

FAMILY CONNECTIONS



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WAITING CHILDREN FIND THEIR VOICES

Until recently, older children available for adoption had little ability to participate in the process of finding their own “forever” family.

That situation changed recently, thanks to the dedication of Diakon Adoption & Foster Care staff.

Waiting children represented by child-specific recruitment—or CSR—caseworkers are typically those who have been most victimized by abuse or neglect or who have spent years in the child-welfare system. They have many special needs best met by the permanency found within a “forever family.”

The challenge for CSR caseworkers, however, is to present the children to waiting families in ways that successfully show who the children are and what they offer a family. This group of youths ages 10 and over traditionally has been considered the most challenging for whom to recruit because of the small number of potential families willing to adopt older children.

At the same time, this group lends itself well to Diakon’s variation of CSR—“child-focused recruitment”—a process allowing children to be team

members in the recruitment process recently championed by Elisa Esh, Diakon Adoption & Foster Care’s director of recruitment and family development and facilitator of the Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network’s (SWAN) Older Child Matching Initiative.

Ever an advocate for youth empowerment, Esh approached SWAN with the idea of having youths participate in quarterly “Matching Moment” meetings by presenting themselves alongside adoption and children’s services staff.

Partnering with Bethanna and Project STAR, Diakon Adoption & Foster Care now facilitates this initiative, enabling the most vulnerable children in the child-welfare system to express their needs and be active participants in the search for a forever family.

The effort resulted in the first time in SWAN history that children were the “stars of their own show” ...

Northeast Region

The first youth to provide a Matching Moment presentation was Kimberly from the northeast region of

Pennsylvania. She spoke at the Wilkes-Barre quarterly meeting on Oct. 2.

“When

Kimberly and I first talked about whether or not she would like to open her heart to a room full of strangers, she was nervous, but was also surprised, excited, and proud,” says Angie Gillen, Northeast CFR recruiter of the SWAN Older Child Matching Initiative. “She was thrilled that I believed in her enough to choose her to stand in front of my colleagues and speak. Kimberly did a marvelous job presenting a touching poem she wrote about herself, and participating in a celebrity interview.”



Kimberly

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HELP US FIND FOREVER FAMILIES



Chad, age 14

Chad, a friendly and personable 14-year-old boy, is hoping for his own forever family. He loves to laugh and have fun and would like his family to be nice, friendly, and give him plenty of attention. He hopes to have a family that enjoys doing things together, and although Chad likes to be active, he also would love to spend family-time at home just hanging out and watching movies.

Chad's favorite activities include going to parks, fishing, playing and watching football, camping, going to the mall, playing basketball, and watching movies. Chad is a big fan of Spongebob Squarepants, as well as hip-hop and rap music.

Chad will need a patient and calm family that can provide him with structure and supervision. To learn more about Chad, please contact Angie Gillen, child-focused recruitment specialist, SWAN Older Children Matching Initiative, at Diakon Adoption & Foster Care, (484) 300-2074 or gillena@diakon.org.

Marcus, age 15

Marcus, 15, believes that his best qualities are that he is adventurous, smart, and energetic. Currently a Boy Scout, he likes to camp, fish, swim, and play video and board games. He likes to both watch and play football, and he hopes to become part of a family of Steelers fans!

Marcus does not like to clean, but realizes that he must do chores to help out, and prefers to do the dishes. He doesn't like asparagus or Brussels sprouts, but will eat pretty much anything else. He especially loves seafood—lobster, crab, and even caviar.

Some day Marcus would like to try sky diving, and he aspires to go to Tokyo to see the car races there. He knows that he needs to work on his acceptance of criticism as well as his tendency to act older than he really is.

Marcus would do fine with siblings or as an only child, and



with one or two parents. For more information on Marcus, please contact Bethany Leas at (412) 244-3075 or ble@the-institute.org.

Ryan, age 13

Ryan is a handsome and energetic 13-year-old. His favorite activities include playing cards, riding his bike, reading, playing video games, watching movies, swimming, and playing basketball and football. Ryan also enjoys completing art projects in school and doing word-search puzzles.



