



Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice
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NEWS RELEASE
EMBARGO UNTIL NOON, MAY 24, 2103

FOR RELEASE May 24, 2013

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OJJ Opens Swanson Center for Youth at Columbia

Columbia, LA - The Columbia area welcomes a new friend in a familiar setting, as the Louisiana Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) opens a secure care facility for delinquent juvenile males on the site of the former DHH/Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities' Columbia Community Residential and Employment Services (CCRES).

The new facility is Swanson Center for Youth at Columbia (SCYC), a satellite facility of Swanson Center for Youth in Monroe. Another familiar friend is Columbia native SCYC Deputy Director Kim Rushing, who will be responsible for daily operations, while Swanson-Monroe Director R. Vickie Shoecraft will have oversight.

CCRES originally housed residents with developmental disabilities, and served day clients with vocational programming. In 2005, DHH began to comply with the Congressional mandate that individuals with developmental disabilities receive residential services in community-based, rather than institutional settings. All clients were transitioned to community-based care with private providers several years ago, and the facility was closed. The property was transferred from DHH to OJJ in 2010 for use as a secure care center for youth.

The new OJJ facility houses 40 youth and 68 employees, who moved from Swanson Center for Youth in Monroe to the Columbia facility after renovations to the 10-acre campus were completed. SCYC will provide a therapeutic, secure setting where youth will receive treatment services and rehabilitation, utilizing the nationally-acclaimed Louisiana model of therapeutic secure care. SCYC's on-site, state-approved Pinehill Alternative School, will provide educational opportunities for the resident youth, including academic instruction and life skills training. Daily therapeutic groups will address identified needs, such as anger management and substance abuse.

"As part of a systemic reform of Louisiana's juvenile justice system that began a decade ago, OJJ's goal is to open small, regional facilities for our adjudicated youth population, as we move away from the previous system of large, institutionalized corrections facilities," said OJJ Deputy Secretary Dr. Mary L. Livers. "Today OJJ provides youth with treatment and rehabilitation services closer to their homes, to enhance family involvement in their treatment and to allow youth to maintain ties with the community to which they will return. We are extremely pleased to become a part of the Columbia community as we open this new, regional facility to serve area at-risk youth."

OJJ serves youth who have been adjudicated delinquent or Families in Need of Services (FINS). The agency is responsible for youth assigned to its care and custody by the court system, either for probation supervision, or custody in residential placement or secure care.

For more information about OJJ, please visit our website at www.OJJ.LA.GOV.

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