

# Family Connections



FALL 2015

## Every child needs a family

*A*rticle upon article describes the need for families to foster and possibly adopt older children from the child-welfare system. And it appears the need cuts across the nation from Utah to Georgia and every state between.

The questions remain ...

*Where do we find these families?*

How do we recruit families willing to take that 17-year-old homeless young man or the sibling group of five—so that we can assure all of the children are placed together?

*How can we make sure that we can say “yes” to every call we receive?*

We are asking you and your connections within the foster care and adoption community and network for assistance!

At Diakon Adoption & Foster Care, our goal is to find a home for every child in need of out-of-home placement, including those who need short- or long-term care, those coming out of residential or hospital-type settings, and those children and youths part of a large family unit who need to remain with their siblings.

Please help us to make the difference in a child’s or youth’s life.

While we use billboards, newsletters and even online advertising to recruit families, we can always use more help—because the need is so great!

For example, let us know how we can recruit more resource parents. Be our ambassadors. Talk to others about the joys and meaning of foster parenting or adoption.

And, as possible, open your home and your heart. Make a difference in the life of a child or a group of children.

Become a foster parent—and please encourage others to do the same.

For more information or to discuss your ideas with us, call one of our offices, message us on Facebook, and find us online at [www.diakon.org/adoption](http://www.diakon.org/adoption).

### Help us to spread the word!

Who better to help spread the word about foster care and adoption care than those who have helped children and youths themselves?

Diakon families have a wealth of experience and knowledge that could benefit others. Here are a few ways you could help us to reach others in the community:

- Be a speaker at our Resource Family Training
- Help at a recruitment community event
- Attend an “information night” and share your experiences
- Distribute signs and posters
- Recommend families who would like information on Diakon
- Offer suggestions of churches or businesses that may want us to speak about our programs or display information

At Diakon Adoption & Foster Care, our goal is to bring children together with families willing to commit to their care.

Please consider helping us get the word out!

Contact Cathy Balliet at (610) 682-1587 or via email at [ballietc@diakon.org](mailto:ballietc@diakon.org) for more information.

Coming soon!

We hope to have rear-window car stickers that you can display to show your commitment as a foster or adoptive parent.



## Back to School: The best of times, the worst of times

Lauren Conzaman  
Vice President  
Diakon Adoption & Foster Care

Back-to-school time sometimes can mean back to chaos. There's homework, IEP meetings, conferences, activities, sports, concerts, activities, and so on . . . Well, at least in my house.

Some families become excited that the children are back in school, thinking it will be a nice break.

In our two-parent, working household, however, it becomes a lot more work and is much more difficult than the break of the summer months. The \$200 trip to Target in late August for school supplies and back-to-school necessities is just the beginning; you can add to that the challenge of trying to figure out how your child will get his or her afternoon dose of meds or how much school will be missed for visits, doctors' appointments or therapy.

Homework is another area to which many of us do not look forward. Homework time in our house can last anywhere from 15 minutes for one child to more than three hours for the other. Sunday nights to Thursday nights tend to end in tears, anxiety and extremely exhausted parents who get up to do the same thing for the next four nights every week.

While the summer months can cost more because of multiple children in a variety of camp activities, child care, babysitters and supervision, those three months also help to provide a reprieve, mentally and physically, from the chaos that begins with the start of the school year.

When you have a child or children with special needs, the summer is the break, while the school year is much more of a challenge. So, to all of you who understand and feel the angst that goes along with the months from September to June, I say: "Hang in there!"

Summer is only three-fourths of a year away.



