

what's up doc?

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

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Hello, Everyone:

The legislative session closed last evening, and mercifully, the budget drama is over for a while. I'd say it's over for a year, but we are very likely to have a special session after a new governor is elected due to projected revenue shortfalls. We came out of the session with the resources we need to open Acadiana next year. The funds and TO were put back into HB1 by the Senate and we were still there at 6 p.m. yesterday when the closing bell rang. So, barring anything truly unforeseen, we will have the money and the TO authority to begin hiring and training staff to get the facility open next May.

I was very pleased to be invited to participate in a PREA Collaborator and Subject Matter Expert Meeting in Pennsylvania this week. It was hosted by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, funded by a Bureau of Justice Assistance PREA Demonstration Grant, and facilitated by The Moss Group. National experts in the area of women working in male facilities came together to address some of the unique challenges facing women working in corrections. It is good to share the challenges we all face, and to keep abreast of the best practices that will help our staff maintain fidelity to our mission.

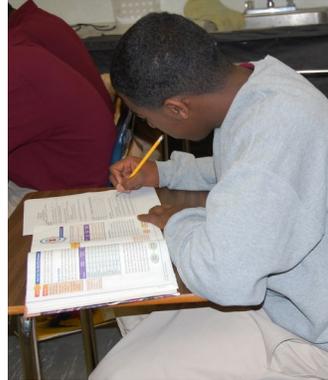
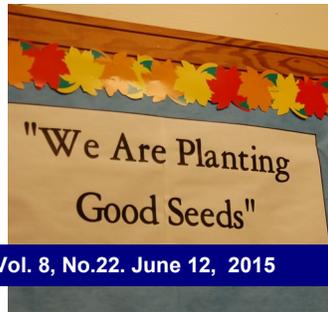
As soon as I returned from Pennsylvania, I rushed off to Swanson to attend graduation. I enjoy the graduation ceremonies as much as the young people, and I always get a little emotional seeing the pride they display as they accept their diplomas. We celebrated 19 graduates, (although only 9 were present, as 10 have already gone home). Our staff who worked so hard to get to them to their goal, and their supportive parents came out to see them "walk" and accept their diplomas. Our keynote speaker was DA John F.K. Belton, of the 3rd Judicial District (Lincoln and Union Parishes), who gave our graduates words of wisdom and encouragement. Another inspiring speaker was a Monroe businessman, Lewis D. Jones, who is a community leader. A job well done, everyone!

Not long ago I asked that we think about our Texas and Oklahoma neighbors as they dealt with horrific floods. Unfortunately, now it's Louisiana's turn, as the Red River that runs through northwest Louisiana on its way to merge with the Mississippi is at the highest levels in seven decades. Hundreds of homes in the Shreveport area, agricultural lands and roadways in Red River and Natchitoches Parishes are under water with homes being threatened or already flooded, and Rapides Parish and Alexandria are next on the itinerary, and the river has not crested there yet. The governor declared a state of emergency this week and activated National Guard troops to assist people in the flood zone. I hope all of you are safe and your homes and property are not affected.

Big question here—is your team leading in the NBA finals? It's the Golden State Warriors or the Cleveland Cavaliers— and the end is near! I hope you get some TV time this weekend—it's supposed to rain almost all weekend, all over the state. Let's hope the rain does not swell the Red any more than it already is.

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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