

Family CONNECTIONS

A PUBLICATION OF DIAKON ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE

Family overcomes challenges with help from Triple P Program



The Wendlings are a wonderful, wholesome family. Brad and Tammy have a son named Morgan who was adopted through the help of Diakon. They have a foster daughter in their care as well. Morgan and their foster daughter are both four years old, just four days apart from each other. They are Virtual Twins. After many years of attempts, Brad and Tammy were unable to have biological children of their own. A friend who worked for Diakon connected them and the rest was history.

The initial motivation to do the Triple P Program (Positive Parenting Program) was to get hours in for the year, and because they were caring for a child who has trauma, they knew it would be a good fit for them. The first year, the family was able to take Triple P one-on-one with their case manager. The second year, they took it in a group setting.

Triple P's biggest takeaways involved the family making a goal to always review the plan before things were happening. With a child who has endured trauma, they quickly realized that setting expectations also created a sense of security and

knowing what was next on the list. They also found that behavioral charts helped during the first year.

Things changed when the little ones turned four the second year. We discovered that giving gold coins as an incentive for good deeds worked better for the family. By the time we were ready to do the chart, some things fell off the list so they weren't being rewarded instantly. If they did something where they needed to be redirected, most often it overshadowed the good. The family found that the coins caught them in the moment, and gave each a special bag to keep their gold coins in.

The Wendlings express that they are truly grateful for the time Diakon has devoted to Triple P, specifically mentioning that their trainers are amazing, invoke incredible dialogue and are always open to questions and suggestions. "I think that having trainers who know your family is also very important. They knew what was going to work for us and where we would have challenges prior to implementing new tools," Tammy said.

FINALIZATIONS

Emmitt
1/24/23
Blair & Edward
Jonestown, PA

Zoei & Grayson
4/11/23
Rochelle
Coplay, PA

Matthew & Sophie
3/15/23
Regina
Mohrsville, PA

Faith
2/14/23
Juan
Easton, PA

Kaitlyn
4/4/23
Lori & Tim
Hershey, PA

Trinity & Kai
4/4/23
Debra & Mark
Allentown, PA

Amarah, Dominica & Mekhi
2/14/23
Brielle
Kunkeltown, PA

Adelaide
2/26/23
Kevin & Stacy
Wernersville, PA

Vivian
4/11/23
Alfred
Hatboro, PA

Kyare
2/14/23
Jessica
Bethlehem, PA

Dayanara
4/11/23
Pablo
Northampton, PA

Samantha
3/27/23
Jennifer & Frances
Nazareth, PA

Parker
3/15/23
William & Laura
Birdsboro, PA

Annelise
4/18/23
Fresia
Easton, PA

Serenity
5/3/23
Nadya & Steve
Easton, PA

Ava
4/18/23
Daralice
Easton, PA

Madison & Gavin
5/9/23
Ambrosia & Steven
Kunkeltown, PA

Nlna
6/6/23
Jason & Cyndi
Allentown, PA

Zamir
4/18/23
Chiffon
Whitehall, PA

Oscar
6/6/23
Melissa & Joshua
Mt. Bethel, PA

Jasmine
6/14/23
Kelsey & David
Kutztown, PA

Heaven
5/16/23
Christina & Justin
Bethlehem, PA

Jaymar
9/21/23
Adail & Janet
Allentown, PA

Dylan
10/3/23
Krista
Gilberstville, PA

Nay'Lessie
5/4/23
Virginia
Allentown, PA



Heaven was adopted by Christina and Justin on May 16, 2023.



Jaymar was adopted by Adail and Janet on September 21, 2023.



Trinity and Kai were adopted by Mark and Debbie on April 4, 2023.

