



Celebrating Impact and Excellence!

Each day, team members across Diakon go above and beyond, making a profound difference in the lives of those we serve and in the communities we touch. The Diakon Impact Awards recognize these extraordinary efforts, highlighting the dedication, innovation, and compassion that define our mission. This publication is a tribute to every nominee—a celebration of their heart for service and the lasting impact they create.



Abigail Care, Youth Services

Nominated by Jerry Fritz 1/2/25

Abby goes above and beyond for every student everyday. She pours from her cup even when there is nothing left to pour. She is constantly making sure everyone feels support both students and staff. Her optimism, personability, and desire connect with the students has a big impact on the community as a whole.



Amanda Holt, Family Life Services

*Nominated by Chrissy
McMahon 12/10/24*

Amanda has been my partner for over a year works very hard to improve her skills and provides supportive and effective service while being a great partner and becoming a trusted friend.

Codi Rittenhouse, Family Life Services

Nominated by Jennifer Crossen, 12/11/24

Codi always ensures that she goes above and beyond to make sure that all of our clients' needs are met. She sources resources to connect clients with community resources. Codi is always available to help clients out when they are in crisis and is a calm in the storm.



Cortney Caflin, Permanency Services

*Nominated by Montana
Sigel, 12/12/24*

Cortney is an extremely dedicated worker who looks out for the youth she works with. She is true to herself and down to earth, always ready with a joke and smile. Her personality is no nonsense, and she does not shy around hard topics. She is sympathetic and caring, creating strong bonds with everyone she works with, both clients and coworkers. Cortney has made a large impact on me during this, my first year at Diakon. She has helped to teach me the ropes of my job as well as how to stay true to yourself and setting boundaries necessary for navigating social work. I have observed Cortney interacting with her youth and seen firsthand the positive impact she has made. I believe Cortney is a valid recipient of this award for her hard work, caring nature, and impact she had made on her clients and coworkers.



*Thank you for joining us in honoring
these outstanding staff members.*



**Dana Oravitz,
Community Services**

*Nominated by Renee Stefnic,
1/13/25*

She will go above and beyond to make sure you understand your job. She is excellent with the volunteers and goes above and beyond to make sure they have everything they need. For

birthdays, anniversaries etc., she is always buying treats and drinks for everyone. She's amazing.



**Debbie Herb*,
Community
Services**

*Nominated by Kathi
Conahan-Baltzelle,
12/3/24*

I would like to nominate Debbie Herb for Diakon's Impact Award. I cannot say enough positive things about my co-worker. She truly exemplifies all of our guiding principles and mission statement at

Diakon. Debbie is always looking for a way to enhance the lives of the people we serve. She absolutely loves the people she serves and always goes the extra mile to create memorable experiences for them. She has great attention to detail and incorporates that trait in every event or presentation she either participates in or arranges. Her "high" energy is contagious, and you always feel energized when she is in the room. Debbie has a caring heart and a listening ear not only for the clients she serves but also for her co-workers. She has a "can do" attitude and always tries to figure out a way to make things happen especially if it will benefit the people she serves. Her dedication and true concern for this organization truly makes her a treasure. She "walks the walk" and "talks the talk". This is evident by the outpouring of love she receives from her congregant members and the staff she leads. Debbie is a leader in the truest sense and always leads her team by example. She is always involved with her team but allows and encourages them to grow. She gives her team

** Debbie Herb received multiple nominations, each contribution is listed here, and on the following page.*

guidance for them to achieve success which her team greatly appreciates. She is an inspiration to me both on a personal level and professional level. Her positive impact is felt in our Schuylkill County community. I feel blessed to have her as a co-worker, a peer, a mentor and most importantly a friend.

Nominated by Alexandria Oravitz 12/10/24

Debbie has made a remarkable impact on not only the team but also the seniors in Schuylkill community. Her positive attitude and warm personality shine through every interaction, and she consistently goes above and beyond to put others before herself. Whether it's helping a coworker or assisting a client, Debbie's genuine care and attention to detail create a welcoming environment where everyone feels valued and supported. Her dedication to making a difference is evident in the way she approaches every task, ensuring that not only are the results exceptional but that everyone involved feels seen and appreciated. Debbie's presence is a constant reminder of the power of kindness and service, and her contributions have undoubtedly made a lasting impact on those around her.

Nominated by Kelly Truscott, 12/11/24

Debbie is our Senior Center Coordinator. She oversees all our Senior Centers. She provides our Senior Centers with presenters for our seniors. She provides us managers with support and encouragement to be our best to our congregates and our clientele who we serve with meals. She has always been an inspiration to me. She is always available if I need a question answered or just need a little encouragement. She is not just my superior she is a team player and friend.

Nominated by Elizabeth R-Chelak, 12/17/24

Debbie Herb is exemplary as a boss, manager, coordinator, and just a good-natured human being. She engages with the center members on a level that is above and beyond, and they love her. She has everything running smoothly to the best of her ability being understaffed. Her commitment to every center says everything about Debbie. I have never encountered anyone so dedicated to their profession each and every day. Every day she works, she applies herself wholeheartedly. When I met her on



the interview, I knew right away I would like to work with her. Her guidance, patience and knowledge has helped me tremendously in the center. She makes coming to work enjoyable and it is my pleasure to work with her. She is a force in her own way. Debbie always shows up with a smile, always. In my opinion, she deserves this award amongst others. Thank you!

