



**Adoption
Awareness
and
Matching Event
Planner**



Adoption Awareness and Matching Event Planner

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Adoption Awareness and Matching Event Planner

Foreword

To a waiting child in temporary care, finding a family to call their own is their most important goal. So how can we, as resource professionals, get the attention of families who may one day offer permanency to these waiting children? Our own time and resources are limited, and we must use what we have both wisely and efficiently. We hope this planning guide will help you and your agency make the most of your own resources as you work to find permanency for Pennsylvania's children and youth.

This event planning guide is the work of many people, but the one who started the ball rolling was Elisa Esh. Elisa organized and planned a very large and successful adoption awareness event with over 10,000 attendees at Williams Grove Speedway, near Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, while she served SWAN as a coordinator/technical assistant. Elisa, who is now Director of Family Recruitment for Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries, started this event with little except her own drive and determination and her relationships with the drivers and officials at the speedway. This document and many of the planning tools in it were begun by her.

If you would like the Word or Excel files of the attachments referenced in this document, please contact info@diakon-swan.org or telephone 1-888-793-2512. You should always add your own logo and agency or event information to these forms, though we will gladly provide you with the templates of the attachments if it will make your work easier.

Adoption Awareness or Matching Event?

Before you get caught up in the excitement of planning an event, take a few minutes and think about what kind of event best suits your goals. Do you want to match families with waiting children or are you looking to recruit new adoptive and foster families?

This document is organized into two sections. The first section was developed to help you organize an adoption awareness event. The second section will help you plan and host a matching event for your resource families. An **adoption awareness** event focuses on the critical need to identify and train new families who may eventually become resources for waiting children. These events will also highlight the work of your own agency. A **matching event** will showcase the waiting children who are looking for families of their own. Typically, the families attending these events are approved foster or adoptive families who are still looking for a child. Families who will become approved in the near future and who are still at the beginning of their search for a child are also likely attendees.



If you're still not sure which type of event is the right one for you, we hope you will read about the planning needed for both types of events, and that this will help you make the right choice.

It is possible to combine an adoption awareness event with a matching event, though you won't save yourself as much organizational work as you might hope by doing this. Although the venue

and the sponsor recruitment are the same, inviting families to the event with the goal of matching them to children adds a layer of complexity and scope that impacts logistics, planning and the volunteers you need to be successful.

Planning an Adoption Awareness Event

The guidelines and sample templates in this packet summarize steps your agency can use to help plan, at little or no cost, a large or small adoption and foster care awareness event. Awareness events highlight the need to find permanent families from your area for the children you serve and will also showcase the work of your agency.

You should hold your event where the families who are most likely to become adoptive or foster families for your waiting children will be found. Are you looking for a few families from a preferred race for several specific children? Are you hoping to educate and raise awareness in a large number of people? Events should target your specific needs, so all planning should be done with that in mind.

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As a general rule, the larger the event or venue you wish to work with, the more complex the planning process and the more lead time you will need. Determining the ultimate goal of your event will help focus your choices and decisions in the right direction.

While your primary goal is to find families who will offer permanency, the professionalism and services available at your agency are also highlighted. A successful event will enhance your agency and increase the number of people who are aware of your work.

First Steps

- **Create an internal planning group.**

How many people are available to help plan the event? The number of people who can help plan the event may determine the size of the event you will hold or the venue you choose.
- **Brainstorm the goals of your event.**

At your first group meeting, consider what the goals of your event will be. Think about how you can best reach the families you need. What are your agency's needs?

 - Do you need to reach large numbers of families?
 - Do you want to reach a few families of a specific race?
- **Match your event or choice of venue with the activities of the families you seek.**

Here are a few location suggestions to get you started:

 - A church or church event frequented by a specific ethnic or racial group
 - Sporting events
 - Local libraries
 - Community fairs
 - Holiday fairs attended primarily by a specific ethnic group
 - County fairs
 - Amusement parks
 - Local sporting tournaments
 - A local access TV channel



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The Sky is the Limit... Be Creative!

- **Target a date and time for your event.**

This may already be determined by the scheduling of an existing event you want to join with. Be prepared to choose several possible events in case participation in your first choice can't be arranged.
- **Set preliminary goals and determine what is needed to reach them.**
 - What do you need to make your event successful?
 - What will be the highlight of your event? Will it be:
 - Videos of waiting children projected onto large screens at a stadium?
 - A table of information and giveaways to be handed out?
 - Team players wearing photos of waiting children on their uniforms?
 - Announcements and banners displayed throughout the venue with contact information for the SWAN Helpline and your agency?
- **How will you promote adoption awareness during your event?**
 - Could the helpers at your table wear matching shirts?
 - Is there a public address system that would announce your event throughout the venue?
- **What is the cost of the materials for your awareness event?**
 - Establish a budget.
 - Can you use things you already have on hand?
 - Can you get donations and sponsorships for things you don't have?
- **Determine if other county and affiliate agencies should be involved.** For large events you may want to consider asking other agencies to participate.
- **Determine which children or which group of waiting children will be featured at the event.**
 - If children will be at the event, who will prepare them for the day?
 - Estimate projected attendance.
 - Will waiting children be available to talk to the media? If so, make sure to arrange for releases from the county agencies.
- **Create an action plan to develop your idea and then promote your event.** Your action plan will grow as you develop and finalize your event. Be sure to consider:



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- Media coverage and promotion with participation in this planning by event or venue personnel.
- Activities your group needs to accomplish.
- What materials or support your sponsors will provide.