Ryan has been in the foster-care system for a very long time and has experienced a great deal of loss and trauma. He has been through many failed placements and desperately deserves a permanent home.

Ryan is looking for a family that will be understanding of his special needs and that will provide him with unconditional love and support. All families will be considered.

For more information on Ryan, please contact Liz White at (717) 795-0479 or whitee@diakon.org.



Sandra, age 15

Sandra is a beautiful, 15-year-old young lady who describes herself as funny and smart. She is usually talkative, especially when she feels comfortable with those she is with. What she likes most about herself is her emotional strength and that she does not easily have her feelings hurt.

Sandra loves school and learning, and enjoys hanging out with her friends at school. Her favorite subjects are math and science, and she usually receives As and Bs on her report card. Her goal is to finish high school and continue on to college to become a lawyer.

Activities that Sandra enjoys include reading, watching television, talking on the phone, and taking pictures and enhancing them on the computer.

Sandra would like her family to be supportive, loving, and caring. She also desires an intelligent family that will encourage her with her academics. She would prefer to remain in Pennsylvania to stay in contact with her siblings. She is open

to having new siblings; however, she would prefer not to have more than three. She also prefers a family without dogs.

For more information about Sandra, please contact her CFR, Karen Knodel, at (215) 355-6500, ext.193, or kknodel@bethanna.org.

Steffi, age 16

Steffi is a fun-loving, active 16-year-old girl. Her favorite activities include singing, shopping, hanging out with her friends, and dancing to hip-hop music. She also enjoys swimming and playing basketball.

Steffi's favorite foods include pizza, cheeseburgers, milkshakes, and almost anything from McDonald's. She does well in school, however she needs a lot of motivation and support to stay focused and complete assignments. She also benefits from taking breaks throughout the school-day to keep



her from becoming frustrated and overwhelmed.

Steffi is not sure what she would like to do with her future, but her ultimate dream is to go to school to become a professional dancer.

Steffi recently participated in a Val's Kids taping where she had the opportunity to visit the Whitaker Center in Harrisburg, Pa. She had a great time being interviewed and exploring all of the exhibits. She even had the opportunity to experience the incredible force of a category I hurricane!

Steffi is strongly in favor of adoption and is desperately hoping for a family that will love her and accept her for who she is. Families interested in learning more about Steffi should contact Elizabeth White, Diakon Adoption & Foster Care, at (717) 795-0479 or whitee@diakon.org.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

Almost 50 people filled the Lundin Social Hall at Atonement Lutheran Church in Wyomissing, Pa., on Dec. 9, for Diakon's Post-Permanency



Deleah spends a moment with Santa.

Support Group Christmas Party. Along with enjoying good food, children participated in crafts, face painting, and a visit from Santa.



NEW YEAR BRINGS CHANGES TO DIAKON FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PROGRAMS

BY: **LAUREN CONZAMAN, MSW, LSW**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DIAKON ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE

In 2008, Diakon's adoption, foster care, and pregnancy services programs were again successful in serving a high number of children, youths, and families. Considering significant federal, state, and local funding cuts and decreases in contributions, the increase in total care provided to those in need was not a simple task.

In spite of challenges, a remarkable year ...

- In 2008, the programs received more than 430 referrals from county agencies for children to be placed on a foster care or foster-to-adopt basis. The programs served more than 210 children in our foster homes, compared to 206 in 2007.
- There were 74 adoption finalizations in 2008, compared to 72 in 2007.
- Diakon Adoption & Foster Care placed 50 children with adoptive families in 2008, compared to 61 in 2007.
- The four office sites completed 172 family profiles and profile updates in 2008, compared to 175 the prior year.
- A total of 142 child profiles were completed in 2008, compared to 113 in 2007.
- The number of child preparations (from 74 to 81 units) and child-specific recruitment units (from 6 to 5 units) was stable.
- More than 450 calls were received from families interested in our programs and the possibility of becoming licensed as resource families.
- The pregnancy services program worked with 30 birth families in 2008, only two fewer than in 2007.

