

what's up doc?

by Dr. Mary Livers, PH.D, MSW, Deputy Secretary

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Hello, Everyone:

The cool weather finally made it down to us in the southern part of the state. I am sure those of you who head out for high school and college football games are going to enjoy the weather. Of course, don't put your flip flops away yet. We will likely still get some type of heatwave before fall "sticks" for good. Also, don't forget that we are not out of the woods on hurricanes yet either. Hurricane season is not over until November. Hurricane Joaquin is working itself up the East Coast right now. Luckily, the latest paths keep it offshore.

I broke up my week with a trip to Columbia on Wednesday. I never miss the opportunity to bring folks to see the good work you are all doing in the facilities. Judges Young and Matlock from Caddo Parish spent the afternoon at SCYC visiting with the young people and touring the campus. As always, Director Kim Rushing and her staff were great hosts. – very friendly and eager to discuss the great work that the young people do at Columbia. RD Carolyn Lewis and new SCY Director Richard Robinson were also on hand to welcome the judges.

The young people and staff at Columbia were able to show the judges firsthand the group process. It was obvious that the young people at Columbia have the support and encouragement of the staff. The Judges threw quite a few questions at them (you know how judges like to ask questions). When questioned, they all knew the name of their PPO and confirmed that the PPOs kept in regular contact with their families. Score one for Service Coordination! Ironically, very few of them could name their attorney.

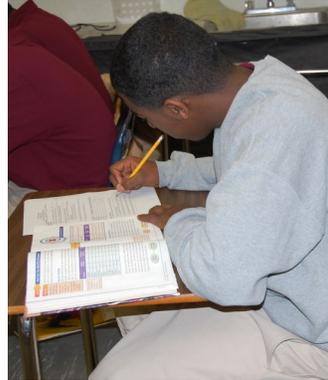
It is hard to believe that it is already October. I guess the barrage of Halloween merchandise in the stores is our best sign of October, but I also wanted to remind you all that October is also National Youth Justice Awareness Month. President Obama made it official this week with a proclamation. The proclamation is in line with our focus on treating youth in the least restrictive environment. It highlights that young people who are served in the community with outcome driven services have a better chance at success than those who penetrate deep into the system. Further, the young people in the juvenile justice system often have issues with substance abuse, trauma, and mental illness, which all must be considered when implementing services and diversion programs.

The proclamation closes with a message about second chances for kids. Pointing out that America is a nation of second chances, and each individual deserves a fair shot at rehabilitation. Sound familiar? I would like to encourage you all to take the time this month to recognize your own individual contribution and those of your coworkers in providing young people with second chances. Your commitment makes a difference not only in the lives of young people, but in the communities in which they live.

I'll close with my sincere thanks to every member of the OJJ team, wherever you serve, for all you do every day to meet the mission.

Sincerely,
"Doc"

Dr. Mary Livers



Comments?
Send them to
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