(See Attachment A: Sample Adoption Awareness Action Plan)

Finding a Venue

- **Investigate several upcoming events as potential partners for your event.** Your first choice may not work, so you should have several possibilities to choose from.
- **Arrange a preliminary meeting with representatives from the proposed venue or event and your own internal planning group.**
 - Explain your purpose and what you are trying to achieve.
 - With event and venue representatives, agree to all terms for your event. All expectations of both your agency and the event promoter should be defined ahead of time.
 - Afterwards, confirm in writing all that was discussed and agreed to.
 - Do you want to hang informational banners? Decide how many and where.
 - Will you have display tables with information for attendees at the event? Decide where these should be located.
 - Will you need tickets for staff and persons attending the event?
 - If tickets are needed, how many free tickets will you receive?
 - How many can you get at a reduced cost?
 - Will an announcer at the venue broadcast information about your agency and adoption? How frequently and how many times?
 - If the event has a program, what will be your promotion within it?

(See Attachment B: Sample Confirmation to Host)



Finding a Primary Sponsor

If you solicit corporate sponsorship from a local business, you should try to have your sponsor cover the costs of the activities that will take place at your chosen venue. If your planning requires extensive sponsorship, you may also need to find secondary sponsors.

Local businesses with ties to the community where your event will be held are more likely to agree. Please note that many businesses plan their giving a year in advance, so the more lead time you have, the better your chance for success.

- **Create a comprehensive list of the terms of the sponsorship(s) and the costs your sponsor(s) will cover.**

- When the terms are agreed to, confirm these terms in writing within one week.
 - This can be similar in approach to **Attachment B**, the Sample Confirmation to Host.
- Explore different ways a corporate sponsor can buy into and help promote the event.
 - How will your event help promote their services?
 - Would some of your sponsor's employees be willing to come to the event to help at the display tables?
 - Will your sponsor promote the event to its own employees and how will that be done?



- **Identify what the sponsor expects from your agency.**

- It is important to remember that in addition to promoting your own event, you will also publicly promote the sponsor and the support they lend.

- **Confirm participation by letter to event personnel or teams, if applicable.**

- Baseball players might wear photos of children available for adoption.
- Fair personnel might wear t-shirts with agency contact information or children's pictures.

Create Subcommittees

Subcommittee work is the key to success in carrying out your event. Once subcommittees are identified, specific responsibilities are assigned to these smaller groups.

Examples of subcommittee work include defining the level of your waiting children's involvement at the event, if any; soliciting donations for wish list items for children who participate in the event; scheduling publicity before and during the event; planning set-up and take-down of your materials.

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- **Subcommittees should meet separately from the larger group meetings, either by phone or in person.**
- **Subcommittee chairs should report progress to the event chair regularly.**
- **Typical subcommittees to consider are:**
 - Publicity
 - Set-Up and Tear-Down
 - Hospitality
 - Donations and Giveaways

Subcommittee Duties

Publicity

- Develop a comprehensive list of press and media outlets in the region, including:
 - Contact local media – radio stations, TV stations, newspapers.
 - Contact specialized media for the event/venue where your event will be held – team Web sites, hobby or fan newspapers, newsletters, community or town Web sites.
 - Get a listing of all media outlets in your area at <http://www.congress.org/congressorg/dbq/media/>.
- Create press releases, send them to local media outlets and follow up with telephone calls.
 - Mention the names of the primary and secondary sponsors in all interviews and press releases.
(See Attachment C: Sample Press Release)
 - Get commitments from as many local news outlets as possible to cover the event.
- Name a spokesperson who will be your point of contact for all media questions.
 - Provide an event schedule to news stations and your spokesperson that lists any planned events and interview times.
(See Attachment D: Sample Staff Schedule)
- Assign a contact person to serve as a media liaison with the host event or venue.
- Try to find a photographer to cover the event at no cost to the organizers.
 - If you bring waiting children to the event, photos of them at the event would be great for their life books.
- Ask the hosting venue to announce or broadcast information about your event and its purpose to help draw more attention to your efforts.

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- Provide talking points, videos, brochures, etc., about your topic (adoption, foster family recruitment, etc.) to spokesperson and announcers.
 - Coordinate with officials at the venue about your event's schedule.
 - Develop key talking points about your agency's needs or the waiting children that can be announced or talked about to the public.
(See Attachment E: Talking Points)
 - If you have sponsors, provide a list to include in event programs.
- Obtain brochures and family packets from SWAN to place at your display tables by contacting the SWAN Prime Contractor at 888-793-2512. We suggest you have at least one display table at the venue where the public can view pictures of children available for adoption and find out more about adoption.
- Create a dress code for all participants working at the event.
 - Consider wearing the same color polo shirts or get t-shirts donated that say "Ask Me About [Special Needs Adoption, Becoming a Foster Parent" etc.].
 - How can you draw more attention to your staff and identify them as a team?
- Create a form for the families who visit your display tables to provide their contact information.
 - Make follow-up calls after the event and/or send information to them.
 - Invite these families to your agency for an orientation session.
- Try to arrange for local celebrities to attend. Local celebrities or officials can help attract more media participation.
 - Do you know any celebrities who were adopted (and who are local to your region)?
 - Do you know any celebrities who have adopted children (and who are local to your region)?
 - Don't be afraid to try to arrange for major celebrities to attend your event.
(See Attachment F: Do's and Don'ts of Celebrity Invites)
- Coordinate all publicity on site at the event.
- Provide letters of thanks to all sponsors, partners, participants and celebrities after the event has occurred.



