

LOWER SUSQUEHANNA DIAKON CONNECTION

Essential Connections

New program helps children with emotional transitions

Diakon Adoption & Foster Care has partnered with **Diakon Family Life Services** to create a counseling program for children in out-of-home placements dealing with emotions brought on by all the significant changes in their lives.

Known as Essential Connections, the program combines traditional therapy with a "child-preparation" program.

"We wanted this program to be focused on the child and his or her needs as far as grief, loss, and attachment," says Suzanne Piccolo, director of the York office of Diakon Adoption & Foster Care.

"Our kids' ... grief, loss, and attachment issues make them unique," she explains. "Until now, most therapy focused on behavioral issues and what had happened recently in the foster home. It hardly ever dealt with what the child had really been through."

What makes Essential Connections also unique is that one person—a master's level clinician—completes all therapy and child-preparation services.

Family Life Services therapists in Williamsport, Topton, and Mechanicsburg provide the service, coordinated by Cheryl Drake of Diakon Adoption & Foster Care's York office.



In addition, a Diakon case manager searches county records and contacts foster, adoptive, and birth parents to develop a child profile.

"That is done before the child-preparation sessions start," says Piccolo, "so that the therapists have the advantage of that information," as they help transition the children to permanency—returning home, remaining with a relative or foster parent, living independently, or being adopted.

FALL-WINTER 2005-2006

- Cumberland Crossings, Carlisle**
- Diakon Adoption & Foster Care**
- Diakon Family Life Services**
- Diakon Youth Center**
- Diakon Youth Services**
- Frey Village, Middletown**
- Senior Centers (Cumberland County)**
- Volunteer Home Care, Northern Dauphin County**



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Television personality and chef Art Ginsburg, also known as Mr. Food, left, confers with Diakon's "chef," the Rev. Daun E. McKee, Ph.D., president/CEO. Mr. Food was the featured speaker at Dining with Diakon, a unique event at which celebrity chefs from throughout central Pennsylvania raised funds to support Diakon's regional ministries. The second Dining with Diakon, with even more guest chefs, including celebrity chef Brian Kent, will be held April 20, 2006. For more information, readers may contact Diakon's Office of Advancement at 1-877-DIAKON-7.



Mission: In response to God's love in Jesus Christ, Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries will demonstrate God's command to love the neighbor through acts of service.

Diakon serves some 70,000 persons annually in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Delaware through adoption, foster care, counseling, retirement communities, volunteer home care, congregational ministries, hospice services, and more.

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Frey Village residents help boy aid others

Frey Village residents played an important role earlier this year in helping a seven-year-old boy reach out to soldiers overseas.

Drew Zimmerman, great-grandson of resident Florence Laudermilch, couldn't have been more excited when he learned that members of the 193rd Operational Wing of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard were going to visit Reid Elementary School in Middletown. The first-grader's school planned to collect items for care packages to be delivered to troops in places such as Iraq.

"Drew was really excited because for the first time, he could do something big, when he was still just little," says his mother, Teresa Zimmerman. "Right away he wanted to ask different churches and businesses for donations."

With only one week in which to pull everything together, Drew went to work listing places he wanted to approach and enlisting the help of his family. "It was interesting, as his family, to watch this little mind open up and go. There were so many things going through his mind," Zimmerman says. "He was determined that he was going to help somebody somehow."

Drew collected reading materials, writing paper, notes and cards, anything that would



Frey Village residents Nancy Stouffer, left front, Grace Demy, right front, and, back left to right, staff member Heidi Murray, village activities director, and residents Amy Berger, Gertrude Bryant, and Pat Ingersoll, gather around Drew Zimmerman, whom they helped collect care-package items.

