

what's up doc?

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

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Hello, Everyone:

I guess the big news this week is the 10th Anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. President Obama and plenty of dignitaries have streamed into New Orleans to mark the anniversary. I bet the traffic in New Orleans has not been fun this week. There have been lots of forums discussing the progress (or in some instances, lack of progress) in the recovery of the city and its citizens.

As I read through the many articles this week on the topic, one in particular stood out to me. It discussed a group of New Orleans youth that were detained at Orleans Parish Prison during the storm and the efforts to reunite them with family members after the widespread evacuation of the city. It noted that by now these youth have aged out of the juvenile justice system, but raised a good point about youth currently in our system.

Many of the youth currently involved with juvenile justice suffered through life changing trauma as very young children. They either were first hand witnesses to the storm, possibly witnessing evacuations or displacement, shelter in place or even death or they hear the stories from the storm from their families and friends. I guess that it was fitting that we finished up our trauma informed care training in the Southeast region this week. The anniversary serves as a reminder that we should always be considerate of the past trauma on the youth we serve.

I know that the killing of two law enforcement officers has likely been on all of your minds this week. Anytime a fellow officer is killed in the line of duty, we are all reminded of the dangers involved with upholding public safety. I reached out on OJJ's behalf earlier in the week to Col. Mike Edmonson to officially express our condolences on the loss of Trooper Steven Vincent.

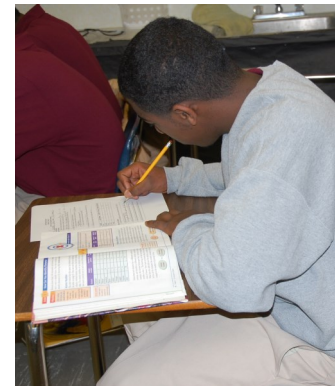
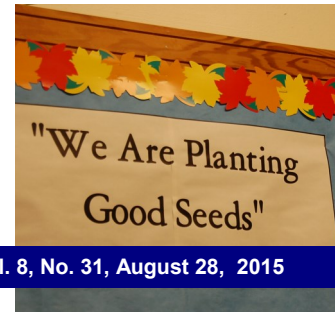
Sunday's tragedy was followed by the death of Sunset Police Officer Henry Nelson on Wednesday. Officer Nelson, like Trooper Vincent died on the job, while trying to help someone. Please keep both of these men and their families in your thoughts and prayers this weekend.

The leadership team came together on Thursday at the Picard Center in Bunkie. As always, we had a productive day getting caught up and planning for the future. The meeting also gave me the opportunity to stop by the construction site of the Acadiana Center for Youth. The facility is actually starting to look like something now. We have walls, ceilings, roofs, the beginning of parking lots. It is so exciting to watch the progress.

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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