



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

July 14, 2020

To the Families and Loved Ones of the Youth in our Care:

It was just four months ago that Florida announced the first two positive cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). And with those first two positive cases came a dramatic shift in everyday life as we know it. I know many of you are experiencing a lot of uncertainty and struggles, and on top of that, you must also deal with having your son or daughter not at home, but away inside a juvenile detention center or residential program. As a mother, I cannot imagine how difficult this must be. Please know, we are doing all that we can to keep your child, our staff, and our communities safe.

Our team is working hard to ensure that your child continues to receive necessary services, including the very best medical care. Our facilities are equipped with continuous supplies of personal protection equipment and each facility employs a team of medical professionals that are able to deal with COVID-19 and any other medical issues that might arise. DJJ facilities are also working together with local health departments on how to best care for youth who have tested positive for COVID-19 and to determine the source of the infection and who else might have been exposed. We continue to take necessary precautions including supplying masks for staff and youth in all facilities, making hand sanitizer readily available, and practicing social distancing when possible. Educating youth about the virus and how not to spread it is also an important part of the ongoing discussions we have inside our facilities.

The safety of your child will always be our top priority. You are a part of our team, so if there is anything that you are worried about, please reach out to us directly and let us know so we can address these concerns. You can reach out to our Office of Youth and Family Advocacy via telephone at 1-866-757-0634 or by email at oyfahelpline@djj.state.fl.us. Please stay connected with your child and offer your support and encouragement, and we will continue to offer our support to you as well.

I know we are all looking forward to the day when we no longer have to deal with COVID-19, but rest assured that until that day comes, the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice will continue to fight with everything we have to protect the youth in our care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Simone Marstiller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Simone Marstiller

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Ron DeSantis, Governor

Simone Marstiller, Secretary

The mission of the Department of Juvenile Justice is to increase public safety by reducing juvenile delinquency through effective prevention, intervention, and treatment services that strengthen families and turn around the lives of troubled youth.