

The Forever Campaign

THE LUTHERAN HOME

Ensuring Our Future,
Honoring Our Past

 DIAKON

Forever Begins...

Early on a warm summer's morning in 1897, the Rev. Uriah P. Heilman, superintendent of the Lutheran Orphans Home at Topton, traveled to the site of the projected Old Main building. There, using a pick and a shovel, he dug ground out, making the shape of a cross. Having asked God's blessing, he reportedly kneeled in the cross-shaped opening and offered a brief prayer. It was an unofficial, though auspicious, groundbreaking.

Today, both Old Main on The Lutheran Home at Topton campus and the Diakon Adoption & Foster Care program are testaments to his efforts—efforts that you can make last forever!



The idea of forever is an appealing one. In adoption and foster care, we focus on the concept of the “forever” family. In fact, adoption and foster care are often called “permanency” services.

Certainly if you’re a child or youth waiting to know the gifts of love and family, forever is a wonderful idea. In fact, it’s world-changing.

The Forever Campaign is world-changing as well. Its two key goals are to:

🕊️ *Assure Our Future* by creating a welcoming “Center for Permanency” within Old Main on The Lutheran Home at Topton campus for our adoption and foster care program—and the families it services.

🕊️ *Preserve Our Past* by renovating the second floor of the historic Old Main building and restoring other parts of Old Main as part of long-term efforts to protect critical aspects of our nearly 150-year history of service to children, youths and families.

Our campaign celebrates the very best aspects of “forever”—while simultaneously ensuring permanence, in multiple ways, for generations to come.

Successfully completed, these simultaneous efforts will ...

🕊️ Enhance services for children who wait for the love and embrace of family.

🕊️ Preserve not only the spirit of an institution dedicated to the care of children and youths, but also the iconic building that embodied that mission.

🕊️ Provide donors with a unique way to make a difference now—and long into the future.

In essence, The Forever Campaign will bring permanence to—and preserve—the spark from which The Lutheran Home at Topton and its sister institution, the Tressler Orphans Home, arose so many decades ago.



The Legacy Begins

The Lutheran Home at Topton was created to aid hurting children.

By as early as 1894, local Lutheran leadership had posed the question: “What can be done on behalf of the orphans of our congregations or Sunday Schools being deprived of their homes and means of Christian education?”

The Lutheran congregations of Berks County quickly responded—a 105-acre farm was purchased Oct. 12, 1896, establishing “the Lutheran Orphans’ Home in Berks County, Pennsylvania.”

Several decades earlier, in central Pennsylvania, the Lutheran Church similarly had reached out, purchasing the Tressler family’s classical academy with a goal of making it an institution of the church to serve children orphaned by disease or disaster.

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While both children’s homes expanded physically and programmatically over the next century, their organizations never lost sight of their key mission: to make a real difference in the lives of children, youths and families. To make their worlds whole.



Today, that heritage of bringing love, stability and permanence to the lives of children and youths in need continues through **Diakon Adoption & Foster Care**. The program unites waiting children and youths—in some respects, today’s “orphans”—with the best possible family for them, whether kin, adoptive or foster.

The program has carved its own niche in the history of service to children and youths by focusing, almost from its beginning in the 1960s, on the placement of children with special needs, becoming a national model for serving older youths, groups of brothers and sisters needing to be placed with one family, children of minority heritage, and children and youths with physical, mental, emotional or developmental challenges.



Diakon's role in serving children and youths includes as well programs for at-risk teens, family counseling, and management of Pennsylvania's Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network, typically known as SWAN. That role, testament to Diakon's standing in the adoption and foster care community, means the organization is involved in every public-agency adoption that occurs across the Commonwealth.

While both children's homes expanded physically and programmatically over the next century, their organizations—continued now by Diakon—never lost sight of that key mission: to make a real difference in the lives of children, youths and families.





Old Main at The Lutheran Home at Topton campus is a hallmark of Diakon’s ministry to children. The 32,122-square-foot building stands sentry over The Lutheran Home at Topton grounds as well as the borough of Topton and the rolling hills beyond.

It is, without question, a Berks County landmark.

Imbued with similar mission, the Tressler Orphans Home, which began in 1868, also encompassed a large campus, eventually including more than 30 buildings.

While the Tressler campus was sold in the 1960s to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania—though Tressler itself is one of the founding partners that created Diakon—The Lutheran Home at Topton’s iconic Old Main building has remained a vital symbol within Diakon.

And now is the time to make Old Main even more important by supporting The Forever Campaign—a comprehensive campaign that will ...