*Last year, Diakon restructured its overall organization to separate child and family programs from its senior living services, creating Diakon Child, Family & Community Ministries. Along with that change, leadership has been evaluating operations and making various changes to better position the new organization to improve quality, maximize efficiencies and—most importantly—serve more people.*

*Regretfully, one of these changes is the elimination of the Diakon Child, Family & Community Ministries vice president position, effective Oct. 2.*

*Over the last 14 years, Lauren Conzaman—who holds that role and whose column has been featured in this publication—has provided consistent, supportive and caring leadership for all the programs that comprise DCFCM. She has great passion for those we serve and has accomplished much during her tenure. She will be greatly missed. If you would like to reach out to Lauren, you may contact her at [laurenconzaman@gmail.com](mailto:laurenconzaman@gmail.com).*

# Fashion event features waiting youth, celebrates National Adoption Month

It's fun ... fashionable ... and a unique way to mark National Adoption Month.

The 4th Annual Matching Event & Fashion Show, presented by Diakon Adoption & Foster Care, is coming soon! The event offers older youths the opportunity to meet interested families in a relaxed setting. Plus, they receive a little extra attention as they are the “stars” of the fashion show.

Here are the details:

When: Saturday, Nov. 7 • 1 – 4 p.m.  
Where: Henry Auditorium at The Lutheran Home at Topton  
One South Home Ave., Topton, Pa.  
What Else: Door prizes, a DJ and refreshments

This event is devoted to youths who are served by the SWAN Child-Specific Recruitment program or Older Child Matching Initiative. The young people are treated to hair styling and makeup by students of Metro Beauty Academy and have professional photos taken. Then they show off their personal style as they take part in a fashion show.



In the past, the Matching Event & Fashion Show has drawn a number of area agencies involved in adoption and foster care, as well as dozens of interested families.

The SWAN Older Child Matching Initiative serves children over the age of 10 who have a primary goal of adoption and are legally free, unless the court that determines dependency will not terminate parental rights until an adoptive resource has been identified. Sibling groups also are eligible as long as one child is 10 years old.

For more information about this year's Matching Event & Fashion Show, please email Pat Bittner at [bittnerp@diakon.org](mailto:bittnerp@diakon.org) or call (610) 682-1522.

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## Incentive being offered for resource-family referrals

One of the most heart-wrenching calls we receive is when a county referral source contacts us about a child or youth who needs an immediate out-of-home placement—and we have no family available to meet that need.

There's no question. We need more great families to meet the pressing needs of children and youths. In fact, you can help us to do just that. And help yourself in the process.

We are now offering an incentive program that can reward you for those referrals. We are providing a small stipend to Diakon resources families for each family you help to recruit for Diakon Adoption & Foster Care that completes various stages of the approval and placement processes.

Here is the schedule on which you would receive incentive payments:

Identified family completes training: \$50

Family approved/licensed: \$100

Family accepts placement: \$100

For you to be eligible for the full amount of \$250, the licensed home must accept a placement through one of our programs and the child must remain in the home for at least 30 days.

To be certain that you receive credit for your recruitment efforts, please ask the family calling or emailing our offices to identify you as to how they heard about Diakon Adoption & Foster Care. Contacts for each of our offices are noted on our website at [www.diakon.org/adoption](http://www.diakon.org/adoption).

As a Diakon family, you are one of our critical resources. You have made a huge difference in the lives of waiting children and youths. Now, you can make an even greater difference by helping us to find even more resource families!

# Help us to find *forever* families

## *Chris, 13, and David, 11*

Chris and David are an active, fun-loving sibling group looking for a family who will keep them together. Both boys know a lot about cars and love video games. They play very well together and especially enjoy being outside and playing board games. They recently began living in the same home again, which is going very well.

Chris might seem quiet and reserved at first, but once he becomes more comfortable, he is more outgoing. He responds well to adults who do activities with him and enjoys being busy. David is a little bit more outgoing than his older brother. He is smart, inquisitive and loves to ride his bike and play soccer. Both boys do well with clear expectations and routine, and are great with animals. They would benefit from a family who will be involved in and supportive in their school, and will commit to continuing communication and, it is hoped, visits with their sister, mother and grandmother. They are not yet legally free for adoption. For more information, please contact Katie Juliana: (717) 795-0479; julianak@diakon.org



## *Miguel, 13*

Miguel enjoys a variety of activities including reading, basketball, football, skateboarding, drawing and board games. He loves superheroes and anything that has to do with them! His favorites are Iron Man and Spider Man. Miguel also loves animals and would enjoy having pets. He is very active and would do well with a family who can spend some time doing activities outside with him and who could involve him in community activities.

