#


# COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WELFARE**

 **Statewide Adoption and Permanency**

 **Network and Independent Living**

 **2011 Winter Statewide Meeting**

 **OCYF Updates**

**Record Number of Adoptions**

You did it again! For the second year in a row, Pennsylvania had a record number of children adopted from foster care. 2,388 children were adopted from the PA foster care system in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2009 – 2010, an increase of more than 200 children from FFY 2008-2009. This milestone could not be reached without the hard work, collaborative efforts and dedication from the county children and youth agencies, SWAN affiliate agencies and other organizations that work to find permanent homes for the foster children of Pennsylvania.

**April is Child Abuse Prevention Month**

April is just around the corner! Now is the time for county and affiliate agencies to be thinking about what type of events they should organize or participate in to help raise awareness about child abuse prevention. Each year, OCYF, along with other state and local agencies, partners with Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) to host events statewide designed to educate communities about the devastating effects of child abuse and how it can be prevented. PFSA will be once again ‘Painting for Prevention’ at three sites across the state. Large murals will be created with the help of artists from “Heart to Art.” The events will be held on the following dates:

 April 2, 2011 from 11:00am to 3pm - Indiana Mall in Indiana

 April 9, 2011 from 9:00am to 1:00pm – Cherry Lane in York

 April 14, 2011 from 8:00am to 11:00am – SCI Muncy (closed to the

 Public; inmates involved in the parenting program will create this mural)

For more information, to learn how your agency can partner with PFSA on one of these events, or to order your blue ribbon child abuse prevention pins, please contact PFSA at 1-800-448-4906 or visit their Web site at [www.pa-fsa.org](http://www.pa-fsa.org).

**Chafee Education and Training Grant Program (ETG)**

The Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) application for the 2011-2012 school year will be available in April.  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. With potential award amounts of up to $4,000 per year (not to exceed the cost of attendance), this grant opportunity significantly reduces a student’s out of pocket costs or loan burdens. It also may be the deciding factor as to whether a youth in foster care seeks to further their education.

This is not a student loan and students do not need to repay this amount after their education is complete. Eligibility requirements, the one page application and directions on how to apply can be found at:[**http://www.pheaa.org/specialprograms/pa\_chafee\_grant\_program.shtml**](http://www.pheaa.org/specialprograms/pa_chafee_grant_program.shtml) **or**

[**www.independentlivingpa.org**](http://www.independentlivingpa.org)**.**

Maximum grant amounts were lowered in PA from $5,000 to $4,000 in fall 2010 in order to serve more youth with the limited amount of federal funding. For questions about current Chafee applications or a youth’s status, please contact PHEAA at 1-800-831-0797.  If you have youth receiving aftercare services who plan to move to another state and establish residency there, they can find state information on the ETG programsat: [www.statevoucher.org](http://www.statevoucher.org/). Each state has its own individual application process.

If you have questions regarding the ETG program, contact Carrie Keiser at ckeiser@state.pa.us or (717) 705-4401.

**Older Child Matching Initiative (OCMI) Expansion**

Family Pathways and Children’s Service Center of Wyoming Valley have joined the OCMI partners, Diakon Adoption and Foster Care, Bethanna and Project Star to provide services to youth in the northwest and northeast parts of the state. This grant has produced an incredible number of adoptions and permanent placements for older youth in out of home care. If you have a youth you would like to be part of the OCMI, please contact Elisa Esh at EshE@diakon.org or 717-724-7979.

**IL Youth Retreat 2011 – SAVE THE DATE**

Mark your calendars for the 2011 IL Youth Retreat: Imagine… No Limits! The retreat will be held in August 8-13, 2011 at the University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown. Registration for youth will be coordinated through county children and youth offices. Stay tuned to the YAB website, <http://www.independentlivingpa.org>, for more information.

**Pennsylvania 2011 Permanency Conference, Assuring a Legacy, Award Nominations**

The Conference Planning Committee is accepting nominations for 2011 Permanency Recognition Banquet in the following categories:

* Permanency Professional
* Permanency Teamwork
* Permanent Family
* Permanency Advocate
* County Collaboration
* Philanthropy
* Independent Living Professional

A copy of the *Nomination Form for Outstanding Permanency Services to Children and Families in the Pennsylvania Child Welfare System* can be found in your packet.

Submission deadline is March 22, 2011 – so nominate now!