👉 **Ensure the future** by creating the Helen N. Palmer Center for Permanency for foster care and adoption on the building’s second floor ... and

👉 **Honor the past** by making preservation of Old Main a key component of the permanency center project.

A campaign that will help to ensure both the Diakon heritage and the organization’s critical efforts to match waiting children and youths with loving, forever families.

Although structurally sound, Old Main needs extensive repairs—particularly to the currently unused second floor. The Brandywine Community Library, the historic Putz train layout and some offices

for The Lutheran Home at Topton and other Diakon staff occupy the first floor of the building.

*The Forever Campaign
will “ensure the future”
by creating a
permanency center ...*

While a recent bequest has provided seed money to begin renovation and preservation of sections of Old Main, more funding is critically needed to ensure the wonderful vision that has been set out for the building. That vision includes:

- 👉 Preservation of Old Main as a key part of Diakon’s past, present and future.
- 👉 Relocation of Diakon Adoption & Foster Care offices, currently housed in cramped, energy-inefficient buildings on The Lutheran Home at Topton campus, to Old Main.





Current program offices, as well as on-campus training facilities, are inadequate for hosting families interested in adoption and foster care, providing family-education and supportive programming, or expanding adoption and foster care services. This project would ensure proper accommodations for expanded family-focused work.

Similar relocation of Diakon administrative offices from the Medical Arts Building on Diakon’s Luther Crest campus in Allentown, Pennsylvania, to the second floor of Old Main. This step will allow Diakon to lease the space its staff currently occupies in the medical office building, providing additional income to support our mission.

The preservation of other aspects of Old Main through such steps as renovation or replacement of exterior porches, window replacements or refurbishment, exterior work as needed and introduction of new heating and air-conditioning systems that will help to preserve the building’s underlying structure.

Moreover, we hope that these steps are precursors to an eventual project to preserve Diakon’s storied history. Old Main would provide the perfect setting



The start of the Old Main project is made possible by use of a portion of a bequest received in 2015 from the estate of the late Helen Nicholson Palmer of Wyomissing, who passed away in December 2012. Mrs. Palmer had a lifelong commitment to The Lutheran

Home at Topton, evident in her unwavering attendance at Topton board meetings. Use of some of the funds for the Forever Campaign correspond well with Mrs. Palmer’s interests in both children and The Lutheran Home. However, additional funds are needed to complete the significant project. In recognition of her gift, we are naming the new adoption and care facilities “The Helen N. Palmer Center for Permanency.”

The Forever Campaign represents a unique opportunity to enhance Diakon’s ability to serve children and families, while also expanding those services and sustaining and honoring the heritage from which they arose.

*... and “honor the past”
by incorporating continual
preservation of Old Main
into organizational plans.*

Without this planned infusion of capital—without a re-infusion of purpose—Old Main will continue to deteriorate.

The project is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Diakon—but also for key donors to the institution—not only to preserve the past from which so much of today’s ministry sprang, but also to ensure the future of that mission.

*We hope you will help us to make our
Old Main vision a reality.*

Ensuring the Future

The Forever Campaign provides three ways to support the Old Main project and our services for children and youths who long for permanence in their lives:

