



## **Director's Message**

January 14, 2011

Dear Colleagues,

Monday, this nation honors the life of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a man who dedicated himself to creating a just, fair and equitable society for all of us.

In response to a world that resisted his message of change – sometimes violently – it would have been easy for him to meet violence with violence. But he did not. He preached and practiced a doctrine of nonviolent change. He worked to bring opposing points of view together, and he promoted the idea that people could learn from each other and move together toward a peaceful, productive solution.

Given the events in Arizona this past week, Dr. King's message is just as important today as it was 50 years ago. And, as President Obama suggested in his memorial speech a few days ago, the best response we can make in the aftermath of this violent tragedy is to reflect on how we can do better in the future, how we can encourage and support peaceful resolutions to conflict, and how we can better value each other and the diverse backgrounds and viewpoints we hold.

For those of us at OYA, that message resonates strongly. For the past year and a half we have been engaging in conversations within this agency about what it means to be juvenile justice professionals, including how we treat one another and how we role model for youth. We have worked together to create and confirm the core values that guide us – integrity, professionalism, accountability and respect – and we have discussed what it means for us to infuse those values into the work we do and the decisions we make.

We must remain mindful of how we interact every day with each other, and in particular we must be aware of the behaviors and attitudes we model for the youth in our care and custody. Our core mission is to protect public safety, and we do that well. We also have an obligation to provide the youth we manage with safe and respectful environments, and to reform their thinking and help them grow in a healthy way from adolescence into adulthood.

Your work makes a difference, and the services Oregon offers its at-risk youth make a difference. As this nation celebrates Martin Luther King Day, whether you are working or have the day off, the holiday offers a poignant reminder of the significant impact your work has on youths' lives and the greater public good. Day by day, youth by youth, you are creating a safer, more peaceful world.

Thank you for all that you do.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Colette S. Peters". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the top.

Colette S. Peters  
Director

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fariborz Pakseresht". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

Fariborz Pakseresht  
Deputy Director

**INTEGRITY \* PROFESSIONALISM**  
**\* ACCOUNTABILITY \* RESPECT \***