Miguel thrives with routine and structure and may do best with a family with experience. He has contact with several of his extended-family members and has recently begun

having some visits with them as well as his sisters. Miguel is legally free for adoption. For more information, please contact Katie Juliana: (717) 795-0479; julianak@diakon.org

## *Symar, 15*

Outgoing and charming, Symar loves to meet new people. He enjoys conversing with peers and adults. Although he is very intelligent and articulate, his “gift of gab” does sometimes get him in trouble at school! Symar enjoys school for both social and academic reasons. His favorite subject is English, and he’s very proud of his excellent hand writing. Symar enjoys activities ranging from singing, dancing, photography, fashion, and reading. He also admits to spending a lot of time watching TV. Symar would love to sing you a few lines from his favorite artist or share his passion for dancing.



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# Help us to find *forever* families

Although he enjoys his favorite activities, Symar says he likes to challenge himself to try new things. Symar would do well with experienced parents who can provide him with the flexibility and boundaries that every teenager needs. He currently is in contact with several birth-family members and needs a family who could appropriately guide and encourage this contact. Symar is legally available for adoption. For more information, please contact Katie Juliana: (717) 795-0479; [julianak@diakon.org](mailto:julianak@diakon.org)

## *Terrel, 16*

An engaging and energetic young man, Terrel loves the attention of caring adults. He is very activity-oriented and loves to be busy. He especially loves video games, wrestling and football, but is willing to try almost anything. Terrel also enjoys eating out; his favorite food is pepperoni pizza, which he says he would eat every day if he could! Eating meals with a family would be very important to Terrel.

He hopes to have a family who will listen to him and take the time to understand him and teach him the skills he needs to transition into adulthood. Ideally, his forever family would encourage his relationship with his sister. He feels very close to her and visits with her monthly. To make these visits possible, the family would ideally be located within a reasonable driving distance of the Harrisburg area. Terrel would do best with a family who is able to focus significant time and energy on him. He is legally free for adoption. For more information, please contact Katie Juliana: (717) 795-0479; [julianak@diakon.org](mailto:julianak@diakon.org)



## *James, 18*

James is an engaging and intelligent young man with a variety of interests. He enjoys outdoor activities such as hiking, camping and fishing, and also is very creative. James likes to spend his free time reading fantasy series books, writing, playing video games and using other technology. Another big interest for James is animals. He would absolutely love pets!



James is considering eventually working in the culinary field and also is looking into graphic design. At this time, he hopes to attend Thaddeus Stevens College next year. James would benefit from a family who can support and guide him in making decisions about his future. James would like a family who spends time together and strongly desires to feel a sense of belonging. He needs a family who will help him gain the life skills to eventually become independent, though he will likely need continuing support. He would thrive in a family structure and boundaries and with no young children. James is legally free for adoption. For more information, please contact Katie Juliana: (717) 795-0479; [julianak@diakon.org](mailto:julianak@diakon.org)

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# Help us to find *forever* families



## *Jackie, 16*

Jackie is a sweet and loving young lady who craves affection and individual attention. She thrives in an environment in which she has a routine, is stable, and receives reassurance. Jackie has made a great deal of progress in her current foster home, because of the patience, stability, love, and encouragement they have been providing for her. She enjoys playing sports, especially soccer and basketball, and is involved in a bowling league.