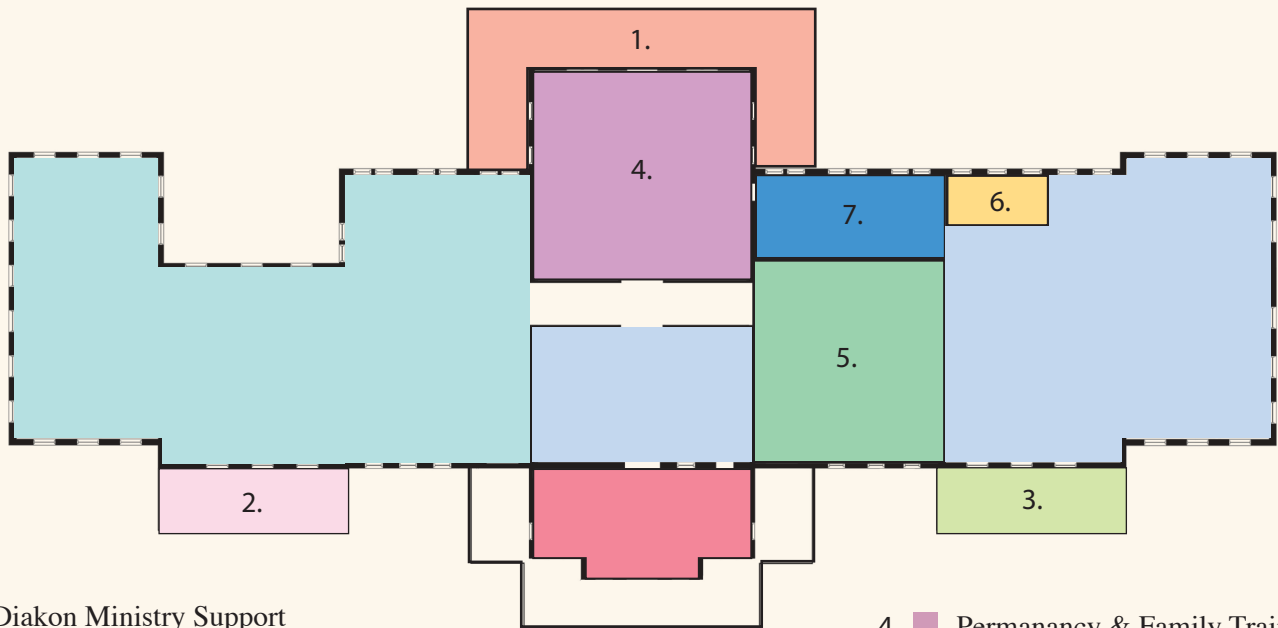
- Capital opportunities in the refurbished Old Main, with an emphasis on developing and equipping the Helen N. Palmer Center for Permanency.
- Program-support opportunities for the continuing work of Diakon Adoption & Foster Care, to be housed in Old Main.
- The Preservation Fund, a longer-term opportunity to provide for continuing efforts to maintain and renovate the iconic Old Main building and the history from which it sprang.

CAPITAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 1. The Old Main Front Porch**
 - Planter Sponsor \$ 250
 - Rocking Chair Sponsor (8) \$ 500
 - Name porch in honor or memory of a loved one \$ 10,000
- 2. Children’s Porch by Library**
 - Planter Sponsor \$ 250
 - Rocking Chair Sponsor (8) \$ 500
 - Name porch in honor or memory of a loved one \$ 5,000
- 3. Residents’ Porch**
 - Planter Sponsor \$ 250
 - Rocking Chair Sponsor (8) \$ 500
 - Name porch in honor or memory of a loved one \$ 5,000

SECOND FLOOR – THE HELEN N. PALMER CENTER FOR PERMANENCY

- 4. Family & Training Center** – Used to assist resource families as they work and plan to open their home to a youth or child in need of a “forever family”; additionally used for training and education of foster care/adoption staff at Diakon and other child-welfare organizations.
 - Family sponsor \$ 500
 - Agency sponsor \$ 1,000
 - Technology sponsor \$ 2,500
 - Name Family & Training Center in honor of or memory of a loved one \$ 15,000
- 5. Mentor Meeting Center** – A supportive area in which both resource families and children can meet with others in similar situations, assisting them as they face the varying challenges of adjusting to new family configurations.
 - Resource sponsor \$ 250
 - Conference sponsor \$ 500
 - Name the Mentor Meeting Center in honor of or memory of a loved one \$ 10,000



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Diakon Ministry Support ■ Permanency Support & Case Management Services ■ Reception/Lobby | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ■ Old Main Front Porch 2. ■ Children's Porch 3. ■ Residents' Porch | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4. ■ Permanency & Family Training Center 5. ■ Mentor Meeting Center 6. ■ Family Kitchen 7. ■ Children's Play Room |
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6. **Family Kitchen** – A comforting, homelike environment in which families can cook and share a meal together as foster or adoptive children transition into this new phase of their life.

- Food sponsor \$ 250
- Equipment sponsor \$ 500
- Name the Family Kitchen in honor of
or in memory of a loved one \$ 10,000

7. **Children's Play Room** – A setting to encourage interaction and play among children with “new” siblings and foster or adoptive parents.

- Book sponsor \$ 100
- Game sponsor \$ 250
- Resource sponsor \$ 500
- Name the Children's Play Room in honor of
or memory of a loved one \$ 5,000

❖ **Information Center Sponsor** \$ 10,000

This sponsorship helps to create an area providing information about the Center for Permanency, Diakon Adoption & Foster Care programs and upcoming events, as well as recognition of donors who supported the development of the overall center.

❖ **The Daun and Mary Jo McKee Endowment Fund for Children** \$ 10,000

The Daun and Mary Jo McKee Endowment Fund for Children is an endowment named in honor of The Rev. Daun McKee, former President & CEO of Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries and his wife Mary Jo. The endowment is held by the Diakon Lutheran Fund and managed by its board. The annual release of funds benefits our adoption and foster care programs.

PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

While there are no longer orphanages, Diakon continues to change the lives of thousands of children, youths and families each year—making their worlds whole—through a program that directly carries on the missions of long ago: Diakon Adoption & Foster Care. Children may no longer come into the care of our foster and adoptive families because disease or disaster has robbed them of one or both parents, as they once did. Today, the youths’ needs more likely arise from family dysfunction, abuse, neglect or societal change.

But the need for love, support and guidance—for permanence—remains a constant.

Unfortunately, many children linger in foster care for years. Some, tragically, even “age out” of the system—that is, become adults—before they know the embrace of a family of their own.

Diakon Adoption & Foster Care is committed to finding families for as many children and youths as possible. To do that, however, the program needs your help:

- ✦ By making a contribution toward one of the capital opportunities already noted in the Helen Nicholson Palmer Permanency Center to be developed in Old Main, you will help to create specialized areas in the center that will support, in special ways, the foster and adoptive families making a real difference in the lives of waiting children.
- ✦ You may also directly support Diakon Adoption & Foster Care. While all public adoptions in Pennsylvania are funded through the Statewide Adoption & Permanency Network, or SWAN—which Diakon, along with a partner-organization, manages for the Commonwealth—Diakon consistently subsidizes adoption and foster care services. Amounting to nearly \$331,000 in 2015, those funds help to provide supportive services for both children and resource families; child-preparation programming to assist children and youths in foster care understand and accept their past, a step critical to successful transitions; parent training; family-recruitment; and a range of specialized services that address specific needs in individual families.



HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Emergency Supply Package Fund

Supplies needed items (clothes, toiletry supplies) for children transitioning to new home.

- Infant \$ 500
- Toddler \$ 750
- Child \$1,000
- Teenager \$1,500

Life Book Fund

Written for and by each child in our care; includes information about birth family, personal and family history. A keepsake about the past, the book aids in the healing process and allows a child to develop his or her own sense of identity.

- Cost of materials for 5 books \$250
- Costs of materials over three-month period \$500

“Wind Beneath My Wings” – \$500 per youth

Provides household supplies for youths aging out of foster care.

Child Activities Fund

Helps to underwrite annual costs for a child or teen to engage in music lessons, wellness activities, camps or sports.

- Child \$ 500
- Youth \$1,000

Family Training Fund

Assists foster parents in meeting critical training needs

- First year family training needs \$ 500
- First and subsequent years training \$1,000

Sponsor an Adoption – \$10,000 per child

Additional methods of programmatic support are listed in our Case for Support for Diakon Adoption & Foster Care.

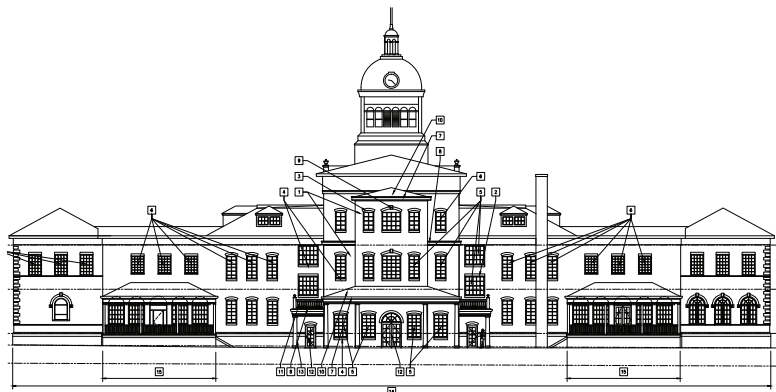
Honoring the Past

THE PRESERVATION FUND

The preservation fund is designed as a long-term way to support continuing maintenance and restoration of iconic Old Main building. Contributions to this account will be used specifically for preservation work related to Old Main.

Moreover, the current renovation project lays the groundwork for a potential later project designed to display the history of orphanages in Pennsylvania with a particular focus on The Lutheran Home at Topton and the Tressler Orphans Home, the two children’s homes on which the Diakon legacy was founded. Funds available from this account at that time could be used to further important historical preservation.

- Alumni sponsor \$ 250
- Neighbor sponsor \$ 500
- Friend sponsor \$1,000



However you choose to support this important project, your contributions are critical. To learn more, please contact Diakon’s Office of Development at (610) 682-1219.



Diakon Office of Development
The Old Main Building – The Lutheran Home at Topton
One South Home Avenue
Topton, PA 19562

(610) 682-1219

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