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Hospitality

- Facilitate and organize hospitality and reception for families, waiting children, news representatives, reporters, etc., as applicable.
 - Ensure children and youth who attend your event are prepared for what will occur.
- Send thank-you notes to all sponsors and tell them the outcomes of the event, including total number of attendees, serious family inquiries, etc.
- Solicit donations of food and drink items.
 - Ask for donations from local grocery stores, bakeries, industries, etc.
 - Ask committee members to bring a dessert.

Set-Up and Tear-Down

Remember to schedule personnel and times for set up and tear down of your materials. Consider and arrange for any special equipment that is needed.



Donations and Giveaways

Everyone loves to get stuff for free. The more novelty items your event has to give away at display tables or to toss out to an audience at a stadium, the more attention you will draw to your cause.

See Attachments G and H: Sponsorship Letter Template and Sponsorship Form

- Solicit donations from local businesses to cover the cost of:
 - Tickets to bring adoptive families and waiting children to the event
 - Rental of display tables
 - Prizes
 - Food and beverages
 - Novelty items for display tables or to be thrown to a crowd in a stadium, if applicable



- Give chances to win something to those viewing your information displays.
- Coordinate your giveaways to match the event. If it is an auto racing crowd, get racing apparel donated; a bowling league, get a bowling ball and shoes donated.
- If you have waiting children attending your event, try to get donations of toys and useful items (school supplies, personal supplies) as a thank you for them.
- Think about wrapping giveaways from the display table in your flyers and brochures as an inexpensive way to disseminate contact information.

Create a Consortium of Agencies

If your event will be a large one, we suggest you organize a consortium of local affiliate and county agencies to help plan and run the event. We have found this to be most productive as it brings together highly skilled, talented and passionate people who can share the workload, bring their own resources to the table and enhance your access to publicity, donations, connections, etc.

- Affiliates and counties identified at the initial planning meeting should be invited to participate in the consortium that will carry out and plan the event.
- Don't be afraid to invite participants from the public to help with your event. These folks can bring unique perspectives and additional resources to the table. Think about

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including people associated with your venue or sponsor, as well as those who have an interest in or a connection to adoption or your agency.

- Your internal planning group should plan and host the initial meeting of a consortium. Some of the main duties to consider when planning this meeting are:
 - Create an agenda for the meeting.
 - Explain the preliminary goals of the event.
 - Identify chairs for the sub-committees.
 - Identify subcommittee members, define roles and plan activities to support those roles.
 - Summarize all activity from previous meetings to bring new members up to date.
 - Use agenda topics to create minutes with action assignments, person responsible and due dates for each task. A table format makes it easy to see this information at a glance.
 - Create sample forms and templates for fund raising, secondary sponsorship and donations to distribute at the meeting.
(See Attachments G and H: Sponsorship Letter Template and Sponsorship Form)

Only one person should be assigned as the main contact for all donations. That person should then be directly responsible for tracking sponsors for press releases, publicity, etc.

- Provide directions both to the venue and to your event within the venue.
- Draw a map of the venue or find out if one already exists, and provide a detailed layout of where your event will be located within it. Include parking locations, table placement, entry points, etc.
- Have members distribute a press release about the event within their own areas.
(See Attachment C: Sample Press Release)
- Develop a future meeting schedule, with meetings held at least twice a month until the event.

Planning a Matching Event

The Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network has held many matching events over the years, and many children have directly found permanency through them. The effort you make to host a matching event is well worth your time. This section offers some basic guidelines for organizing your own matching event.

Relationships between agencies and families are a critical factor to the success of placing children in permanent homes. Matching events offer agencies and families the chance to meet and develop those relationships. They are also an efficient method for very busy caseworkers to get information about families and other agencies. The information compiled here is a summary of many of the lessons learned from conducting these events but is not an all-inclusive list. Agencies are welcome to report their own success stories that will help others with their own matching events. If you have a particularly successful tip, please let us know so we can add your “secret” to our examples. Our ultimate goal is to ensure permanency for all of Pennsylvania’s waiting children.

First, you need a planning group to help put the event together. This group can be from just your agency or include those from several agencies. The goal is to have a good mix of people. You need those with creativity to give the event a spark. You need detail-minded people who can put all the pieces together. You need people with connections to other agencies to get the right players to the event.



You want as many families to attend as possible, so you need someone on your planning team who has contact with families. And you also need as many children as possible to be featured and presented to those families.

Finally, every event needs a certain level of funding to succeed. You need a member with fundraising experience or connections to people and organizations with funds. Fundraising can mean monetary or “in-kind” contributions, and your fundraiser must be willing to ask individuals and business for all kinds of resources and funds. Knowing the goal of your event and presenting it concisely (“finding permanent homes for youth,” for example) is vital to winning their support.