Despite increased demand for various community services, our operating budget, investments, access to funding, and contributions steadily decreased in 2008. While the adoption, foster care, and pregnancy services programs budgeted for an overall deficit of more than \$550,000 in 2008, our actual deficit exceeded \$900,000.

The need for additional dollars increased across our program sites at the same time Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries' overall investments decreased similar to market trends, seeing record-setting losses.

In order to remain operationally strong, several changes have been made to secure our existence in such a difficult time. Diakon was forced to restructure various programs and reduce staff positions across its Family & Community Ministries, Ministry Support, and Senior Living Services divisions as a result of these market and funding challenges. Below are some of the changes specific to our permanency services programs:

- The discontinuation of adoption-related services in Maryland with a total phasing-out of site operations by mid-2009. The only remaining Maryland programming related to adoption will include a grant-funded position as the result of a contract with the Dave Thomas Foundation/Wendy's Wonderful Kids program. We will continue matching available children in the County and City of Baltimore with adoptive families for other agencies.
- Changes within Diakon Pregnancy Services, moving program operations from a flat rate paid for services provided to adoptive families to a fee-for-service type structure.
- Updates and increases in private-pay fees for services, which have remained the same for more than eight years.
- Position eliminations across sites and the combining of workloads and responsibilities.
- Cost-saving measures put in place across our offices to maximize limited resources.

WAITING CHILDREN FIND THEIR VOICES *Continued from Page 1*

Seventeen-year-old Destiny was also part of the SWAN quarterly meetings. Assisted by Gillen, Destiny



Destiny

presented at the Malvern quarterly meeting later in October.

“Destiny was initially reluctant to present herself because she didn’t believe it would be helpful in finding her forever family. She thought no one at the meeting would care about what she had to say,” says Gillen. “She does know, however, that I care, so she agreed to participate.”

Using her craft skills, Destiny made a collage of her favorite quote, “What doesn’t kill you will only make you stronger,” for the presentation. Then she spoke to the audience about what that quote means to her.

“It was the first time I saw Destiny carry herself with confidence and self-assurance,” Gillen says. “It might have been the first time Destiny really believed that anyone knew she had something worthwhile to say.”

Western Region

Bethany Leas, the OCMI’s Western recruiter from Project-STAR, accompanied two children in their presentations. Quincy, 14, presented at the Clarion meeting, while Nick, 15, spoke at the Pittsburgh meeting, both in October.

“Both children shared their interests



Quincy

with the audience through interviews, and Nick even used the opportunity to show off his academic skills by demonstrating how to solve a math problem,” says Leas.

“Both boys spoke about what they want in a family and why they want to be out of foster care. Quincy was a bit nervous before his presentation, but afterward was grateful that he had had the opportunity to speak. And Nick, after the meeting was over, was filled with newfound hope of finding a forever family.”

South Central Region

Elizabeth White, the South Central OCMI recruiter from Diakon Adoption & Foster Care, helped one of her CFR children, Tyson, present himself at the New Cumberland quarterly meeting on Oct. 20.

“Tyson was unsure about presenting, but when I told him he was in charge and could make the presentation be anything he wanted, he was on board,” she says. “I helped Tyson create a PowerPoint presentation to introduce himself to the group. Then, in his own voice, he described himself, his experiences in the foster-care system, and what he wants in a forever family. The audience was very moved by Tyson’s presentation.”

Southeast Region

The OCMI’s Southeast recruiter from



Nick

Bethanna, Karen Knodel, brought two children to present themselves at the Philadelphia quarterly meeting in late October. First, 12-year-old Mikal showed the audience a “commercial” he taped; he was then interviewed by Knodel.

“He did a wonderful job showing everyone his personality and energy,” Knodel says.

Next, Myira, 14, presented a quilted pillowcase she had made to help describe herself. “Each of the different squares represented the different parts of her personality she felt were important to showcase,” says



Myira

Knodel. “Since Myira has a quiet personality, I was able to encourage her to put her creativity to work to present herself in a unique way.”

Gillen says it is important that recruiters acknowledge that the children they promote are amazing individuals with distinct voices.