Nominated by Lisa Griffin, 12/13/24

Debbie is extremely knowledgeable and helpful with all of our seniors and managers. She is the hardest worker and dedicated to her team and congregant members more than anyone else I know. A true example for me in giving it all I have to be helpful to all those I serve. She is fun, inspirational and a gifted people person who really serves everyone at Diakon and beyond. She goes out of her way to be helpful to others in need with compassion, selflessness and generosity. Debbie deserves to be recognized in our community because she is a very spirited leader that uplifts and inspires others to be a better and be of service to others. Our Mission at Diakon is this and Debbie is the best.



**Deena Stehman,
Permanency Services**

*Nominated by Chris Sanders,
12/10/24*

Deena always has a smile on her face and is willing to help anyone in need! Whether it is an employee looking for operational support or a client lost in the lobby, Deena lends a helping hand. Deena embodies the "DiaKINDNESS" philosophy in every aspect of her job.

**Elizabeth Touchstone,
Permanency Services**

Nominated by Sydney Kramer, 12/12/24

Elizabeth has been an exemplary coworker and collaborator. She continues to have a positive and uplifting spirit at the office. Elizabeth is always ready to assist a coworker in need and goes above and beyond to be a positive representation of the agency with our foster families.



**Erin Johns,
Family Life Services**

*Nominated by Dianne Rupp,
12/10/24*

Erin is always pleasant no matter what is going on with her families. She is always available to new staff and old to assist in anyway. Erin goes above and beyond when working with her families. Thinking outside of the box, looking at new techniques and old. Erin understands what family based is about and tries to work the model to the best of her ability. Erin comes in with a smile, shares stories and keeps the moral of the other staff going.

**Evalinette Colon Ocasio,
Permanency Services**

Nominated by Elizabeth Touchstone, 12/12/24

Eva is always so kind and willing to lend a listening ear. She is empathetic, relatable, and kind towards anyone and everyone she meets. She carries this into her work and is always so kind and understanding towards the families she is working with.



**Jason Brode,
Youth Services Central**

*Nominated by Aaron
Brewbaker, 12/1/24*

Jason is everything you could want in a boss. He is infinitely supportive of staff and focuses so much on providing opportunities for staff to make their own choices and be themselves as well as having the supports and space to grow as people. He is also extremely patient with clients and focuses on treatment and restorative practices over all. We could not do what we do without someone like that at the helm.



**Joann Shelley,
Finance**

Nominated by Stephany Masonis, 12/19/24

Joann has been working so hard on getting everything caught up for the end of year including giving up some of her days off for the holiday. She has also been a big part of working between LSS and Diakon during the transition of the merger. She works really hard every day and I feel like she deserves to be recognized!



**Kathi Conahan-Baltzelle,
Community Services**

Nominated by Renee Stefnic, 12/10/24

she is dedicated to helping others always there to do whatever it is she's crafty loves to have a good time and always willing to give a hand.



**Kim Patten,
Youth Services**

Nominated by Natasha Goodhart, 1/2/25

Kim's dedication at the Diakon Wilderness Center is truly remarkable. As the manager of the Wilderness Greenhouse, she ensures its success while teaching horticulture to students, fostering their connection to nature. Additionally, she has spearheaded the Entrepreneurship Project with the Center Point Day Program, creating valuable growth opportunities for participants. I am incredibly grateful for Kim's unwavering support and the impact she has across all Wilderness Center programs, inspiring both students and staff alike.



Melissa Geesaman, SWAN

Nominated by Jeanne Sheetz, 12/10/24

Melissa goes over and above to help everyone and never complains no matter the situation. She is a positive role model for our team!



**Monika Stasko,
Family Life Services**

Nominated by Dominique Schell, 12/10/24

Monika is a dedicated team member who through times of frustration and tiredness continues to show up for her team and her clients. Monika is the definition of a woman who gives her all for those around her. Monika brings a sense of joy to my life and those at the Diakon team in Williamsport and in the schools.



Raul Morales, Youth Services Southeast

Nominated by Jabreel Michael, 12/10/24

Raul is dedicated to his job working with those we serve. He demonstrates positive leadership to staff and passion in working with the youth.



**Sara Whitman,
Family Life Services**

Nominated by Anna Galloway, 12/15/24

Sara has continuously strived to work with her employees in making sure she helps them find a way to figure out work schedules with families while also helping to prioritize family

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lifestyles. Sara will help to team with her employees if their work partner is away. Sara continues to show her staff appreciation for the work that they do and making sure to take time in supervisions to address any concerns and will follow through with meeting those concerns/comments/suggestions. Sara demonstrates an amazing level of being a supervisor while also being supportive of her team and showing empathy and understanding. Sara also, will help her staff in being part of team meetings to make a presence for her employees families and making a time to either meet or talk with them so the families know she is there for support. Sara has developed an amazing team who all support one another and taking time to create an amazing work family and wanting to continue to do the hard work that we do. In all my years in my career, Sara Whitman has been the best supervisor I have worked for and it definitely shows in how her team runs and how they interact and care for one another.



