

**Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network *and***

**Independent Living Services**

**2015 Fall Quarterly Meeting**

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| **Office of Children Youth and Families** **Updates** |

**New Staff Welcome:**

We are pleased to welcome three new staff members to the Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF), Bureau of Policy, Programs and Operations.

*Welcome back* to **Desiree Weisser**, who rejoined the Division of Programs as a Human Services Program Specialist Supervisor in September 2015. She will be responsible for managing Special Grants, Pennsylvania Family Centers, and the Child Welfare Resource Center contract among other duties. Desiree previously worked as a Human Services Program Specialist managing various parts of the SWAN prime contract for seven years before spending the last two years at OCYF's Central Regional Office. We are excited to have Desiree back on our team! Desiree can be reached at dweisser@pa.gov or (717) 705-2911.

**Tamm Cramer** joined the Divisions of Policy and Program in August 2015. She is a Human Services Program Specialist working with the Act 31 Mandated Child Abuse Reporter Training Curriculums and Citizen Review Panels. Tamm previously served for nine years at Snyder County Children and Youth Services as a caseworker, is credentialed and serves as a coach and an instructor for the Strengths-Based Family Worker Program, formerly known as Family Development Credentialing, and has experience as a Quality Service Reviewer. Prior to accepting this position, she was a ChildLine caseworker. Tamm can be reached

at tamcramer@pa.gov or at

(717) 705-5420.

**Belinda Eigen** joined OCYF’s Division of Programs as a Human Services Program Specialist in September 2015. She will be managing several programs and contracts including Accurint, Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance and Safe Haven. Belinda spent the past year as a Human Services Program Trainee, rotating through several program offices within the Department of Human Services. Her previous work experience includes three years with The Bair Foundation providing transportation services and six years providing administrative support for Church Plants. Belinda can be reached at beigen@pa.gov or at (717) 214-3784.

In addition to the new staff listed above, OCYF would like to announce that **Joe Warrick**, a Program Specialist in the SWAN Unit has

added the state Independent Living Coordinator to his job duties.

You may contact him at

jwarrick@pa.gov or (717) 214-6765.

**Chafee Education and Training Grant Program:**

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application for the 2015-2016 school year and directions on how to apply are available online at: <https://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml>. The 2015-2016 maximum ETG award is tentatively set at $4,500 per student, not to exceed their cost of attendance.

Please continue to spread the word about the ETG for youth who are, or were, in out of home placement or adopted after age 16.  Youth ARE NOT required to participate in a formal IL program to be eligible to apply and receive an award.  Timely completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the Pennsylvania State Grant and ETG applications is important.

All current ETG award recipients will be automatically enrolled for the next academic year and do not need to complete the ETG application.

For questions about current Chafee applications or a youth’s status, please contact PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797.  If you work with youth receiving services who plan to move to another state and establish residency there, they can find state information on the ETG programs at the Foster Care to Success website: [www.fc2sprograms.org](http://www.fc2sprograms.org).  Each state has its own individual application process.

If you have questions regarding the ETG program, contact Joe Warrick at jwarrick@pa.gov or at (717) 214-6765.

**National Youth In Transition Database:**

National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) implementation is ongoing with the Baseline Population (every youth in foster care who reaches age 17), the Served Population (any youth receiving an IL service regardless of age.), and the Follow-up 19 Population collection period (starts October 1, 2015). NYTD questions can be directed to Joe Warrick at jwarrick@pa.gov or (717) 214-6765.

**SWAN Google Groups:**The SWAN ListServ through Google Groups is comprised of county children and youth agency workers and SWAN affiliate agency workers. The goal of the group is to facilitate special needs adoptions throughout PA.  All information posted on this site is confidential.  Anyone wishing to join this group must be an employee of a county children and youth agency or SWAN affiliate agency. If interested, please contact Joe Warrick by email at jwarrick@pa.gov or at (717) 214-6765. **SWAN-IL Network Newsletter:**Tell the Network about all of the wonderful things you, your agency, your community, a youth or a colleague are doing to promote improved outcomes for PA’s foster youth. If you have something exciting, interesting or informative to share with your colleagues, please forward your articles, success stories, matching events or ideas to Karen Lollo at klollo@diakon-swan.org or at (717) 558-1242. Pictures are always a great addition to any article. You can find the latest and past editions of this newsletter at [www.adoptpakids.org](http://www.adoptpakids.org) under the Network Newsletter link.

**Save the Date:**

The 24th Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference is moving to the Pocono Mountains in 2016! Mark your calendars now and join us on June 15-17, 2016 at Kalahari Resort and Conventions in Monroe County, PA. Visit the hotel website at [www.kalahariresorts.com/pennsylvania](http://www.kalahariresorts.com/pennsylvania). Be sure to let your families know about this exciting location that includes an amazing indoor waterpark! More details will be provided to the network in the months ahead.

**Affordable Care Act and OCYF’s Former Foster Outreach Initiative:**

On March 23, 2010, President Obama signed the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) which made Medical Assistance (MA) coverage available, under specific conditions, to former youth in Pennsylvania’s and other states’ foster care systems. Effective January 1, 2014, youth who were in the foster care system on or after their 18th birthday and who were enrolled in MA are entitled to keep receiving MA up to their 26th birthday.

This provision includes coverage of individuals who turned 18 or aged out of foster care prior to the effective date but who have not yet reached their 26th birthday. Up-to-date contact information for a number of those who would be eligible for this benefit is not available as they are no longer in the foster care system.

The Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) is revitalizing their outreach efforts to this group. E-mails are currently being sent to groups and organizations in the areas of education, foster parenting, health, employment, socials services, etc. within the

Commonwealth who may come into contact with those who would be eligible for this benefit. OCYF is providing all interested parties with posters, brochures and resources to have available for posting and distributing to stakeholders, employees, members and anyone else who may have contact with former foster youth.

If you know any youth who received MA benefits while in foster care on or after their 18th birthday, and are not yet 26, please share this information with them. Additional information is located at [www.healthchoicespa.com](http://www.healthchoicespa.com). The COMPASS homepage [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us) also has information about benefits and how to apply. Individuals without internet access may call the PA Consumer Services Center at 1-866-550-4355 to apply or ask questions. We appreciate your assistance in this important mission.

**National Adoption Month:**

November is National Adoption Awareness Month. If you would like to have your event featured on the SWAN Facebook page, please contact Joe Warrick at jwarrick@pa.gov or

(717) 214-6765.

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