



Administrative Update

2014 WINTER STATEWIDE MEETING

Congratulations, Eleanor! SWAN LSI Training Division Changes

We congratulate former SWAN Legal Services Initiative, LSI, Legal Training Specialist and Division Manager Eleanor Bush, Esq. on her recent election to serve as a judge for the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas.

Eleanor was sworn in on December 30, 2013. She practiced child welfare law for 12 years with The Juvenile Law Center, Kids Voice and the American Bar Association's Center on Children and the Law before joining Family Design Resources, Inc. in 2005. Since then, she has trained countless attorneys, paralegals, social workers, foster parents and other service providers, in addition to supervising and mentoring

the current legal training specialists, Rachel Meaker, Esq., and Benjamin Drinen, Esq. She also managed the Allegheny Legal Services Project, ALSP.

With Eleanor's resignation, Rachel and Ben were promoted to legal training division managers. Rachel will supervise and train two new legal training specialists, Ilene Dubin, Esq., and Alyssa Cowan, Esq., while Ben will directly supervise new ALSP Manager Michael Wahlen, Esq., and oversee the ALSP program. Both will continue their previous responsibilities such as legal training, Warmline assignments and conference and quarterly planning.

Special Points of Interest:

- Eleanor Bush elected judge
- Rachel Meaker and Ben Drinen named SWAN legal training division managers

SWAN Website Gets Facelift

The SWAN website, www.diakon-swan.org, is undergoing significant reconstruction. Not only is the site being updated to be more aesthetically pleasing and appealing, but content is also being updated to convey the most current and relevant information.

A NEWS feature will be added in the form of a blog for the prime contractor to highlight recent happenings and promote specific events.

Also, a FAMILY section will include information and resources for families who are interested in becoming a resource family, adopting or who have already provided permanency.

These are just a few of the anticipated enhancements. Please look for the updated SWAN prime contractor website to be released in this fiscal year.

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Jiff Pilot Project Looks Good So Far

An exciting new assessment tool is being piloted by the SWAN prime contractor for use in SWAN's post-permanency program. Eighteen affiliates are evaluating the Juvenile Inventory for Functioning, JIFF.

The JIFF is a hands-on, self-administered computer-based tool. The JIFF assessment was developed in 2004 by Kay Hodges, the developer of the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS). It was developed with child welfare, juvenile justice, education and public health systems in mind.

It is an evidence-based product with over 20 years of field testing.

The JIFF tool allows the affiliates to capture the input of key stakeholders in the post-permanency process including the youth and their caregiver.

The 18 affiliate agencies involved in this program have used the JIFF since September 2013. The pilot project will run for a year with affiliates meeting quarterly during this period to give feedback. The affiliates involved also regularly complete surveys to assist the SWAN prime contractor in

determining how usefulness the tool is in the assessment process.

So far the feedback from affiliates is positive. Affiliates have indicated the involvement of the stakeholders, especially the youth, have led to a great understanding of the key issues the youth and family are facing. The prime contractor will continue to keep the network updated on the progress of this new tool, as we move through this pilot project.

Family RFR Registration Requirements Explained

Recently, many caseworkers have expressed confusion about the requirements of the Resource Family Registry and whether or not they must register a family who seeks to become an approved foster or adoptive family.

The Child Protective Services Law, CPSL, requires all foster, adoptive and kinship families studied for placement of children through the Pennsylvania child welfare system to be registered with the

Resource Family Registry regardless of who completes the family profile or home study (23 PA.C.S. Chapter 63 § 6344 d.1). Therefore, SWAN affiliate agencies, as well as non-affiliated SWAN agencies that are licensed to provide foster and adoptive services must register foster, adoptive and kinship families they are working with on the family profile or home study process.

In addition to registering the family, the agency is responsible to

follow that family until they close and are no longer active with the agency.

If you have any questions about the registration status of families your agency serves, reports can be obtained online through the SWAN portal. If you are wondering if your agency is current with family registrations, contact your SWAN regional technical assistant for information.

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Update on...Finalizations

SWAN's Finalization services were used for 1,090 children in 2013. The finalization unit of service is used for children of all ages provided the child is in the custody of their county children and youth agency.

These services are particularly helpful for children for whom barriers may exist to their

placement as the unit can be used to plan services that address the barriers.

Though the vast majority of finalization services are used for children between the ages of 0 and 4 (47%), a significant number are used for children over age 9 (23%).

Additionally, finalization services were used for 35

children 16 or older.

Racially, the children using this unit of service are consistent with the percentage of waiting children; that is, 54% are white, 41% are Black or African American, and the rest are another race.

SWAN Portal Enhancements

The SWAN prime contractor continues its work to enhance the SWAN portal. As ever, our goal is to align the system with standard permanency practices and protocols.

We are excited that SWAN portal access is now available to our county OCYF regional representatives. This access allows regional representatives to review county CY890 reports on children with the goal of adoption.

Additionally they will now be able to view information about

children registered on the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange, PAE, by the county children and youth agencies.

Planned enhancements still to come are:

- Updates to allow for dual child goals to be entered in the portal in accordance with the concurrent planning bulletin;
- Updates to the placement types and closure reasons on the child data collection forms (CY130, CY890 and the County Child

Referral Form) for consistency with federal reporting systems, and

- Updates to service benchmarks to reflect current practice standards.

Please look for these enhancements to be completed in this fiscal year. If you have questions or feedback about the portal or have suggestions about how the system can be enhanced to better serve your needs, please contact your SWAN technical assistant.



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www.diakon-swan.org