

what's up doc?

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

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Hello, Everyone:

As you know, central office passed the ACA re-accreditation audit with flying colors. All that cleaning and filing paid off. Many, many thanks to Chief of Operations Ellyn Toney, ACA Accreditation Manager Angela Arabie and the CQIS staff, who quarterbacked the effort. This audit seemed to go a lot easier than in the past, because we are all experienced now in what needs to happen before the auditors arrive, and one of the big lessons is to always be audit-ready. It helps to have our files and work papers in order and organized all the time. We know where everything is, we can lay our hands on what we need whenever we need it, and we don't panic when audit time rolls around.

Thursday we camped out at the Capitol where the House heard testimony on HB1—the overall budget bill. We needed to make our case to restore the funding required to open Acadiana when it's complete next summer. At this point, the \$3.5 million and 124 positions that we need to open new facility are not included in our budget. Next step is to try to convince the Senate Finance Committee to restore the funding, or the brand new facility will sit vacant and unused. Though budget times are tough, we have to keep pushing for realizing the model of small regionalized facilities. We know that it is best for the youth and getting them home to be productive.

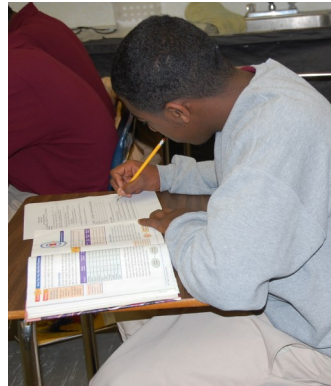
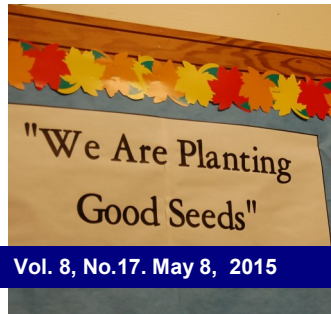
We have been in design meetings with the architects who are developing the plans for the new Jetson and Swanson facilities. The project is going well, but we have learned that it is a slow process. Don't look for new construction on the existing sites any time soon. But we have to begin somewhere and be ready to move forward once the funds are available.

I had the opportunity to address NAVSPIC—the National Association of Victim Service Professionals in Corrections—at its national conference in Baton Rouge this week. Although I was able to provide some insight what we are doing with restorative justice in the juvenile setting, my posse, as the conference chair called the Bridge City youth who accompanied me, stole the show. Seasoned speakers Oren R. and Reginald W. took the microphone and described their experiences at Bridge City and the LAMOD process. Oren got a standing ovation when he concluded that he did not know where he would be now if he had not been sent to Bridge City—maybe dead. And Reggie was applauded when he described his educational achievements at Bridge City, including being last year's valedictorian, earning certificates in Culinary Arts and C-Tech, AND taking college courses through distance learning. It's such a pleasure to watch our young people grow and thrive and to know that we have had a hand in helping them along the road to success. Meeting the mission...

Monday is Memorial Day and most of us will have the day off. Our facility staff will be on duty taking care of our kids and teaching them why we celebrate Memorial Day, the national holiday set aside to remember the service and sacrifices of veterans and current members of the military, and those who died in our nation's service. We need to remember a number of military people who lost their lives this year, including the four Army personnel whose helicopter went down in Florida not long ago. Please remember to let veterans know that you appreciate their service and sacrifice. As ever, I'd like to recognize the fighting men of the 487th bombers and WWII veteran George Livers – my Dad. Thanks, Dad, and your comrades -in-arms, for your service to our country.

And thanks to every member of Team OJJ for all you do in every office and on the front lines every day, to meet the mission. Enjoy that three-day weekend!

Sincerely,
"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*



Comments?
Send them to
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