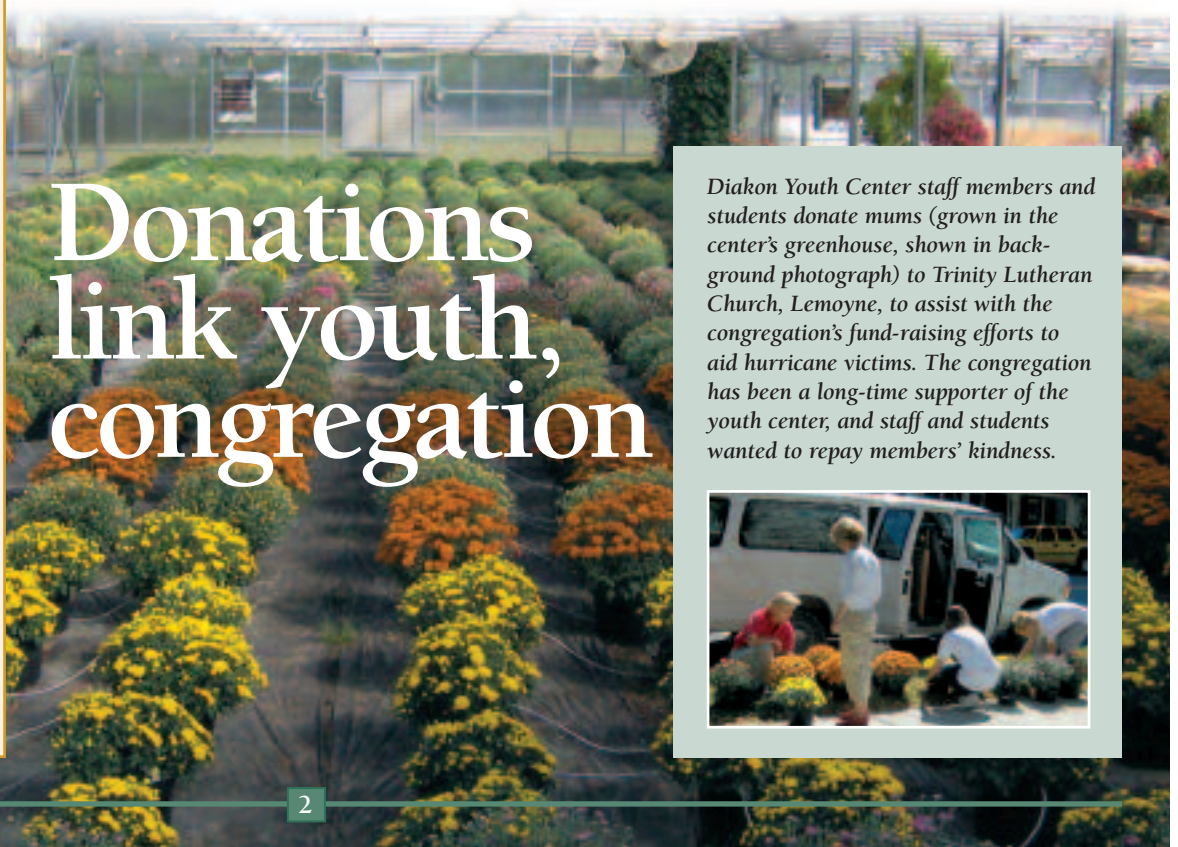
make useful gifts for troops. Frey Village residents contributed such items as reading material, gum, hard candies, writing paper, pens, and tablets.

"Frey Village was wonderful because people were really behind it," recalls Zimmerman. "People were really considerate of the needs of the troops. For that reason we thought many of them probably had served or knew someone who had served."

When it came time for Guard members to load items onto trucks at the end of the drive, Drew was excited that they asked for his help.

"He kept saying, 'It's not about me. It's all about you guys,'" says his mom. "He caught on real early that it was not about him, but about spreading the love of Jesus."

Donations link youth, congregation



Diakon Youth Center staff members and students donate mums (grown in the center's greenhouse, shown in background photograph) to Trinity Lutheran Church, Lemoyne, to assist with the congregation's fund-raising efforts to aid hurricane victims. The congregation has been a long-time supporter of the youth center, and staff and students wanted to repay members' kindness.



Family Life Services partners with United Methodist Church

When an area career-testing service for clergy went out of business, *Family Life Services – Capital Region* staff members knew they could help.

Thanks to relationships built by Carenda Baker, outpatient therapist and congregational ministries coordinator, Family Life Services now contracts with the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church to provide the service.

The church “recognizes clergy come to a point in their ministry when things may not be going well in their congregation for one reason or another,” says Baker. “Sometimes it is conflict. It may be personality issues. Sometimes it is a matter of effectiveness.”

At that point, the church turns to profes-

sionals to help pinpoint the issues. “We give them six different tests that look at vocational interests, leadership style, mental health concerns, ability to handle conflict, personality inventory, and anger inventory,” says Anne Leedy, Family Life Services director. “We compile all the data into a lengthy report and review it with the pastor and also provide a copy to the conference leaders who have recommended the evaluation.”

The vocational assessment benefits the conference, says Baker.

“All of us are sensitive to issues of spirituality that would factor in here, as well as issues of goodness-of-fit with career,” she says. “Anything we can do to help strengthen clergy and churches is part of what we see as our mission.”

