

what's up doc?

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

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Hello, Everyone:

Another eventful week is closing at OJJ. I am just happy to be home and not in front of a microphone. I started my week off in sunny California at the ACA Winter Conference. This meeting was special for me because I am now officially the 104th President of ACA. My Monday started off with a speech in front of the largest crowd that I have ever addressed. I presented my platform (highlights below) to an audience of 800-900 fellow professionals. I was nervous, but I made it through the speech without buckling at the knees.

The speech gave me the opportunity to introduce some of the topics that the ACA will focus on in the next couple of years. Many of you are familiar with the fact that there are fewer inpatient treatment options for folks battling mental illness. This is true, not just in Louisiana, but across the country. The result is that more mentally ill people are ending up in correctional facilities. This is an issue that needs to be addressed on two fronts – finding ways to maintain treatment within the community and making sure that if they do end up in correctional facilities we are meeting their needs while providing safety.

ACA committees are setup to identify best practices or models and get them out to the rest of the field for adoption. Key to spreading best practice is the culture of agencies. Reform or change in practice is not possible if the agency culture is not invested in producing positive outcomes. For this reason, ACA will establish a new committee on culture that will find innovations to provide safe and healthy corrections culture.

More strongly tied to our work with juveniles, ACA will also look at two juvenile justice areas: restrictive housing and health authorities. Restrictive housing is an area that we need to take a lead on to assure that best practices are identified and implemented through our ACA standards. We also need to make sure that the best model for delivering health care to youth is being utilized. ACA has previously created a Coalition for Correctional Health Authorities for adult corrections, going forward this effort will be replicated for juvenile corrections.

As you all know, Swanson and Probation and Parole went through ACA audits last summer. The accreditation process was completed at the meeting in California where the commission on accreditation panel accepted our final report and officially accredited Swanson and Probation and Parole. Thanks to all of you who worked to make this happen. Next up for accreditation is central office, we are already beginning preparations for our audit in May.

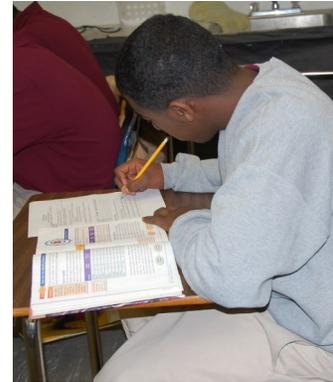
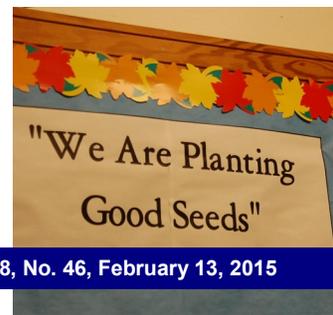
I returned to Louisiana to be put in front of a microphone yet again. The British Broadcasting Company, commonly referred to as the BBC, came to Bridge City to see the good work that we are doing with youth. Yep, we are now international! I did not have to do much talking. As usual, the staff and youth at Bridge City stole the show. The piece focused on education so we visited classrooms and wrapped up the visit with a visit to the culinary arts, Thanks Chef Sonnier! Sue Mitchell, the reporter from “across the pond” was very impressed with everything. Thanks to Bridge City for being such a good host!

Well we have a busy weekend ahead of us Valentine’s Day and Mardi Gras. I hear it is impossible to get a reservation at restaurants here in Baton Rouge if you don’t already have one. I am sure it is even worse in New Orleans. Please enjoy your time with family and friends this weekend and remember to be safe when celebrating.

Thanks for all you do, everyday, to meet our mission.

Sincerely,

“Doc” *Dr. Mary Livers*



Comments?
Send them to
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