**Waiting Child Segments**

SWAN’s media contractor funds three waiting child segments across the state designed to find adoptive families for older youth in need of families. *Waiting Child* is aired on KDKA TV 2, a Pittsburgh CBS affiliate, *Val’s Kids*

is aired on WHTM abc 27 in the Harrisburg area; and *A Little Love* is aired on WBRE TV 28, a Wilkes-Barre NBC affiliate. Waiting child segments have proven

to be successful over the years in helping find permanent homes for the children of PA.

If you have a child you would like featured on KDKA’s, ***Waiting Child***, please contact Ja-Neen Jones at Three Rivers Adoption Council at jjones@3riversadopt.org.

If you have a waiting child you would like featured on WHTM’s, ***Val’s Kids***, or ***A Little Love***, please contact Karen Lollo at klollo@diakon-swan.org or at

(717) 558-1242.

**PA National Youth In Transition Database (NYTD)**

The PA NYTD online data collection system at [www.getnytd.org](http://www.getnytd.org) went live October 1, 2010. Counties are required to collect information on the baseline population of all youth in foster care at any point between age 17 and 45 days as instructed in the OCYF Bulletin 3130-10-03, Implementation of 45 CFR Part 1356 Chafee National Youth in Transition Database Part 1, released on

August 4, 2010. A web-based training will be available on the University of Pittsburgh, PA Child Welfare Training Program website, <http://www.pacwcbt.pitt.edu>. Contact Wendy Unger at (717) 795-9048 or wau2@pitt.edu for log-in information.

**Pennsylvania Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Update**

We are currently in quarter three of PA’s Program Improvement Plan (PIP) and will be submitting a semi-annual report to the Administration for Children and Families no later than February 15, 2011 to show the progress that has been made during the first two quarters.  The PIP, as well as the Statewide Assessment and Final Report, are available for your review on the DPW website at:

<http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/dpworganization/officeofchildrenyouthandfamilies/bureauofchildwelfareservices/index.htm>

PIP workgroups are continuing to work on several of the strategies within the PIP including, but not limited to, the phased-in implementation of continuous quality improvement, building a collaborative network of technical assistance providers, developing policy and best practice regarding concurrent planning and enhancing available assessments in order to identify underlying issues and ensure the provision of appropriate services.  We appreciate all of the stakeholders who are currently or who have been involved in this process over the past several years and look forward to our continued collaboration to achieve all we set out to accomplish in the PIP.  Anyone interested in joining a PIP workgroup can contact Stephanie Maldonado (smaldonado@state.pa.us) or Jeanne Schott (jls192@pitt.edu) for more information.

**Youth Ambassadors Search**

The Child Welfare Training Program is currently looking for Youth Ambassadors to lead statewide youth engagement efforts across Pennsylvania. If you know of a youth currently or formerly involved in the child welfare system who is enrolled in a post secondary education program and looking for an exciting, PAID internship opportunity, please have them contact Cindy Gore at lcg7@pitt.edu or 717-795-9048 for more information.

**2011 SWAN Media Schedule**

During January through March, SWAN commercials will air on network television and cable in the three largest media markets in Pennsylvania as follows:

* Philadelphia – January 10th – February 6th
* Harrisburg – February 7th – March 6th
* Pittsburgh – March 7th – April 3rd

During April through June the SWAN radio commercial will air in four media markets in Pennsylvania as follows:

* Altoona – April 4th – 24th
* Allentown/Bethlehem – April 25th – May 15th
* Erie – May 16th – June 5th
* Williamsport – June 6th – June 26th

During the month of May, National Foster Care Month, print advertisements will run in four newspapers on the following days:

* Philadelphia Gay News – May 6th – 12th and May 20th -26th
* Philadelphia Tribune Review – May 3rd – 5th and May 17th – 19th
* Pittsburgh Courier – May 4th – 10th and May 18th – 24th
* Out In Pittsburgh – Entire month of May

An online paid word search campaign will run on Yahoo, Google and MSN from November 1st, 2010 – May 30th, 2011. SWAN Advertisements will also run on

Facebook and the Google Network from November 1st, 2010 – May 30th, 2011.

While this media campaign airs, agencies should be prepared to promptly respond to phone calls from prospective foster and adoptive families.

**SWAN List Serve**

The SWAN list serve throughGoogle 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 Desiree Weisser at** dweisser@state.pa.us **or via telephone at (717) 772-7011.**

**SWAN-IL Network Newsletter**

Tell the Network about all of the wonderful things you, your agency, your community, a youth or a colleague is doing to promote permanency for the youth of PA! If you have something exciting, interesting or informative to share with your colleagues, please forward your articles, success stories, matching events or ideas to Desiree Weisser at dweisser@state.pa.us or at

(717) 772-7011. Pictures are always a great addition to any article.