First Steps

- **Establish a wish list of planning members with a balance of skills and talents.**
 - Creative
 - Detail-oriented
 - Connections to families or those who represent families
 - Connection to children or those who represent children
 - Fundraising

- **Convene the planning group.**
 - Even if you haven't found all your ideal committee members, get started!
 - Name a Chair who has the time and energy to lead this specialized event. The leader should have a vested interest in the event's success.
 - Think outside the box. This is a great opportunity for someone new to take a leadership role.

- **Brainstorm the primary goals of the event.**
 - At your first meeting, decide the goals of your event.
 - How many agencies and families do you want to attend?
 - What children do you want to highlight? Will you focus on children nearing 18? What about a child who's lost a long-term foster parent? Or one who suffered an adoption disruption? Make these children the stars of your event.
 - Who will set guidelines to help prepare the children who will participate?
 - Create a theme to increase the effectiveness of the event.

Details

- **Target a date and time for your event.**

This may already be determined by the scheduling of an existing event you want to partner with. Be prepared to choose several potential events in case your first choice can't be arranged. Consider holding the event so you can capitalize on a national event such as Adoption (November) or Foster Care (May) months.

- **Review the items in the “Matching Event Tracking Sheet.”**
 - Assign the individual responsibilities on the Matching Event Tracking Sheet and establish due dates (see [Attachment I – Matching Event Tracking](#)).
 - Brainstorm ideas for anything that may be specific to your venue or goals.



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- **At the end of the first meeting, create a calendar and choose future meeting dates.**
- **Prepare minutes for each meeting and review the task assignments for each individual.** The assignments should be noted in the minutes if they are not already included on the tracking sheet.

How Do We Pay For This?

Ask local and regional businesses for donations. Please remember that most businesses budget for their charitable donations at the beginning of the fiscal year. If you need significant funding, begin searching for it early, and do not anticipate responses for several months.

However, matching events usually do not need lots of money to be successful. Look for in-kind contributions such as room space, food, bags, inexpensive give-aways, etc. Ask the families you invite to bring desserts. This makes them a part of the event and can be a great talking point.

Look for venues large enough for the number of anticipated attendees, then ask the site to provide the space at no or a reduced cost. Ask if tables can be provided for the displays and find out the size of the tables. If tables are not available, ask those with displays to bring their own, if possible.

Remember, most people really want to help others but are not often asked. Ask for contributions that are possible and preferably easy for the giver to provide. Whatever they can give is appreciated.

An event budget tracking document is provided to help (see **Attachment J - Budget**). We also have this attachment in its original format, complete with formulas.

Who Has Experience With Planning a Matching Event?

Many groups have already done matching events and it may help you to speak with some of those when planning your own event. Below is a list of some who can tell you about their experiences:

- The Northeast Foster Care Coalition hosts a matching event in November. Contact: Nancy Johnson at 570-963-6781 or johnsonn@lackawannacounty.org
- York Area Coalition, comprised of Children's Home of York, Diakon York, and York County Children & Youth. Contact: Kim Deiter at 717-231-5384 or kdeiter@diakon-swan.org.
- Capitol Region Adoption Coalition, comprised of agencies from Harrisburg and surrounding area. Contact Donna Zimmerman at 717-238-5944 or dzimmerman@hbgdiocese.org.

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- Three Rivers Adoption Council sponsors an annual Zoo Event, inviting adoptive and prospective adoptive families. Contact: Bridget Clement at 412-471-8722 or beclement@3riversadopt.org.
- Connections By Choice – A multi-agency collaborative that has sponsored multiple matching events in western Pennsylvania. Contact Kirsti Adkins of the Lutheran Service Society of Western Pennsylvania at 724 837-9385 or kadkins@lsswpa.org.

Evaluating the Success

How will you know if you hit the mark with your event? Did you match children and families? How will you find out? Answering these questions should be a two-step process.



First, at the event itself, use a questionnaire (see **Attachment K – On-site Matching Event Evaluation Form**). Second, make follow-up calls to families (see **Attachments L and M – Follow-up Evaluation and Matching Sign-in Sheet**).

Ask families to sign in when they arrive at the event and ask for permission to follow up in several months to see if they found the event helpful. The SWAN Helpline can assist in making those calls. If you wish to have follow-up calls made to families, contact the SWAN Helpline at 1-800-585-7926 or the Helpline Support Manager Karen Oldham by e-mail at KOldham@diakon-swan.org.

Whew, It's Over!

You need to critique and review your event with the other event planners.

- Ideally you should wait several days after the event before you do this review, but you shouldn't wait longer than 2 weeks. You want people to have time to think about what went right and what needs work for the next time, but you don't want so much time to pass that they forget the details.
- The review should be very simple. Ask the committee members for their thoughts. Write down these answers on a flip chart so everyone can see. (see **Attachment N - After Event Action** for flip chart headings.)
- Begin the review by discussing your intended result. Some of the questions to ask are:
 - Did any children find a possible permanent connection? How, specifically, did this come about? What steps of the event planning supported this outcome?
 - Did all invited agencies attend? If yes, what (or who) made that happen? If no, how can you improve this for future matching events?

