

administrative *update*

Spring 2015 SWAN/ IL Quarterly Meeting
SWAN Prime Contract—www.diakon-swan.org

Making recruitment work

In the past one of the most frequent complaints about the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE) was the limitation on talking about the “true” child in the narrative. As the internet became more readily available, we heard fewer complaints about the narratives but still felt the need to tell the “rest of the story.” It was this thinking that resulted in two major changes for SWAN’s PAE and Helpline.

The first change is the use of specialized notes about the child that allows child specific recruitment workers and county caseworkers to tell “the rest of the story” about children without exposing their private information to the world. The notes are used in this way: anything that is not appropriate to be placed on the internet is placed in a private notes section of the child’s portal record. The child’s worker can share any special or private information with the PAE coordinator, who adds this information to the child’s notes section of their portal record. This information is then made available to approved families to assist them as they consider a child to add to their family.

Families may also receive a child’s information through Pennsylvania’s Seamless System. The Helpline staff speak with approved adoptive families and will routinely share the specialized notes information, special needs and characteristics about the child with those families. Once a family hears this additional information, they can then decide if they wish to continue to work towards providing permanency for that child or move forward with another child. This second change saves tremendous time for caseworkers who can eliminate the families with only a passing interest in a child and present children to families who are truly interested.

The SWAN Helpline serves as the sole point of entry for a permanent family seeking post-permanency services. **But**, did you know that a family in need of post-permanency services can contact the Helpline either by phone at **1-800-585-SWAN (7926)** or by email at swanhelpline@diakon-swan.org? SWAN Helpline completes a family’s request for post-permanency assessments. Helpline explains services to the family and submits the referral through SWAN portal while emailing a narrative to the contact person at the affiliate agency. Helpline checks back with family after 14 days to determine the status of the referral and to answer any more questions the family may have.

One final tip for making this all work for the child is to review the child’s special needs and characteristics on the CY130 form and make sure these are accurate and up to date. Also, please note some descriptions on the CY130 form should not be checked unless diagnosed by a professional because those characteristics can impact the child forever. Some of the very detrimental diagnoses are fire setting, abuses animals and inappropriate sexual behavior. Additionally, if a characteristic was once true but is no

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SWAN brochures released

2015 SWAN / IL Spring Quarterly meetings

April 1—Scranton

April 14—Clarion

April 15—Monroeville

April 22—Philadelphia

April 23—Lansdale

April 28—Enola

2015 Summer Statewide Meeting

June 23—24—Lancaster

23rd Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference

June 24-26—Lancaster

The SWAN prime contract is very excited to announce the release of two helpful brochures to guide those impacted by adoption. Whether you are working with an adoptee, a birth parent or birth family member, these resources will aid you in providing direction and support.

The first brochure is the [*PAIR Brochure: A Resource for Adoptees and their Birth Families*](#).

This brochure was officially released in August 2014 to provide general information about the Pennsylvania Adoption Information Registry (PAIR). It outlines who can submit and request information from the registry. Links direct you to where you can find the forms to complete the submission or the request. You will also find the contact information for additional resources and guidance.

The second brochure is the [*Adoption Search Brochure: Important Information for Those Impacted by Adoption*](#). This brochure was released in February 2015 to provide helpful information for people to begin their search process. This brochure highlights the “who, what, when, where and why’s” of adoption search. Contact information and additional links will assist searchers understand the laws and specific details for searching.

Both of these brochures can also be found at the SWAN website at www.diakon-swan.org under Publications, with additional links in the Adoption Search section under the Families tab. They can also be found on the Family Design Resources website at www.familydesign.org. We encourage you to download, print and distribute your copies today!

JIFF soon online

At the March post-permanency unit of service meetings, affiliates heard about a new assessment tool, the Juvenile Inventory for Functioning (JIFF). This new assessment will soon be added to the current tools used in the Case Assessment unit of service.

The interactive, computer-based JIFF will be used for youth aged 11 and older. It was designed by Kay Hodges, who developed the Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS), therefore the evidenced-based research of the CAFAS also supports the JIFF.

Before JIFF was implemented, youth did not have a strong voice in the assessment process. This tool changes that and does so in an electronic medium, with which most youth are comfortable.

The portal will be updated to reflect the addition of the new tool.

New diligent search packet is out!

The fifth and newest edition of the **SWAN LSI Diligent Search Packet (DS)** is released!

A diligent search is a comprehensive process to locate parents, relatives or other potential permanency resources or connections for a child who is receiving services or in the custody of an agency. The DS packet assists searchers by consolidating information and tools needed to complete their search. The 2015 edition also contains information to help your agency comply with new and existing laws related to diligent search. Updated information also includes websites to help with military and prison searches.

With each new edition, the Legal Services Initiative (LSI) DS Committee diligently reviews the existing information in the packet so the most effective resources are listed first, to help streamline the search process. Whether you are a seasoned searcher or a novice, you will be able to begin your process from page one! A checklist is always included in the attachments section to help guide your search and later support your documentation requirements for court.

By collaborating with the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), the SWAN LSI has enhanced the section on the Indian Child Welfare Act to assure Pennsylvania's practice complies with this federal law and guidelines. The International section was also updated to include the most supportive resources to help you navigate through these challenging searches.

Visit the LSI Diligent Search page on the SWAN website at www.diakon-swan.org to download and print your new edition today! If you have questions about your search, please remember to send your inquiry to the attention of the SWAN LSI DS Committee at the LSI Warmline – lsiwarmline@diakon-swan.org.

Finalization update

The SWAN Finalization unit of service is the last legal step in the adoption process. During the second quarter of fiscal year 2014-15 (October-December 2014), 294 children (150 boys, 135 girls and nine with gender unreported) completed the SWAN finalization service.

While more than 70% are younger children (0-8 years old), older children showed better outcomes in this quarter, compared to with the FY2013-14 second quarter.

- Percentage of children aged 13 and older among all finalized children increased from 6.9% to 8.8%.
- Number of children aged 13 and older who completed the SWAN finalization service increased by 30%, from 20 to 26.

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(continued from page 1) longer, then the form should be updated. Some of these characteristics that may have change are bed wetting, use of foul language, lying and stealing. The goal should be to accurately reflect the child but not to overstate any weaknesses.

SWAN prime contract

www.diakon-swan.org

717-236-8490

P.O. Box 4560

471 JPLwick Drive

Harrisburg, PA 17111

Fax: 717-236-8510