**Skylar Bartholomew,
Permanency Services**

Nominated by Elizabeth Touchstone, 12/12/24

Skylar is always so dedicated to helping the families that she is working with. She is patient and kind with them, even when

they do reciprocate the gesture. She takes the time to explain everything thoroughly and will do it numerous times to ensure that they understand what needs to be done.

Sydney Kramer, Permanency Services

Nominated by Elizabeth Touchstone, 12/12/24

Sydney is always the epitome of kind and professional, regardless of how families treat her. She is so dedicated to serving her families to the fullest and making them as happy as possible. As a coworker, she is always kind, attentive, and willing to help.

**Tiffany Zimmerman*,
Family Life Services**

** Tiffany received multiple nominations, each contribution is listed below.*

Nominated by Elizabeth Svolto-Patterson, 12/11/24

Tiff is the glue that keeps us together. Although her role is not direct service, we couldn't do what we do without her. No matter the task or request, Tiff always gets the job done or has the answers we need. Examples-Can't figure out why you can't clear your failed activity in CareLogic-Tiff will figure it out. Insurance issue-Tiff will figure it out. It doesn't matter what your questions is, Tiff will always help you get the answer you need.

Nominated by Ashley Stahl, 12/19/24

Tiffany has been with Diakon for many years and is simply the "glue" that holds our clinic together in Mechanicsburg. Tiffany is a team player and is consistently goes above and beyond daily.



**Susan Schmale,
Affordable Housing**

Nominated by Tara Banninger, 1/16/25

Susie's job is not an easy one. We work with seniors that are living independently but often need help in doing so. And Susie is their line to getting that help.

She understands Medicare, Medicaid and the services that are available to our residents through their benefits and when a resident is in need of assistance, she helps them and points them in the right direction to get the aids and assistance they need to live independently for as long as possible. She's our eyes on the residents to make sure that they are okay and recognizing when a resident may be struggling. She reaches out to them and if need be, to their families. She gives advice and encouragement on making sure their affairs are in order. And she even arranges for people to come in and talk to our residence about things they may need. She helps them sign up for things like Meals on Wheels, Harvest

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Congratulations to all Impact Award recipients.

Susan Schmale *continued*

Box and the Farmer's Market Voucher program. In addition, Suzie has been a part of Diakon for so long that she has developed excellent relationships on the Topton campus and the local community with people that are now LSS, that she knows who to contact someone to assist or get information for a resident. For example, our seniors often don't have a way to get to the store to pick up prescriptions, etc. When we lost the pharmacy on campus, Suzie sprung into action to get a comparable solution and reached out to a local pharmacy to be a supplier to deliver prescription medications to their door. She helps them arrange transportation and reaches out to local charities if need be, to help them find a way to get where they need to go. She is also an ear for the residents to talk to and maybe sometimes confide in. She is an integral part of our two HUD buildings in ensuring that our residents are safe, happy and have what they need to live independently. She gives herself 100% to the job. She does it with kindness, patience, empathy and understanding.



Susan Long, **Community Services**

Nominated by Dana Oravitz,
1/19/25

Susan demonstrates commitment and dedication to Diakon and her team. Her office door is always open, and she is always available to listen. Stepping into my new role with Diakon, I could not have survived without Susan's support, kindness, and

patience. I appreciate how Susan is flexible and open to change. She is not afraid to try new things or set in her ways. She is an excellent leader, and I am proud to work under her leadership.



Hannah Blackwell, **Family Life Services**

Nominated by Dora Kabwe,
1/19/25

I was partnered with Hannah because we did not have partners when I started in May 2024. I was afraid to drive in the mountains when I started. Hannah had me meet her and then drove to the homes we were visiting until I got used to the routes. Hannah was very kind and patient with me and I will never forget that. When I got my first family, Hannah showed me how to document my visits and walked me through my first intake. I know I would have been lost without her coaching me through that intake. Hannah explained things in a way that made sense. Hannah personifies kindness in everything she does and she is a heroine in my book.



Chanel Thomas, **Family Preservation**

Nominated by Nikkia Walton, 1/16/25

Chanel Thomas consistently goes above and beyond in her service to the families under her care, demonstrating an unwavering commitment to making a difference. Her dedication extends beyond her primary responsibilities, as she has graciously supported our team by allowing our new truancy workers to shadow her during their training period. Chanel's willingness to share her expertise and provide ongoing assistance to her coworkers exemplifies her collaborative spirit and leadership. Her efforts not only enhance the experience and growth of her colleagues but also strengthen our team as a whole. Chanel's kindness and dedication are truly invaluable, and I am deeply appreciative of the positive impact she has on her coworkers and the families she serve. It is a privilege to work alongside her.



*Celebrate the incredible
contributions of our team.*

Submit your nomination today!