

what's up doc?

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

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Hello, Everyone:

Monday was Memorial Day, so it was a short week. I always enjoy having a long weekend, but then we pay the price for that day of freedom by having to get a full week's work done in four days. We even had Senate Finance hearings today - and they met Monday—which is almost unheard of.

I want to keep all of you current on where we are with funding for Acadiana. HB1 has passed the House with an amendment to cut the \$3.5 million and 124 TO (positions) needed to open the facility. I believe there is some genuine confusion that taking away the funding and positions will only delay the opening by two months, and we have been working to clear up that misconception. Removal of the money and positions will cause a 10 month delay, so we would have a brand new, empty facility with no services being provided there to our youth. If we have to wait until the following fiscal year, we won't receive the money and positions until July 2016. We cannot begin hiring and training staff for the facility without the funds and people to do so. We are working to try to get the funds restored in the Senate budget. At least we will have a chance to get the funding through the conference committee.

We had some interesting visitors yesterday, thanks to the efforts of retired Judge Bob Downing and the Director of the Global Justice Program at Pepperdine University in California. A group of corrections professionals from Uganda is visiting Louisiana and they spent time at Angola and the Department of Corrections. I had the opportunity to give them an overview of juvenile justice in our state. "Judge Bob" worked with the Prison Fellowship and the local faith-based community to cover expenses for the visitors so they were able to come to Louisiana. We were so pleased to be able to showcase all we are doing in Louisiana.

We celebrated the upcoming retirement of a well-loved, longtime member of the central office staff with a lovely luncheon today. Program Manager Melba Oubre accepted the retirement incentive and will retire next week. She is sharing her wealth of knowledge with her replacement, Karli Pullard (formerly a program specialist in Lake Charles). Melba's husband, children and grandchild, and several friends and relatives attended. Food Service Director Zelma Jones prepared the beautiful spread of food and drink, with a gorgeous cake. Melba will be truly missed after 31 years of service, and we wish her the very best as she begins her new life.

Just by the way, in my quest to live better and get healthy, I have found that exercise can be dangerous to your health. I'm sort of hobbling around today after throwing my back out of whack after too much exercise.

Snakes alive! It's always snake season this time of year, but it's particularly dangerous this year with all the rain. Snakes are looking for higher, drier ground after all the rain, so we have to be careful when we step outside on the porch or patio. Chief of Operations Ellyn Toney, who lives in a rural subdivision, shared a photo of the serpent she encountered on her porch. It was a ginormous rat snake—non-poisonous but still very scary.

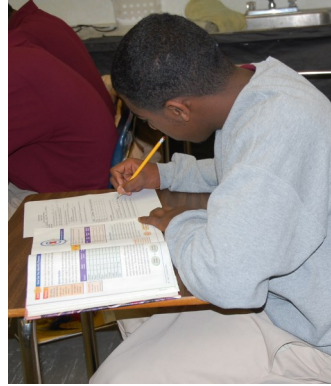
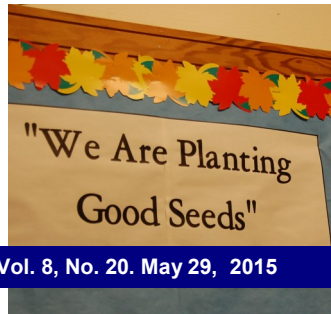
Speaking of rain, please keep our neighbors in Texas and Oklahoma in your thoughts and prayers as they deal with killer floods after recent torrential rains. Almost 30 people have lost their lives, hundreds have been stranded, several are missing and hundred of homes have been destroyed. .

The LSU Women's Softball team is at the Women's College World Series in Oklahoma City. They beat Auburn in a decisive victory and they will play Florida tonight. If all goes well, the ladies could win the Women's World Championship. Now that's something to pull for, with games all weekend.

LSU men's baseball is the SEC regular-season champion, and opened the NCAA Baton Rouge Regional today at LSU. The regional continues all weekend and may have to finish Monday. The Baton Rouge Regional winner will play the winner of the Houston Regional next weekend in the NCAA Super Regional series. Maybe we'll have two winners—men and women.

Wishing you all a great weekend, (and hope you can watch a few games) with my sincere thanks to every member of the OJJ team, wherever you are, for all you do every day, to meet the mission.

Sincerely, "Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*



Comments?
Send them to
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