

OYA Director's Message

July 20, 2009

I begin today as director of the Oregon Youth Authority and want to take a moment to introduce myself. I am grateful the Governor has given me this opportunity, and I am honored to serve in this capacity as I join this vital organization.

My lifetime dedication as a public servant and passion for public safety began 17 years ago while working in juvenile corrections. I am thrilled my career is coming full-circle and that I am given this opportunity to assist in breaking the cycle of criminality early on, while preventing future victims and future adult criminals.

Along the way, I have worked in many facets of the criminal justice arena and have seen the system from many different points of view. Through those viewpoints, I understand and appreciate the complexities of juvenile justice and its need to work collaboratively within the integrated and interdependent public safety system. Within that, OYA's mission is unique and of utmost importance to the successful operation of Oregon's public safety system.

I am thrilled to serve you. From afar, and up-close as of late, I have seen what the Oregon Youth Authority is: a group of dedicated professionals who come to work every day, often putting their safety on the line, to keep the public safe and hold youth accountable while passionately changing the lives of those youth – one child at a time.

I will build on my relationships in Oregon to share OYA's story and to further build the agency's reputation. I will work hard to further the support you receive from our communities, the Legislature, our stakeholders, and the public. I intend to be a leader who operates in an ethical way, who communicates in an open, honest, and transparent fashion, and one who genuinely cares about you, the individuals carrying out the mission of this organization, and about the public you keep safe and the youth you hold accountable and work to reform.

OYA has a long history within Oregon's public safety system with strong traditions and many successes. I also recognize that OYA has recently experienced trials and tribulations, and I understand the importance of those issues. Most importantly, I want you all to know that while I understand, appreciate, and respect the department's past and present, I am very excited to focus on the future. I want to spend our time and energy determining what lies ahead. I want to consider how we can work more efficiently, to discover how we can lead Oregon in progressive and innovative ways to break the cycle of criminality, all of which add up to fewer victims and fewer adult criminals. As we look ahead, we honor all who came before us and helped shape OYA into the organization it is

today. Specifically, I am grateful to Bobby Mink and the Director's Cabinet for their stewardship of this organization over the last nine months. I come at a great time to help move the organization forward with a fine team at my side.

Presently, Oregon is facing hard economic times and these times are directly affecting OYA; we are being asked to do more with less. Knowing what I know of this department, I am confident we will do that well. I am confident that the economy will recover and Oregon will bounce back. Because of who you are, OYA will be better for the struggle.

As we face these challenges, I will begin my career with OYA by traveling throughout the state meeting as much of the agency's staff and its partners as possible during a concentrated period of time. The first time you see me will not be the last; I intend to be a visible and engaged leader, and I look forward to speaking with you and learning from you.

Last but not least, I am delighted to share with you that Fariborz Pakseresht has agreed to stay at OYA as deputy director. We have met personally and spoken frequently over the past few weeks, and I know he will continue to be an asset to this organization. He comes to the table with more than 19 years tenure and a wealth of experience in state government. Before coming to OYA last fall, Fariborz was the assistant director for Administrative Services at the Department of Human Services (DHS) and later led the DHS Transformation Initiative, a very ambitious project to help the agency become a more effective and efficient organization.

While leading with a kind, gentle and firm demeanor that complements his keen and astute intellect, Fariborz openly comes to the table with a passion to change the lives of youth and to serve an organization to which he has grown quite attached. As deputy director, Fariborz will continue his personal involvement working closely with the staff to identify opportunities for improvement that will ultimately help us achieve better outcomes. Please help me in officially welcoming Fariborz as deputy director of OYA.

Again, I look forward to meeting you in the coming weeks, and I am excited to work together to shape the future of OYA.

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 end.

Colette S. Peters