“They are more than a profile, a file, and an evaluation. It’s up to us to build a relationship with them that will allow them to open up and share some of themselves. Often we have to be their voices, speaking to colleagues and potential families on their behalf.



Mikal

And now we’re helping them use their own voices as well. We want them to know that no one can

show people who they truly are better than they themselves can.”

FINALIZATIONS

Aubrey

October 1, 2008
Jason & Jennifer
Reading, Pa.

Nate

October 1, 2008
David & Jodie
Pottstown, Pa.

Alyssa

October 1, 2008
Nicholas & Tami
Allentown, Pa.

Hannah & Malachi

October 8, 2008
Marvin & Beverly
Macungie, Pa.

Jeremy

October 9, 2008
Edward II & Samuel
Hanover, Pa.

Dakota & Savannah

October 15, 2008
Dean & Kathy
Reading, Pa.

Marcus

October 15, 2008
D. Robert & Monica
Sellersville, Pa.

Caden

October 15, 2008
Jason & Jennifer
Fleetwood, Pa.

Seyonna

October 15, 2008
Torsten & Lisa
Mohnton, Pa.

Johann

October 23, 2008
Miriam, Allentown, Pa.

Leah

October 23, 2008
Val & Tiffany
Kempton Pa.

Summer & Ashlee

October 28, 2008
James & Olivia
New Columbia, Pa.

Eva Bee

November 5, 2008
Kevin & Deborah
Reading, Pa.

Jaquane

November 10, 2008
Mike & Mary
Carlisle, Pa.

Naishalie

November 12, 2008
John & Robin
Morgantown, Pa.

William & Sally Marie

November 12, 2008
Juan & Nancy
Tobyhanna, Pa.

Amij

November 12, 2008
Marvin & Omika
Reading, Pa.

Rocci

November 14, 2008
Richard & Carol
Jamison, Pa.

Selena

November 25, 2008
Scott & Kim
Macungie, Pa.

Makayla

November 25, 2008
Randy & Jodi
Palmerton, Pa.

Michael

December 4, 2008
Dean & Michelle
Aspers, Pa.

Corey

December 8, 2008
David & Melany

Violet

December 9, 2008
Craig & Danyell
Whitehall, Pa.

Adrianna

December 12, 2008
Todd & Chris
Northampton, Pa.

Emma

December 16, 2008
Benjamin & Patricia
Shrewsbury, Pa.

Jocelyn & Holly Jo

December 17, 2008
Henry & Tammy
Hamburg, Pa.

Patrick

December 19, 2008
Joseph & Kathy
Carlisle, Pa.

Richard & Shania

December 22, 2008
Bryan & Lori
Hanover, Pa.

Michael & Tyler

December 30, 2008
Steven, Leighton, Pa.

NEW PROGRAM MATCHES CORPORATE IN-KIND DONATIONS WITH NON-PROFITS

Somewhere in Maryland or a surrounding state, there's a tractor-trailer filled with new, unused personal-care items ready to be



Representatives from the Baltimore County Head Start Program visit Diakon Kathryn's Kloset to receive a supply of previously donated flashlights. From left are Ayesha Clatterbuck, family and community services specialist; Wade Brown, executive director of Diakon Kathryn's Kloset; William Haskett, program service coordinator/family services; and Gail Reich, executive director, YMCA Central Maryland.

donated by a large corporation. Urgently in need of such items, a nearby community homeless shelter would love to get a portion of the

donation for local families.

Diakon Kathryn's Kloset helps the two find each other.

Diakon recently committed funding and support to grow what had been a part-time program in Baltimore into Diakon Kathryn's Kloset, which partners corporate donations

of goods with non-profits that serve those most in need. This innovative effort promises to reach hundreds of thousands of people annually.

Accepting dry goods, non-perishable and some perishable food items, toiletries, cleaning supplies, school supplies, office equipment, and furniture, Diakon Kathryn's Kloset serves as a sort of way station for goods donated to aid people in need.

Diakon Kathryn's Kloset collects, stores, and distributes the new, unused products to non-profit organizations, which in turn distribute the goods, free of charge, to people in need in the community.