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- How successful were the planning details? Did you have enough food? Was parking sufficient? Did everyone have directions and was the location an easy one for the participants? Was the space sufficient? How can these concerns be addressed at future events? What worked well and should be repeated?
- Use this information at the first planning session of your next matching event to help make that one an even bigger success.
- And one last thing....

*Please remember to write thank you notes to all your sponsors and volunteers, and tell them the outcome of your event.
Tell them how many people attended.
Tell them if any matches were made.
Your successes from this event will make them want to participate even more in your next event.*

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Attachment A – Adoption Awareness Action Plan

Event Name
Location
Date
Time

Describe the event / where it will be / what it's for / when it will be / purpose/ time, etc.

List specific duties and responsibilities of everyone who will be involved in planning and carrying out your event. This list will grow as the event planning continues. Every individual/group that helps with the planning should know their responsibility and assignment. When activities are eventually assigned due dates and times, these should be included as well. Eventually you can list what time individuals should arrive, what they should wear, what they need to bring, etc.

The categories listed here are the basic ones you need to think about to plan your event:

- **Media Exposure** – List the media that will attend and when they say they will arrive. If a reporter/writer says they will do a story before or during the event, list that here so you can follow up.
- **Hosting Venue Responsibilities** – What will the venue provide for the event, when will it be available and where is it located? This should include everything from electrical cables to signs pointing people in the proper direction.
- **Sponsor responsibilities** – If you have a sponsor, what are they donating and when? What do they want from you and when?
- **Agency responsibilities** – This is what your agency will provide/ plan /bring to the event.
- **Participant Responsibilities** – Your helpers. What did they agree to bring or set up? What will they do during the event? When will they arrive?

Note: If you're not sure you've thought of everything, we can provide a sample of a completed action plan that was used by SWAN for the 2005 Williams Grove Speedway Adoption Night event. Please e-mail info@diakon-swan.org or telephone 1-888-793-2512 if you would prefer this version.

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Attachment B – Sample Confirmation to Host

[Date]

[Host Name
Host Address]

Dear [name of host or sponsor]

Thank you for your willingness to partner with the [your agency/name/group] to host the [name / date of event]

[List in detail all agreed on terms / personnel / activities etc]

[Thank you's and your own contact information]

[Closing]

Note: If you want to see a sample of a completed confirmation letter that was used by SWAN during the 2005 Williams Grove Speedway Adoption Event, please e-mail info@diakon-swan.org or telephone 1-888-793-2512 for a copy.

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Attachment C – Sample Press Release

Put all the time/date/location information for your event in the first sentence or paragraph.

In the second paragraph and those immediately following: Add more details about the event. Keep in mind that **the most important information should always go first**. Every additional paragraph should contain information that's a little less critical. This is because when newspapers "cut" material that is too long to fit their allotted space, they start from the bottom of a story and work up. Putting your most important information first helps to ensure that it won't get cut.

In the next paragraphs: Talk about the sponsor, the event itself, the purpose of the event, other participants etc.

- Include your contact information on each page (especially if submitted as a hard copy).
- Be sure to give the media plenty of time to run your piece and contact you. Submitting something 3 weeks in advance for newspapers/TV/radio is **not** too far ahead.
- Ask media outlets if they are interested in doing a feature about your event (more publicity).
- Call them to make sure they got the release and ask when they will run it.

If you want to see a complete sample press release that was used by SWAN during the 2005 Williams Grove Speedway event, please contact please e-mail info@diakon-swan.org or telephone 1-888-793-2512 for a copy.

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Attachment D – Sample Staff Schedule

[Name, Location and Date of event]

Schedule

[Time]	[Task]	[Location]	[Person Responsible]
[Time]	[Task]	[Location]	[Person Responsible]
[Time]	[Task]	[Location]	[Person Responsible]
[Time]	[Task]	[Location]	[Person Responsible]
[Time]	[Task]	[Location]	[Person Responsible]
[Time]	[Task]	[Location]	[Person Responsible]

From the first activity of your event to the last, list the times, locations and a short description of each activity for your event **in chronological order**. The first timeslot will be the first activity of your event—probably when the first person arrives to set something up and where that will be. The last timeslot will be the last activity of the event, probably clean-up. In between, you should include all the start and end times for each task and the person assigned to that task for each step of your day.

If you'd like to see a completed schedule used by SWAN during an event in 2005, please e-mail info@diakon-swan.org or telephone 1-888-793-2512 for a copy.

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Attachment E – Talking Points

[Date]

[Contact Name]

[Contact Address]

Dear [Contact]:

[Greeting or opening. Talk about your goals for the upcoming event]

Provide information for **non-professionals** (sponsors, celebrities, venue personnel, families, other participants, even the waiting children) to use to answer questions they may be asked about your event. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Pennsylvania’s adoption or waiting child statistics.
 - How families can become adoptive parents.
 - What you don’t need to be an adoptive parent.
- Information about becoming a foster parent.
 - What’s important for potential foster parents to know?
 - What’s a common misconception about becoming a foster parent?
- Information about your agency and what you do.
 - How your agency can help potential families and children.
- A statement about the goal of your event.
- Logistical information about the event itself for their reference.

[Thank you and closing]

Note: If you’d like to see a completed “talking points” used by SWAN during an event in 2005, please e-mail info@diakon-swan.org or telephone 1-888-793-2512 for a copy.