Jackie attends a life skills classroom and is mainstreamed for auxiliary classes. She has many interests, but particularly enjoys swimming, crafts, board games, and listening to music. Jackie would benefit from a loving family that can provide her with a lifelong support system. She is not yet legally free for adoption. For more information, please contact Helene Kosciolek: (610) 682-1564; [kosciolekh@diakon.org](mailto:kosciolekh@diakon.org)

## *Dominic, 17*

Gentle-natured Dominic is an impressive young man who has a lot of goals and ambitions for his future. He would like to attend college, especially Penn State, after he graduates from high school. He also aspires to head a community service group that would focus on fixing up places and planting gardens for people.

Dominic has many different interests in which he excels. He enjoys outdoor activities such as hiking and fishing. He also is very interested in art and uses painting and sculpture to express himself; plus, he's interested in restoring cars and rebuilding computers. Dominic would like to live in a country or suburban area because he has deemed himself a "country boy." He is legally free for adoption. For more information, please contact Helene Kosciolek: (610) 682-1564; [kosciolekh@diakon.org](mailto:kosciolekh@diakon.org)



## *Dominick, 18*

Describing himself as adorable and lovable, Dominick can make you laugh with the stories he tells. He's friendly, outgoing and comical, and enjoys all sports, both watching and participating. He also enjoys cooking and baking. Not long ago, he did an adoption promotion while cooking at a restaurant and prepared a dish named after him, "Pasta Dominick." Dominick is said to have secret recipes for tasty pancakes and yummy pies, which he likes making himself.



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# Help us to find *forever* families

Dominick completed 11th grade life skills classes during the 2014-2015 school year. He says that school is not easy, but he still loves it. Dominick needs a supportive, committed family who can provide him with routine and be an advocate for him throughout his lifetime. He would do best in a family in which he is the youngest. Dominick is legally free for adoption. For more information, please contact Marian Kolcun; (570) 351-9290; kolcunm@diakon.org

## *Franklin, 16*

Franklin is a friendly, kind-hearted young man. Quiet at first, he becomes livelier as he gets to know you. Franklin can be very loving with those he trusts. He relates best to adults who are able to make their expectations clear to him. He feels safe and comfortable when he knows what to expect; he appreciates structure and routine. Franklin learns best through repetition, and he'll ask questions multiple times for reassurance. Franklin enjoys playing games, putting puzzles together, swimming, building with erector sets, and playing and watching sports. He would also enjoy learning how to care for and interact with a dog, especially if it were his own dog.



Franklin recently completed 10th grade life skills classes. He does well academically and enjoys schoolwork, in addition to spending time with his classmates. Franklin would do well in a home in which he is the youngest or the only child. His forever family should be open to maintaining a connection he has with his biological family. Franklin is not yet legally free for adoption. For more information, please contact Marian Kolcun; (570) 351-9290; kolcunm@diakon.org

## *Thomas, 17*



Relaxed and soft-spoken, Thomas is quiet with people until he gets to know them. He enjoys the outdoors and activities such as fishing, swimming, and bowling. In fact, he'll never turn down an opportunity to do any one of these! Thomas also enjoys cooking and baking and would like to cook for a catering business. He loves to tell jokes and when he makes someone smile, it triggers an even bigger smile on *his* face.

Thomas is in 11th grade this school year. He most enjoys his building and trades classes at vo-tech. He has completed masonry and contracting and begins auto collision classes this year. Thomas is open to both traditional and non-traditional families. He would benefit from one-on-one attention, with no younger children in the family. For more information, please contact Marian Kolcun; (570) 351-9290; kolcunm@diakon.org

