

what's up doc?

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

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Hello, Everyone:

It's been another busy week with several really good meetings and visits. Tuesday we were honored with a visit to Bridge City from another Briton studying the issue of detention of youth with challenging and/or criminal behavior. (You may remember that a BBC radio producer visited Bridge City in February and interviewed youth and staff for a documentary on secure care practices.) Dr. Di Hart is a consultant in children's services in Great Britain, and she is the recipient of a Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Travelling Fellowship for overseas research. Dr. Hart visited Bridge City, one of several facilities she is visiting in the U.S. She is also visiting Finland and Spain as part of her research. She was impressed with the campus and the youth and staff she was able to visit. I'm impressed that we are getting worldwide attention for the good work we are doing with our young people.

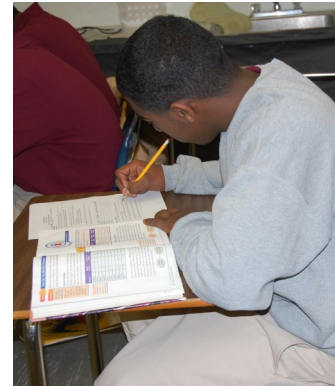
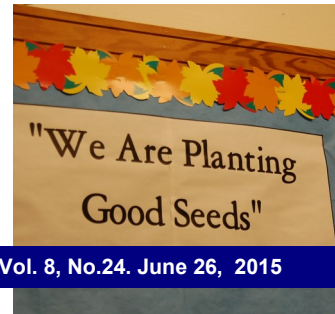
Tuesday and Wednesday we had training sessions in Lafayette that are the starting point of a very important initiative for the agency. Trauma-informed care and services is on the cutting-edge of research into effective identification of symptoms and treatment of juvenile justice- and mental health-involved young people. DHH received a SAMHSA grant for training on trauma-informed care, and invited OJJ to take part. We are training staff throughout the agency and will participate in sessions around the state to ensure that all staff receive the initial training at the appropriate level. Research shows that 70 percent of adults and over 90 percent of public behavioral health clients have experienced trauma. Learning to identify the symptoms and avoiding re-traumatization are very important as we work with our young people. The trainer was Laura Riddle, LMFT and Trauma-Informed Trainer, who has been a front-line practitioner. She noted that occupational hazards for staff can affect us as we care for our youth, including compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma, trauma exposure response and burnout. Look for more information on "T-I" in the next few weeks.

Today we participated in our semi-annual judges' meeting—the LA Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges' Joint Department Liaison Committee meeting. Long name, but it gives the child-serving agencies (OJJ, DOE, DHH and DCFS) an opportunity to meet with the judges and staff to update one another on important issues that affect the agencies and the children and families we serve. We provided information about our goals and priorities for the new fiscal year that starts July 1, and an update on the progress of construction of Acadiana Center for Youth and how that relates to the regionalization of secure care services required by Act 1225. Another issue we found very interesting was discussion about changes in the Behavioral Health Partnership's delivery of services to both children and adults. Many changes in service delivery will be coming as the behavioral health component is rolled into the Bayou Health plans as the Magellan contract winds down. We will keep you posted as the details become available. More change...what can I say?

There has been a huge amount of news time focused on the escape of two murderers from a "supermax" prison in New York, who are still on the run after almost three weeks. As information comes out about how the escape took place, it is very obvious that security and safety practices were routinely ignored at the prison. This is a good reminder to always practice eyes-on;ears-on supervision, and always follow our established procedures— every hour of every day—to maintain the safety of our staff and youth, as well as the public.

Next week we celebrate the 4th of July, on Saturday. So, many of us will have a holiday next Friday, meaning a short week, and no WUD. I'll wish you all, in every office and facility, two great weekends, and a safe and happy Independence Day now, with my sincere thanks for all you do, every day, to meet the mission. Have fun and be safe.

Sincerely, "Doc" *Dr. Mary Livers*



Comments?
Send them to
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