Adoption Awareness and Matching Event Planner

Attachment F – Do's and Don'ts of Celebrity Invites **Invite a Celebrity to Your Adoption Event - Do's and Don'ts**

Do's

- Think about what you hope the celebrity's appearance will accomplish before choosing one.
 - Is it increased media attention for your event?
 - Is it increased attendance by the general public?
 - Is your celebrity choice a good match for your audience?

- For best results, focus on local celebrities. They are much more likely to attend.

- If you choose to invite a major celebrity, try to select one with a local connection, one with a previously known interest in adoption or one with an interest in the venue/event where your activity will be held. This will improve the likelihood of a positive response.
 - For example, a major celebrity who was originally from your area would be more likely to attend your event than one with no connection to the area.
 - A celebrity who is an adoptive parent or who was adopted might be a good choice.
 - A celebrity from the same sport as your hosting venue might be able to attend.
 - Does your sister's husband or cousin or friend of a friend know a celebrity?

- Please be aware that your letter will compete with firms who do nothing but invite and book celebrities for charity events.
 - It is not uncommon for a celebrity's representative to receive 30+ requests per day for a celebrity to attend an event, so explain why your pitch is special, preferably with facts and figures.
 - If the first answer is no, try to find out why. A sudden change in a celebrity's schedule (or your offer) may change the outcome.

- Keep your invitation fairly short and invite the celebrity's representatives to contact you to work out the details.
 - It is preferable to write to the celebrity or the celebrity's publicist if you know their name. Celebrity agents are not considered the best choice for non-profit requests.

- Tell the celebrity early in the letter what you want them to do and when.
 - Be sure to indicate how long you will need them for (one hour, 8 hours, etc.)
 - Tell them what you'd like them to do—give a speech, present an award, attend a press conference, etc.
 - Indicate the dress code for the event.
 - Indicate if the invitation includes the celebrity's partner.
 - Tell the celebrity exactly what you are prepared to offer to do for them.

- Make your request as early as possible as many celebrity schedules are planned a year or more in advance.

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- If you don't hear from the celebrity or agent at first, be persistent and charming and continue to make contacts with their staff.
- Indicate in your invitation letter what you can provide the celebrity, i.e. limousine, hotel costs, plane costs if your budget allows.
 - The easier you make it for a celebrity to attend your event, the more likely they will say yes.
 - Find out about any special dietary requirements.
 - Set limits on the expenses you are willing to cover and let the celebrity know these limits in advance. Don't state you are willing to cover all expenses unless you are prepared to cover any amount.
- Be sure your sponsoring venue is aware of and approves the celebrity's attendance.
 - You will need to consider security arrangements and arrange for them with both your celebrity and the hosting venue.
- Try to arrange time for a celebrity to see the work you do. It will inspire and inform them. It might also lead to further commitments and increased media attention.
 - Celebrities can be powerful spokespeople for an organization - so it is vital to brief them clearly. Be sure to create a "talking points" document just for them.
 - Simplify the issue to a maximum of three bullet points, include a human interest story and keep statistics simple.
- Accompany your celebrity to all event interviews to help clarify and explain issues and answer any questions that they cannot.
 - Be sensitive to the celebrity's needs.
- If your celebrity is gracious enough to attend, a giveaway bag of items from your event and/or other sponsors will be much appreciated.
 - Send a thank you letter after the event and tell them how their presence added to your event.

Don'ts

- DON'T surprise celebrities with things you want them to do that were not part of the original request or contract. DO state everything you need from the celebrity up front, and make sure that they are well briefed as to what to expect and the purpose of their involvement.
- DON'T ask celebrities to arrive too early, when there's no one around to show enthusiasm for their arrival.
- DON'T make any promises that you can't keep and DO keep all of the promises you make.

Attachment G – Sponsorship Letter Template

[Date]

[Contact Name]
[Contact Address]

Dear [Contact]:

Recently you were contacted about [name, date, location of your event]. Currently, more than 1,100 special needs children in Pennsylvania wait to be adopted, and we hope this event will increase awareness within the [overall event audience] community of the need for adoptive families. [Event name] is sponsored by [your event's main sponsor, if applicable].

Our goal is to promote adoption awareness during the [main venue event of which you will be a part]. To that end, we are seeking sponsors who may be able to sponsor or provide some of the items listed below. All secondary sponsors will be mentioned in the [event program, if applicable]. We are looking for donations of:

- Items you'd like donated for giveaways
- Items for which you'd like the cost donated (Tables, chairs, other rentals)
- Other items
- Food

[Explain a little more about the purpose of your event, why it's important and what is planned]

[Explain how the event is publicized and who will cover the event. If this is a continuing event, stress how many people came in previous years.]

Please consider becoming one of the sponsors of our event. We have enclosed more information about doing that. We will contact you in the near future to discuss the details. Our hope is that the 1,100 children who are without a permanent family will no longer wait as a result of our efforts. Together we can make a difference in the life a child who needs a family.

Thank you for your time and consideration of our request. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [contact information].