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Benjamin, left, and Patricia, far right, pose with Emma and Judge Snyder of York County at Emma's finalization on Dec. 16, arranged through Diakon Pregnancy Services.



From left, Corin, Mike, Dylan, Travis, and Kay. The group gathers on Nov. 21 as Dylan is adopted by Mike and Kay in honor of National Adoption Day.



Craig and Danyell from Whitehall, Pa., adopt Violet on Dec. 9 in Northampton County.



Michael is accompanied by his new family at the finalization of his adoption on Dec. 4. Michael was adopted by Dean and Michelle in Chester County.



Family and friends gather to celebrate Luke's adoption to Tarinda and Ryan, finalized on Aug. 13 in Berks County. Here, Luke is being held by Tarinda, front row.

WEDNESDAY'S CHILD CONQUERS THE MOUNTAIN

Late last year, 17-year-old Destiny, one of the SWAN Older Child Matching Initiative's waiting children, was given an opportunity to put her strength and bravery to the test.

On that day, Destiny participated in a taping of a Wednesday's Child segment hosted by Vai Sikahema. The Wednesday's Child project highlights children who are searching for forever families by having them participate in a day of fun activities and then airing the event on a special segment of Philadelphia's NBC 10 news.

"When Destiny was initially asked to participate in the news taping, she was excited to have the opportunity, and decided that she would like to do something with arts and crafts," says Angie Gillen, SWAN OCMI child-focused recruitment specialist with Diakon Adoption & Foster Care.

"Imagine her surprise when she learned that instead of a relaxing and calm artistic activity, Wednesday's Child arranged for her to take a snowboarding lesson at Camelback Mountain in the Poconos!"

But Destiny was adamant about not snowboarding. "She was sure that she would end up with broken bones and wouldn't like it," Gillen says.

After a phone call to Vai Sikahema, it was agreed that Destiny would not have to snowboard if she didn't want to. But once she arrived at Camelback Mountain, met Sikahema, and took a tour, she agreed to try the snowboarding lesson, reserving the right to stop if she didn't enjoy it.

"Although Destiny was still a little apprehensive, I could see the spark of interest was there for her."



With snow pants, gloves, boots, and a snowboard provided to her by Camelback Mountain, a Torino Olympics jacket loaned to her by Sikahema, and a great snowboarding instructor, Destiny was ready to head out to the slopes. "She did a great job following her instructor's lead and was sliding down the hill on her snowboard in no time!" Gillen says. "My favorite part of the day was seeing the enormous smile on Destiny's face as she went down that hill for the first time and heard all of the applause from those watching."

After the snowboarding lesson, Destiny was interviewed by Sikahema. He told her how proud he was of her for overcoming her fears and trying something new. Destiny shared that she really does believe that "what doesn't kill you can only make you stronger." Camelback Mountain gave

Destiny a stuffed camel as a souvenir and let her keep her ski gloves and pants in the hope she would try snowboarding again some day.

"The Destiny I drove home that day was not the same girl I drove to the big mountain," Gillen says. "This Destiny was proud, excited, and confident. She loved that she had gained the respect of so many adults and was amazed by her own ability to express herself so well during her interview. She loved that she had gone outside her comfort zone and found that she could have fun taking on a new challenge."

Any family interested in being considered as a match for Destiny should contact Angie Gillen, SWAN OCMI child-focused recruitment specialist, Diakon Adoption & Foster Care, at (484) 300-2074 or gillena@diakon.org.

TEENS HELP TEENS THROUGH SCHOOL ACTIVITY

The graduating class of 2012 at William Penn High School in York, Pa., chose Diakon Adoption & Foster Care as the recipient of proceeds from a fund-raising event.

Donations were raised by students from teachers' "paying" to dress down. The event included a competition among all classes; the class that earned the most was able to chose the recipient of all the donations received.

All funds received will contribute toward providing special gifts to foster children and teens awaiting adoption. A special thanks from Diakon Adoption & Foster Care to the class of 2012 as well as the entire William Penn High School for sponsoring this thoughtful and meaningful event.