Residents serve as video test group

Frey Village residents played an important role in the development of a relaxation video.

Sandy McNaughton, daughter of resident Sara Hipple, enlisted their help to serve as a test group for her video, “At Water’s Edge.” Twenty-four residents completed a before- and after-survey meant to gauge the effect the video had on them.

“Ninety-two percent of them reacted positively,” says McNaughton, a retired nurse.

“I also learned that this age group enjoys big band, classical, and gospel music.”

Although the video features New Age music as the backdrop for six five-minute segments of waterside scenery, she plans to use her findings in developing new productions.

“My intent is to capture scenes in nature, put them to music that is relaxing and soothing, and bring [the experience] to people who are ill or confined as a way to enhance a healing environment,” she says.

She is confident there is a market for such videos among hospices, nursing care centers, and hospitals. “People are used to using music for relaxation, but this is a new concept of combining it with nature. I’m amazed that it is not being used more.”

WISH LIST

If you or your congregation are able to donate any of these items or provide funding for their purchase, please contact Diakon’s Office of Advancement at 1-877-DIAKON-7, ext. 1219. Thank you!

Diakon Adoption & Foster Care

- Gift cards to purchase clothing and personal care items for children
- Gift cards to restaurants children enjoy
- Books – “A Child’s Journey Through Placement” and “Adopting the Hurt Child”
- Stickers, gel pens for kids
- Gift cards for bookstores (to purchase books for children)

Mechanicsburg Area Senior Center

- New flooring in men’s room
- Upholstered desk chairs with wheels
- Overhead projector computer attachment

Cumberland Crossings

- New piano
- Pool lift
- Clock-style companion radios for resident rooms
- Memory boxes for every resident room
- Height-adjustable TV trays
- Wardrobe for donated clothing

Diakon Family Life Services – Capital Region

- DVD player and TV combo for children to watch videos while parents are in therapy
- Appropriate DVDs for kids
- Gift certificates for play therapy supplies—arts and crafts items

Frey Village

- Donations for Frey Village Courtyard Campaign
- Resident maxi lift
- Nursing treatment carts

Diakon Youth Center (formerly TresslerCare Wilderness Center)

- Winter Wiggy sleeping bag systems
- Henry backpack from Stryker
- Polypropylene long underwear
- Gift cards to department stores to purchase clothing and personal care items for youth
- Full-size beds with mattress/box springs
- AAA mini-mag flashlights with Jac strap accessories to wear them as head lamps

Volunteer Home Care/Northern Dauphin & Schuylkill counties

- Volunteers to assist with transportation to medical appointments

Pennsylvania Rep. Jerry L. Nailor (R-88), left, talks with the Rev. Daun E. McKee, Ph.D., Diakon president/CEO, during Diakon’s annual legislative breakfast, held in the state Capitol. The event provides an opportunity for Diakon staff members to talk with lawmakers about issues of concern to health care and social service organizations. This year, the event was expanded, through Lutheran Services in America-PA, to include representatives of Lutheran social ministry organizations from across the Commonwealth. Numerous representatives and senators spoke with the agencies’ staff members.



Family Life Services

Susquenita counseling program serves children and youths right in their school

Vicki Delellis, Susquenita Elementary School guidance counselor, had been hoping for an on-site counseling office for more than a decade. Her wish finally came true, thanks partly to **Diakon Family Life Services – Capital Region**.

“I guess it was the right time and the right mix of people,” says Delellis, who first discussed the idea with Erin Sanno from Cumberland Perry CASSP—Children in Adolescence Service System Program. The school is located in rural Perry County, sometimes making it

difficult for parents to transport children to counseling appointments.

Sanno had worked with Family Life Services and felt comfortable the program could deliver what was needed. “I’ve had really good experiences. The quality of all their workers is excellent,” she says.

Sanno and Delellis received school approval. The one concern from Family Life Services was that there would not be enough need. “We assured them there would be,” says Delellis

In fact, the need was so great that

therapists assigned to Susquenita went from planning a half-day a week to scheduling a full day before last year’s school session even began and expanding that by an additional day this fall.

Parents love the on-site service, says Delellis. “For those who work in the Harrisburg or West Shore areas, they were missing at least a half-day of work” to transport children to counseling. Family Life Services “has definitely helped some students” who otherwise would not have been served.

In Memoriam

The following regional memorial gifts were received between Jan. 1 through Oct. 21, 2005. Diakon programs in the Lower Susquehanna Synod thank these donors for their generous contributions.

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