the baby. A bath revealed that the little kitty was about starved to death. After lapping up some formula, the baby hissed and swatted at a huge dog, who was not impressed. Now, a week later, the baby is filling out nicely and playing, purrs all the time, and is becoming friends with the household felines and canines. Good job, Susan, et al, for having the compassion and taking the time to rescue a little creature that needed a helping hand.



Well, I'll close for this week, with my sincere thanks to each member of the OJJ family, wherever you serve, for all you do every day and everywhere, to meet the mission, and turn around the lives of our kids and other living things.

Sincerely,

“Doc” *Dr. Mary Livers*

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