# Finalizations

Casey, Lauren, and Dylan  
May 6, 2015  
Adam and Janeen  
Chester County

Cooper  
May 14, 2015  
Stephanie  
Northampton County

Amelia and Autumn  
May 14, 2015  
Mark and Johanna  
Berks County

Na'Laya and Omar  
May 19, 2015  
Philip and Jodi  
Monroe County

Caden  
May 26, 2015  
David and Nella  
Northampton County

Brett and Thomas  
May 28, 2015  
Leroy and Jill  
Lebanon County

Eli  
May 28, 2015  
Timothy and Tamara  
Lebanon County

Raymond  
June 17, 2015  
Bruce and Marsha  
Berks County

Nathaniel  
June 25, 2015  
James and Elizabeth  
Lehigh County

Corey  
June 30, 2015  
Virginia and Saadia  
Lehigh County

Kobe and Scarlett  
June 30, 2015  
Tania and Jose  
Northampton County

Alex  
July 6, 2015  
Steve  
Lehigh County

Hayes  
July 10, 2015  
Jennifer and Jeffrey  
Northampton County

Ethan and Audra  
July 22, 2015  
Alan and Joanne  
Montgomery County

Evalynn  
July 28, 2015  
Amadeo and Kathleen  
Carbon County

Ruby and Mya  
August 4, 2015  
Rich and Kristin  
Berks County

Ricardo and Jayden  
August 4, 2015  
Carmen and Ricardo  
Lehigh County

Chanelle  
August 25, 2015  
Brian and Nicole  
Northampton County



Steve adopted *Alex* on July 6, 2015.



Jennifer and Jeffrey adopted *Hayes* on July 10, 2015.



Brian and Nicole adopted *Chanelle* on Aug. 25, 2015.

# Never giving up helps to make the dream of a forever family come true

Sometimes an adoption hits so many hurdles, it seems as if it will never happen.

That appeared to be the case with a young man whose foster father wanted to adopt him. But, in the end, no obstacles stood a chance against the resolve of Diakon Adoption & Foster Care staff members Christine Smith-Hoh, Kelly Fegley and Michelle Koontz.

Christine first met the young man at age 17. He was a bit directionless and she provided child prep services, helping him to find his voice and look toward the future, two important goals of child prep. Although the county could not terminate parental rights—

meaning that the youth could not be adopted—that changed on his 18th birthday. With such limitations no longer legally in place, the young man used his voice and requested adoption by his foster father.

Enter Kelly, who spent many, many hours trying to get this young man approved, despite some financial problems and health issues. Then, enter Michelle, to do the finalization work, before the family profile had even been completed.

Kelly and Michelle worked hand-in-hand to get the final steps in motion. Michelle had to deal with a new judge, as the young man had requested a

certain judge, chosen because the two had a history from juvenile court. The young man was eager to show the judge how far he had come. Making this happen was no simple task; Michelle had her work cut out for her.

Finally, because they never gave up, the Diakon team, the young man and his foster father saw their dream become reality. The now-19-year-old high school graduate was adopted. Everyone in attendance says the hearing was wonderful. Through coordinated individual and teamwork, Diakon Adoption & Foster Care was able to ensure permanency for one more young person.



## Filling needs for foster children and families

Michelle and Travis Holler learned a lot at their foster parents training session presented by Diakon Adoption & Foster Care.

But one thing in particular stood out. And it led them down a completely unexpected path.

Michelle explains the chain of events: “We learned that the kids usually are given a big trash bag into which they have to put their things,” she says. “I thought that must cause anxiety immediately for them; it’s just you and this bag of stuff.”

The picture became clearer when the Hollers began to care for their first foster child.

“Our first foster child was a girl and she came with clothes that didn’t even fit,” Michelle says. “That child already feels as if no one cares. The trash bag kind of says ‘your stuff doesn’t matter.’”

Michelle and Travis wanted to do something to make this time less stressful. They talked to others and Michelle turned to Facebook to share her concerns about what foster children sometimes experience. Within an hour of her post, she says, a shipment of donated backpacks was on its way to her.

Bags to a New Beginning was born.

“We just spread the word everywhere,” Michelle says, “and soon we were getting donations of luggage, duffel bags and more backpacks. Then we got to thinking about other things the kids might need and we received donations of toothbrushes and toiletries.”

