

what's up doc?

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

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Hello, Everyone:

After the session we expected a little quiet, at least for a few days—but—what a week! There's been a lot going on.

Well, the season's first tropical storm (that acted a lot like a hurricane) barreled into south Texas just two weeks into the hurricane season. After the torrential rains and flood Texas has just experienced, another foot of rain was not welcome. TS Bill ran over Texas, downgraded to a depression, and jogged east to pound Oklahoma and Arkansas, on the way to the Midwest, and it looks like he's headed for the east coast and northeast. Southwest Louisiana was largely spared the effects of the bad weather, with some rain and high tides, but we really dodged that bullet. The weather people are predicting "catastrophic" flooding in many places throughout the country as the "depression" pushes east. I loved one of the comments on a news story: "California: take Bill. Really. Please." If only.....

We are really starting to feel the effect of those retirements, as Undersecretary Connie Percell rides off into the sunset. Connie's last day was Thursday, and let me emphasize, she WILL be missed. Connie had the tough job of dealing with shrinking budgets and staff, and helping us figure out how to continue to deliver high quality services to the youth in our care and custody in a time of dwindling resources. She handled it all with grace and good humor. So, after some 30 years as a dedicated public servant, Connie goes home to take care of her husband and granddaughter (with another grandchild on the way). Many thanks to Connie, and we wish her only the best as she begins this well-deserved chapter in her life.

Our nation has just experienced yet another tragic case of mass murder, this time in the beautiful city of Charleston, where a young man who must certainly have a substance abuse and/or a mental health issue murdered 9 people in a church. As a nation, when are we going address our huge problem with where mental health problems intersect with public safety? There are just not enough resources to provide the care needed for people with mental health needs. Nine of us lost our lives to someone who surely needed services, possessed a hateful agenda and the means to do harm, and we are all affected. We must stand together as communities, churches and neighbors, in this time of grief and healing. We stand with our neighbors in Charleston to mourn the loss of 9 people who had gathered in faith.

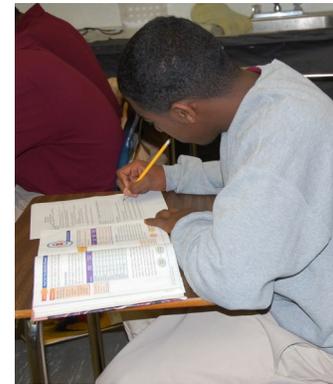
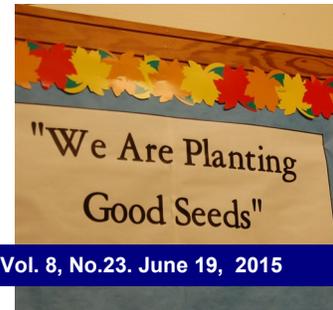
On a brighter note, we met this week with the architects for a preliminary program review, meaning the basic design, for the new campuses at Jetson and Swanson. The next step is for the designers to evaluate the cost of the proposed plans and look at revisions to fit within the construction budgets. It's a very slow process, but we are taking it step by step and we'll be proud of the final outcome....which is several years down the road.

Father's Day is this Sunday, and I hope that all you will be able to spend some time, even if it's just a phone call, with your father or the father figures in your life. I want to wish all of the fathers and grandfathers who are members of Team OJJ a wonderful Father's Day, especially those of you who will be working with our OJJ kids. Some young people will be missing their dads, and sometimes a staff member could be their only father figure. A huge **Happy Father's Day to my dad, George Livers.** (He always reads WUD.) I am so fortunate to have him as my father.

I hope you will all have a great weekend (and once again, Happy Father's Day to our OJJ dads and grand-dads), with my heartfelt thanks to every member of the team, wherever you serve, for all you do every day and everywhere, to meet the mission.

Sincerely,

"Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*



Comments?
Send them to
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