[Closing]

Attachment H – Sponsorship Form

[Your logo here]

Sponsorship Form
[Event – date – time – location]

Our company has agreed to provide the following:

_____ Monetary donation to be used as needed. Total amount of \$ _____.

_____ Giveaways, please provide details in the space below.

_____ [Free tickets to the venue or tickets at a reduced price, if applicable for your event]

_____ Other, please specify in space provided directly below.

Company Name _____

Contact Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

E-mail Address _____

Please complete this form, make checks payable to [your agency] and return the form to:

[Your agency contact information]

Adoption Awareness and Matching Event Planner

Attachment I – Matching Event Tracking

Matching Event Tracking

This table summarizes many of the activities involved in planning a matching breakfast or dessert to help to promote waiting children to prospective families with the use of photos and videos.

Activity	Individual(s) Responsible	Due Date	Date Completed	Comments
Convene a planning group.				
Create a theme for the event.				
Set goals for the event.				
Number of children to be highlighted.				
Names of counties and agencies to invite.				
Number of families to attend the event.				
Estimate attendance.				
Establish a budget.				
Establish agency \$ available.				
Donations available (\$ and in-kind).				
Provide child care? (yes or no)				
Assign volunteers for the children’s group.				
Create children’s activities.				
Plan food or snacks and drinks.				
Talk with a local baker and solicit donations.				
Ask the committee members to bring dessert (yes or no).				
Ask the families to bring a dessert (yes or no).				
Create a time line and identify a responsible person for each activity.				
Select a location.				
Consider low cost or no fee sites.				

Attachment I – Matching Event Tracking

Matching Event Tracking				
Activity	Individual(s) Responsible	Due Date	Date Completed	Comments
Are tables available? (yes or no)				
Is the site handicapped accessible?				
How much parking is available?				
Send invitations to counties/agencies/families.				
Make personal calls to families – for personal invitations.				
Use families registered with agencies.				
Use list of families registered with PAE.				
Finalize the number of county and agency attendees and assign table(s).				
Create a list of attendees with name, addresses and phone numbers.				
Design room layout.				
What do you want to accomplish?				
Who should have the highest visibility?				
What flow do you want to accomplish?				
Review activities list and re-assess activities and responsibilities.				
Create an evaluation form.				

Adoption Awareness and Matching Event Planner

Attachment J – Budget

Matching Event Budget - Expenses

Total Expenses		Estimated	Actual
	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
	Estimated	Actual	
Site			
Room and hall fees			
Site staff			
Equipment			
Tables and chairs			
Totals	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Decorations			
Flowers			
Candles			
Lighting			
Balloons			
Paper Supplies			
Totals	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Publicity			
Graphics work			
Photocopying/Printing			
Postage			
Totals	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Miscellaneous			
Telephone			
Transportation			
Stationery supplies			
Fax services			
Totals	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Refreshments			
Food			
Drinks			
Linens			
Staff and gratuities			
Totals	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Program			
Performers			
Speakers			
Travel			
Hotel			
Other			
Totals	\$0.00	\$0.00	
Prizes			
Ribbons/Trophies			
Gifts			
Totals	\$0.00	\$0.00	

Matching Event Budget - Income

Total Income	Estimated	Actual
Financial Contributions		
	\$100.00	
	\$50.00	
	\$10.00	
Total	\$0.00	\$0.00
In-Kind Contributions		
Estimated Room Value		
Estimated Food Value		
Estimated Drink Value		
Estimated Giveaway Value		
Total	\$0.00	\$0.00
Table – Rental Fees		
Large Booths		
Small Booths		
Total	\$0.00	\$0.00
Sale of Items		
Items @		
Items @		
Total	\$0.00	\$0.00

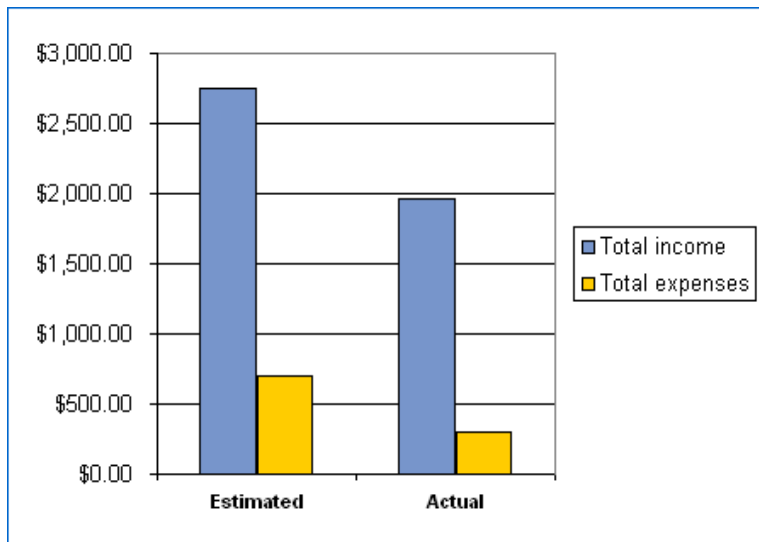
Adoption Awareness and Matching Event Planner

Matching Event Budget Profit – Loss Summary

Profit - Loss Summary

	Estimated	Actual
Total Income		
Total Expenses		
	\$0.00	\$0.00

Note: We will be glad to provide you with an Excel worksheet for this attachment, complete with formulas and a built-in graph similar to the one below. Please e-mail info@diakon-swan.org or telephone 1-888-793-2512 to request this attachment in that format.