While the Hollers first focused on providing bags and personal-care items for the children and youths, Michelle had another idea. This time she focused on children who would be facing the first day of school, perhaps where they knew no one.

“I thought, ‘How cool would it be if they get to pick a backpack and get new school supplies?’ she says. “And what else could they use? Maybe shoes?”

To focus their efforts, they formed the F.A.M.I.L.Y. Foundation, which stands for Fostering, Adopting, Mentoring, Inspiring, Loving Youth. Their goal is to provide love and support for foster and adopted children and parents. Bags to a New Beginning is the foundation’s first mission, Michelle explains.



“We are working with all county agencies and foster organizations to get the word out,” she adds. “We want to reach as many kids as we can.”

The Hollers’ desire to be parents initially led them to Diakon Adoption & Foster Care. Infertility issues had prevented them from having children of their own, Michelle explains.

Now she and Travis are able to show their love and support for lots of young people. In August, they held a “Back to School Bash” at Adams Ricci Park in Enola and were able to fill 35 backpacks with school supplies and shoes.

“I grew up in a home where I didn’t want for anything,” says Michelle. “We weren’t rich, but we had everything we needed. That’s what these kids deserve.”

Through their foundation, the Hollers are working on two new projects. “First Night Comfort Kits” consist of a duffel or tote bag with items such as a toothbrush and toothpaste, blanket, stuffed animal, brush or comb, shampoo, etc. The kits are given to youth services and foster agencies to be provided to kids on their first day of care.

“Christmas Wishes” is being planned as a visit with Santa that includes photos, a gift and cookies and milk. A date and location are still being determined.

For more information or to make donations, you can email Michelle at: [bagstoanewbeginning@embarqmail.com](mailto:bagstoanewbeginning@embarqmail.com).

## Picture-perfect day for a picnic in the park

Diakon Post-Permanency Support Group celebrated summer with an annual picnic at Shillington Memorial Park. Families enjoyed food, fun, crafts, games, and time just to sit and chat. Moreover, it didn't rain, so the children were able to play outside on the beautiful park grounds.

Our group meets the second Tuesday of every month at Atonement Lutheran Church in Wyomissing in the evening. Please contact Christine at [smith-hohc@diakon.org](mailto:smith-hohc@diakon.org) or 610-682-1510 for more information.

Smiling faces say it all!



Kids enjoy the picnic grounds.



Sisters Daleah and Evelyn have fun at the craft table.



Zech tackles a cupcake.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

### Information Sessions

Families interested in learning more about adoption and foster care are invited to attend our free information sessions, held throughout the year at various locations.

#### Eastern Pennsylvania – Topton office

Location: Children Services Building (Annie Lowry Building), The Lutheran Home at Topton campus, One South Home Avenue, Topton, Pa.

Dates: Oct. 15, Nov. 19, and Dec. 17

Location: Atonement Lutheran Church, 5 Wyomissing Blvd., Wyomissing, Pa., Room F112

Date: Dec. 3

Location: St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 474 Vine Street, Bethlehem, Pa., Social Room

Dates: Oct. 13 and Dec. 8

Location: Manatawny Manor, 30 Old Schuylkill Road, Pottstown, Pa

Date: Oct. 20

Sessions run from 6 to 8 p.m. For more information, please call Cathy Balliet at (610) 682-1587.

#### Central Pennsylvania (Mechanicsburg)

Location: Diakon Adoption & Foster Care, 960 Century Drive, Mechanicsburg, Pa. 17055

Dates: Oct. 7, Nov. 4, and Dec. 2

Sessions begin at 6 p.m. For more information, please call (717) 219-2790.

#### South Central Pennsylvania (York)

- Oct. 6 at York Office 836 S. George St. York
- Nov. 3 at York Office, 836 S. George St. York
- Dec. 1 at York Office, 836 S. George St. York

Sessions begin at 6 p.m. For more information, please call Karen King at (717) 845-9113.

