

# what's up doc?

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

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Hello, Everyone:

Walking through the halls this week at Central Office and someone has a sign on their door that says Christmas is 41 days away. Where did the year go? We are already almost half way through November.

A few months ago, I got an invitation to attend an event for the National Council of State Legislators in Austin, TX. All 50 states were invited to assemble their own teams to come together and focus on juvenile recidivism. It seemed so far into the future when I committed to it months ago. As it got closer the past couple of weeks, I questioned whether I had time in my busy schedule to go, but it turned in to one of those opportunities that I am glad I did not miss. COO Ellyn Toney and I were joined by Judge Patricia Koch and Representative Katrina Jackson for the event, along with juvenile justice partners from across the country.

This kind of event is invaluable to our mission. It forces attendees to step back from the daily grind and think about what is going on with our young people that is keeping them from being successful upon return to the community. We did not just discuss what OJJ does to meet the mission, but on ways that Louisiana's juvenile justice system can help young people succeed upon returning to their communities.

We came up with lots of ideas on how to focus our efforts, but most importantly, we also affirmed just how far we have come in serving Louisiana's young people.

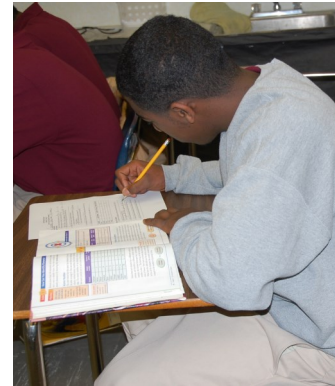
Jump forward to Thursday, and I again got the opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate our progress at Swanson's Celebration of Change. This time it was with the young people and staff who do the hard work of the therapeutic model every day. The annual Celebrations of Change are one of my favorite times of the year. As usual, RD Lewis, Director Robinson and the staff and young people at Swanson were great hosts putting on a great, positive celebration.

This year we recognized Representative Katrina Jackson as our 6<sup>th</sup> Champion of Change. Representative Jackson has always been an ardent supporter of young people, OJJ, her community, and state. She is truly an inspirational leader who recognizes the importance of understanding her constituent's concerns and spending the time to help solve big and little problems.

I also got to celebrate one of my favorite holiday's this week – Veteran's Day. I don't believe that we can thank our veterans and service members too much. I feel that as an agency we are privileged to have so many current and past members of the armed forces working beside us. Veteran's Day is also a good "teachable" holiday for the young people that we work with. The Swanson Youth Choir travelled up to Shreveport on Wednesday to perform songs saluting all five branches of the military. Caddo Parish Judicial Administrator Ted Cox helped to organize the veteran's recognition ceremony in Shreveport and so thoughtfully included the OJJ young people, knowing that they would make us all proud.

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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