Adoption Awareness and Matching Event Planner

Attachment K – On-site Matching Event Evaluation Form

Matching Event - Evaluation Form

This information will be used to help us plan more effectively for future matching events.

Demographics (Optional)

Age: ___ Parent 1, ___ Parent 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Single Parent <input type="checkbox"/> Two Parent
Race: <input type="checkbox"/> AA, <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic <input type="checkbox"/> Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Native Am. <input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial <input type="checkbox"/> Other	
Estimated number of miles traveled to this event?	
Completed the family profile <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Number of months since completion?

How were you notified of this matching event?

- Through the agency completing my family profile
- Through a letter from Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange
- Through a county children & youth agency
- Through the Diakon/FDR web page
- Other – Explain:

Was the notice of the event

- Less than 2 weeks in advance
- 2 – less than 3 weeks in advance
- 3 - 4 or more weeks in advance

Was the notice sufficient? Yes No

Explain:

Did this event meet your expectations? Yes No

Comments:

Were all your questions answered? Yes No

Explain:

Are there any other questions we can answer? Yes No

Question:

What can we do to improve the event?

Would you like to discuss anything further about this matching event?

No Yes Name: _____

Phone: ___/___ - _____ E-mail:

Adoption Awareness and Matching Event Planner

Attachment L – Follow-Up Evaluation
Matching Event - Follow-up Evaluation

Name of Family: _____

County: _____

Affiliate: _____

Matching Event Attended: _____

Date of Survey: _____

Purpose of this Questionnaire: 3 mo ____ 6 mo ____ 1 yr ____

Interviewer Note:

First Call Question:

1. Besides attending the matching dessert/breakfast, what other activities have you done or participated in, in order to find a child?

Follow up Call Question:

1. Have you attended any matching events since we last spoke with you, or participated in other activities in order to find a child?

Ask Questions 2 - 4 only if they were “NO” the first time the questions were asked.

2. Has your family profile been completed? Yes _____ No _____
3. Have you completed your training/preparation for adoption? Yes ____ No ____
4. After you attended the event, did you receive information on any children you had seen at the event? Yes _____ No _____

Ask the following set of questions through question 8 after referring to the first response from the family.

5. How quickly did somebody contact you about your interest in a child?
Less than a week _____ 2-3 weeks _____
One month _____ Two months _____
Longer than two months _____

Adoption Awareness and Matching Event Planner

If you received information, how many children did you receive information about?

6. Where any of these children placed with you? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, how many child placements have you had? _____

7. Are you moving to finalization with any children? Yes _____ No _____

8. Have you adopted any children at this time? Yes _____ No _____

Do not ask questions 9 or 10 for the 6 mo or 1 year follow-up calls.

9. Before attending the matching dessert/breakfast, what did you think the intent of this meeting was (check all that apply):

Find a child to adopt: _____

Meet children's caseworkers _____

Become familiar with the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange _____

Speak to somebody about problems/issues I/we had _____

Other (please mention): _____

Was not sure: _____

10. Please check all other items that apply as value for attending the matching event:

- Made contact with other agencies that provide adoption.
- Learned to use the PAE web site.
- Met with staff who are working with my family in the adoption process.
- Learned more about the adoption process.
- Updated information in my family profile.
- Other _____

Read the question and the family's first response, then ask "After additional time has passed, is there anything else that you would like to add to the worthwhile nature of the matching event?"

11. Based on your own experience, do you think that the matching event you attended was worthwhile? If yes, why? If no, why not?

12. If you have not yet found a child, would you attend another matching event?

Yes _____ No _____

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13. May we contact you in approximately three – nine months to see if you have made progress in adopting a child? Yes _____ No _____

14. If yes, phone number: _____

Demographics: (optional)

This information is being requested to help us better understand the matching process and how these matching events are used. Please feel free to decline answering.

Age Person 1: 20 – 29 ___ 30 – 39 ___ 40 – 49 ___ 50+ ___
Person 2: 20 – 29 ___ 30 – 39 ___ 40 – 49 ___ 50+ ___

Race Person 1: AA ___ Cauc ___ Hispanic ___ Asian ___ Native Am. ___ Other ___
Person 2: AA ___ Cauc ___ Hispanic ___ Asian ___ Native Am. ___ Other ___

Marital Status: Married ___ Separated ___ Divorced ___ Single ___

Income Level: 0 – 25,000 ___ 25,001-35,000 ___ 35,001 – 45,000 ___ 45,001 – 55,000 ___
55,000 + ___

Attachment M – Matching Sign-in Sheet

MATCHING EVENT SIGN-IN SHEET

Name	Address	Telephone	Agency Affiliation	Call (Y or N)

Attachment N – After Action Event Review

<p>What Did Not Work Or Things That Got Complaints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Bullet 1▪ Bullet 2▪ Bullet 3▪ Bullet 4▪ Bullet 5▪ Bullet 6	<p>What Worked Well (Definitely Keep)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Bullet 1▪ Bullet 2▪ Bullet 3▪ Bullet 4▪ Bullet 5▪ Bullet 6	<p>Suggestions for Future Improvement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Bullet 1▪ Bullet 2▪ Bullet 3▪ Bullet 4▪ Bullet 5▪ Bullet 6
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