### Community Events

Join us at these fun and worthwhile community events where you can learn more about Diakon Adoption & Foster Care and support our programs.

#### Eastern Pennsylvania – Topton office

Fashion Show Matching Event

Date: Nov. 7, 1 – 4 p.m.

Location: Henry Auditorium at The Lutheran Home at Topton, One South Home Ave., Topton, Pa.

*(See article on Page 3 for more information)*

### #GivingTuesday

From now through Oct. 29, Diakon adoptive and foster families can submit entries for Diakon's #GivingTuesday video contest.

#### Contest Rules

Each video will be published on an individual contest Diakon website page that allows supporters to vote for the video by making a donation in any amount, beginning Nov. 1.

The video that receives the highest amount of donations by 11:59 p.m. on #GivingTuesday (Dec. 1, 2015) will be declared the winner.

#### Entry Information

To be eligible for the contest, videos must be no longer than 90 seconds. Videos should be submitted on the theme of "Making Worlds Whole."

Each entry must be the original work of the family submitting it and must follow all copyright laws (that means you cannot "back" the video with copyrighted music, for example). Only one entry per household, please.

#### Videos may contain animation.

Entries can be submitted and videos uploaded via our website at [diakon.org/videocontest](http://diakon.org/videocontest). Videos can be recorded on a video recorder, smart phone or tablet. Videos can be submitted in mpg or avi format. For questions, contact us at [info@diakon.org](mailto:info@diakon.org).

Entries must not be inappropriate, indecent, or irreverent. All entries will be approved by the Office of Corporate Communications before being posted publicly. In addition, entries may not depict children for whom no photograph authorization exists.

All videos submitted become the property of Diakon and may be used, published, in whole or in part, royalty-free, in any printed or digital media and in marketing material. All entrants are required to sign release forms when they submit their videos.

# MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

## Training Classes

Families preparing for the addition of a child in their home are required to attend family group training, which takes place on three consecutive Saturdays.

### Eastern Pennsylvania – Topton office

Location: The Lutheran Home at Topton campus, One South Home Avenue, Topton, Pa.

Dates: Nov. 7\*, 14, and 21 from 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. each day

\*This session includes our new Sibling Training Class.

### South Central Pennsylvania (York)

Location: 836 S. George St. York, PA 17403

Dates: Nov. 7, 14, and 21 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. each day



### Central Pennsylvania (Mechanicsburg)

Location: 960 Century Dr, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Dates: Oct. 10, 17, and 24 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. each day

## New class helps siblings in adoptive families adjust

A new sibling training curriculum is being offered at the Eastern Pennsylvania (Topton) office of Diakon Adoption & Foster Care for children whose parents are attending training classes to become foster or adoptive parents.

The training curriculum, developed by a consortium of agencies in Western Pennsylvania, uses activities, games and other methods to help children already in the home prepare for the realities of becoming a foster or adoptive family.

Those already in the home will learn who the children coming to live in their home are and why they need care. The training will provide an understanding of the feelings and adjustments they will experience adding another person to their household. In addition, information about the child welfare and court system will be shared.

The sibling class will be held concurrent to the parents' first foster/adoptive training class.

Over the years, many families have asked whether a program could be offered for their children. We are happy to be offering this opportunity to ensure that the entire family is prepared to open their home for a child or children in need.



## Help Wanted

The Topton office of Diakon Adoption & Foster Care currently has an open position for a visitation coach/program assistant in our foster care division. We are looking for someone with parenting experience and an understanding of the child-welfare system to supervise visitation between a foster youth and his or her birth parents.

Responsibilities include teaching and modeling appropriate parenting skills, reporting on the parents' progress and providing transportation of the youth to and from the visit. The role is a per-diem position primarily in Lehigh, Berks and Northampton counties. Flexible hours and good communication skills required. The job description can be found at [www.diakon.org/employment](http://www.diakon.org/employment). EOE