Two Diakon Adoption & Foster Care staff members, Karen King, far left, and Cheryl Drake, far right, with the student officers of the class of 2012.

NEW YEAR BRINGS CHANGES

Continued from Page 4

On a more positive note, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania/Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network has awarded Diakon a two-year grant to match available children in Pennsylvania with permanent families.

The initiative is titled "The Older Child Matching Initiative," or OCMI for short (see related story on cover).

In addition, funds were renewed for calendar year 2009 through the Dave Thomas Foundation to continue working in Central Pennsylvania and Baltimore to provide child-focused recruitment services.

Like many other non-profits around the country, Diakon will face many challenges in 2009. With the dedication of our staff and families, we plan to work hard to continue meeting the needs of the youths and families in the child-welfare system.

Thank you for the work that you do to help children in need.

PLACEMENTS

Lawrence

November 9, 2008
Stanley & Brenda
Hunt Valley, Md.

Cameron

November 18, 2008
Robert and Staci,
Bangor, Pa

Naomi

November 13, 2008
Troy & Jennifer
Bethlehem, Pa.

Ciara and Mercedes

November 18, 2008
Douglas & Leeann
Easton, Pa.

MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER care MONTH

HELP US CONTINUE OUR MISSION

In 2008 the need for dollars to subsidize program operations of Diakon Adoption & Foster Care services exceeded \$900,000. With the financial status of the nation, our projected need in 2009 may well exceed the need in 2008. Program executives are budgeting for an annual deficit in 2009 that will be more than \$700,000 across the adoption and foster-care sites.

In retrospect, the programs have been serving more and more children and families on an annual basis. Please consider contributing to our program so we can continue our level of care to those we support.



NEW PROGRAM MATCHES CORPORATE IN-KIND DONATIONS Continued from Page 6



Riverview Head Start Center Site Manager Chelai Byrd, left, delivers a flashlight to teacher Delores Snipes for her room's emergency kit.

Diakon's 53,000-square-foot warehouse enables corporations to donate in volume. Community organizations can tap into those donations as they become available, and as they have needs. Partnering organizations, which must be non-profit, complete a survey form indicating their needs, and Diakon works to fill that need.

Donated items may be as varied as sewing machines and laptop computers to bottled water and shampoo. The ultimate end-users of donated items are the children, families, and adults served by the local non-profits.



ADOPTION TAX CREDIT AVAILABLE

The legal and other expenses of adopting a child can be significant. The law permits adoptive parents to claim a credit against their federal tax for up to \$11,650 for tax-year 2008. The adoption of a child with special needs does not require the taxpayer to have qualifying expenses. A child with special needs is described by the IRS as follows:

- A citizen of the United States;
- The state determines that the child cannot or should not be returned to his or her parents;
- The child probably will not be adopted unless adoption assistance is provided to the adoptive parents;
- The designation of having special needs can result from the child's

having an ethnic background, being a member of a minority or a sibling group, or having mental, physical, or emotional challenges.

If the state determines a child to have special needs, all coordinating documentation must be kept. Qualifying expenses are defined as reasonable and necessary expenses directly related to a legal adoption. Examples include:

- Adoption fees
- Court costs/attorney fees
- Medical expenses
- Travel expenses
- Other expenses related to the adoption of an eligible child

Excluded or non-qualifying expenses include:

- Adoption of a spouse's child
- Expenses paid or reimbursed by federal, state, or local programs
- Expenses allowed as a credit or deduction under another income tax rule
- Expenses that violate a federal or state law

An eligible child must be:

- Under age 18
- Mentally or physically disabled

The Adoption tax credit may be carried forward and used on subsequent tax returns up to five years.

These amounts are phased out if your modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) is between \$174,730 and \$214,730. For more information, see IRS Form 8839, *Qualified Adoption Expenses*.

WE'RE THANKFUL FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

Your financial support will help to bring together more families through Adoption and Foster Care.

Through your support, you can help Diakon Adoption & Foster Care touch the lives of children and youths in need. From donating books for our resource libraries to offering financial assistance to help subsidize adoption fees, or providing items for foster children, your support is vital. Over the years, generous donations have helped our mission become a reality in so many young lives.

