

what's up doc?

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

Vol. 8, No. 37, October 9, 2015

Hello, Everyone:

Baton Rouge is in a bit of a scramble right now preparing for a few last minute guests. Due to flooding and storm damage in Columbia, SC this Saturday's game has been moved to Tiger Stadium. University officials, city parish administrators and first responders are all doing a little last minute prep to make sure the traffic flows smoothly and everyone has a safe and enjoyable game tomorrow.

In Louisiana, we know firsthand the disruption of natural disasters, so we are rolling out the red carpet for the Gamecocks trying our best to make it feel like a "home" game for them. The LSU band will be playing the USC fight song, the USC hype video will be blaring in the stadium pregame and tailgating will be a joint effort this week. There will also be plenty of opportunities to acknowledge the tragic flooding and its victims and support them with donations to the Red Cross.

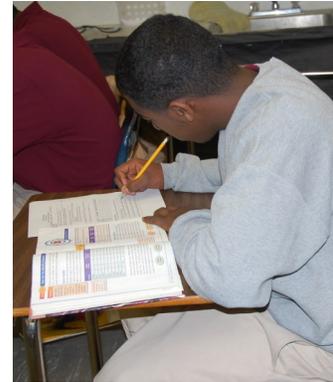
With that being said, I think the theme of my week is southern hospitality and I can truly say that in Louisiana we take hospitality to a whole new level. So far this week, I have been both a host and a guest; and I have enjoyed each equally.

I spent my Wednesday as a guest at Angola Penitentiary. Marjorie Brown, a longtime colleague was in Louisiana touring the campus with a group of correctional professionals and asked that I join in her group. Director of Health Services Denise Dandridge and I made the drive up to Angola and spent the day. As you know, many of the inmates at Angola are serving life sentences. It was good to see that despite facing a lifetime of incarceration, many of them have chosen to continue a rehabilitative path through spiritual and intellectual growth. Many use their skills so that they can serve as counselors, teachers, and mentors to fellow inmates. Warden Cain and his staff should be recognized for their creative programming and adoption of a culture that clearly values each person as a human being rather than an inmate number.

I closed out my week at Bridge City, where we once again played host to a national audience. The Casey Foundation and MYSI brought down a group of juvenile justice administrators from Virginia to spend two days studying our secure care model. As a state, Virginia is plagued with many of the problems that Louisiana faced years ago, namely a large secure care population that is being kept in large correctional facilities rather than therapeutic settings preparing young people for the future. Director Richards and his staff, along with members of the Executive Team welcomed the guests and spent time talking about our mission and core beliefs. Chef and the culinary arts students also fed them a really good lunch because in Louisiana hospitality equals food. As usual, the young people and staff stole the show displaying the hard work that they do every day in the dorms and school.

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
Whatsupdoc?
OJJ@la.gov