You, too, can make a difference! Simply use the envelope in this issue of *Family Connections* or log onto our Web site's convenient and secure donation form to make your gift.

For further information on how you can support Diakon Adoption & Foster Care, please call our Office of Advancement at 1-877-DIAKON-7, option 2, extension 21219. Thank you!



ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE TO LAUNCH ONLINE FORUM

Diakon Adoption & Foster Care is expanding its use of the Internet to reach adoptive and foster families.

The Diakon Web site home-page (www.diakon.org) currently features information on children available for adoption, but a new Web feature will help to link adoptive and foster parents to share resources and build lasting friendships.

A bulletin-board forum has been developed to help create an online community of adoptive and foster parents. From preparing for a child's arrival to caring for a toddler and dealing with teenagers' concerns, parents will be able to share information and stories, answer questions, and offer support to one another.

In addition, registered participants will also find links to helpful sites, useful phone numbers, and a professional-advice section on which questions can be posted for Diakon staff members. When launched, the site will be found at www.diakonfamilies.org.

Forum	Topics	Posts	Last Post
Diakon Message Board			
Getting Started	5	14	Wednesday, March 04, 2009 1:51 PM * Just need to introduce myself by Katie M.J.
Home Sweet Home	0	0	No Posts
Building a Family	0	0	No Posts
Parenting Challenges	0	0	No Posts
Finding Families Like Yours	0	0	No Posts
	1	2	Friday, March 06, 2009 2:55 PM * In Passion by Lizette
			Friday, March 06, 2009 2:55 PM
			Monday, March 04, 2009 1:51 PM
			Monday, December 22, 2008 1:17 PM
			Monday, December 22, 2008 1:13 PM
			Saturday, December 20, 2008 12:15 PM

DIAKON ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE FORUM

Welcome to the Diakon Adoption & Foster Care Forum

The Diakon Adoption & Foster Care Forum offers a wealth of information from the best source—parents like you!

From preparing for a child's arrival to caring for a toddler, parents are here to provide their stories, answer questions, and offer support.

At Diakon, we want to provide you and your family with as much help as we can throughout the foster care and adoption process. In addition to being able to communicate with other parents, you'll also find links to helpful sites, useful phone numbers, and a professional advice board where you can post questions for Diakon representatives.

However, this is your community. Use it to connect with other families, share information and resources, and build lasting friendships.

With this resource, we hope to help you create a happy, healthy family and hope that you will continue to visit, contribute to, and enjoy this online community for adoptive and foster parents.

To participate, you must register.

See you on the board!

Regents,
Lauren Conzaman
Executive Director
Diakon Adoption & Foster Care

DIAKON
LUTHERAN SOCIAL MINISTRIES
Many Hands. One Heart.

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Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

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Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries offers a range of specialized programs for children, individuals, families, and senior adults.

Lauren Konzaman, Executive Director
Ramona Hoyle, Director, Maryland office
Kathy Roach, Director, Topton office
Craig Gehosky, Director,
Mechanicsburg and York offices
Elisa Esh, Director, resource family recruitment
Carolyn Darnell, Editor

Visit our website at www.diakon.org

SAVE THE DATE

Eastern Pennsylvania Dining With Diakon

By popular demand, Diakon is bringing its successful fund-raising event from Pennsylvania's capital to the Lehigh Valley for more people to enjoy. For the past five years, Dining with Diakon has been hailed in

Harrisburg as an opportunity to enjoy a unique culinary and networking experience. Guests socialize while tasting special personal recipes from local business and community leaders who are acting as chefs for the evening. Most importantly, all proceeds from the event support Diakon Adoption & Foster Care.

The event will be held at 6 p.m., Oct. 13, 2009, at the Da Vinci Science Center, Allentown, Pa. Registration is \$100 per person, and many sponsorship and chef support opportunities are available. For more information visit www.diakon.org, or contact Dawna Trump at (717) 795-0464.



FAMILY CONNECTIONS

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610-682-1504

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