FINALIZATIONS

Continued from Page 2

Ayden, Rileigh & Wyatt
6/20/23
Dmitri & Brenna
Stroudsburg, PA

Elijah & Arianna
6/21/23
Davone & Desiree
Allentown, PA

Markus, Joshua & Joseph
6/13/23
Solsiris & Sandro
Macnugie, PA

Zaire & Zhariah
7/11/23
Chiffon
Whitehall, PA

Taylor
8/21/23
Leanna & William
Lehighton, PA

Oliver
5/31/23
Sheri & Amber
Reading, PA

Milana
9/19/23
Daniel & Ana
Easton, PA

Audrey
9/12/23
Kenneth & Sherry
Bath, PA

Lottie
9/19/23
Amadeo & Kathleen
Palmerton, PA

Tobias
9/22/23
Janie
Allentown, PA

Amelia
9/12/23
Courtney
Blandon, PA

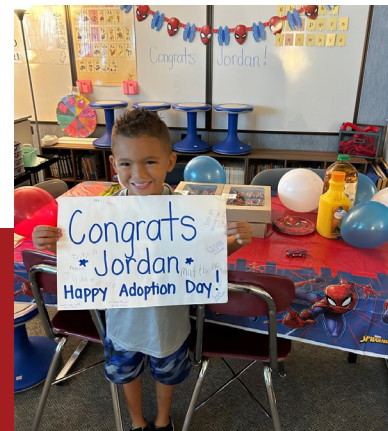
Juliana
9/21/23
Brian & Heather
Birdsboro, PA

Jason
9/22/23
Debra & Ryan
Saylorsburg, PA

Charlee
10/3/23
Terrance & Kellie
Emmaus, PA



Tobias (middle) was adopted by Janie (right) on September 22, 2023.



Jordan's classmates celebrated his Adoption Day with him!



Lottie (far left) was adopted by her parents, Kathleen and Amadeo on September 19, 2023.



Milana was adopted by her parents, Daniel and Ana, on September 19, 2022.



INCENTIVES FOR

Family Referral

One of the toughest parts of our job occurs when we cannot respond to the immediate need to place a child—because no family is available for that situation.

We need more great families like yours to meet the pressing needs of children and youths. In fact, you can help us — and help yourself in the process.

Diakon Adoption & Foster Care is now providing a stipend to Diakon resource families for each family you help to recruit who completes various stages of the approval and placement processes. More than 50% of the children in need of homes are over the age of 10 and an average of 30% of the children referred are part of a sibling group.

For you to be eligible for the full amount, the licensed home must accept a placement through one of our programs and the child(ren) must remain in the home for at least 30 days. **So that you receive credit, please ask the family calling or emailing us to identify you as their referral source.**

As a Diakon family, you are one of our most-critical resources. You have made a huge difference in the lives of waiting children and youths. ***Now, you can make an even greater difference by helping us to find even more families like yours!***

HERE IS THE INCENTIVE PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

- Identified family completes training: \$50
- Family approved/licensed: \$150
- Family accepts placement: \$300
- Family accepts placement of a teen (age 10 or older) or sibling group: \$500



www.diakon.org/adoption

Central Pennsylvania Office
960 Century Drive, Suite 101
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055
Phone: (717) 795-0320

Northeastern Pennsylvania Office One
South Home Avenue Topton, PA 19562
Phone: (610) 682-1504
www.diakon.org/adoption

South Central Pennsylvania Office
836 South George Street
York, PA 17403
Phone: (717) 845-9113



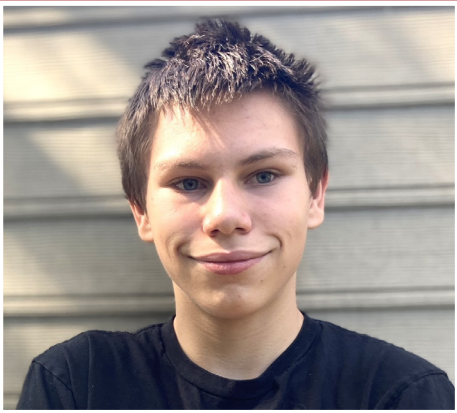
Waiting Youths

Help us to find forever families



Joshua

Joshua likes to complete puzzles, playing with blocks and trains. He enjoys the outdoors, especially going for walks, playing on the swings and going swimming. He'd spend every day of summer at the pool if possible. Joshua is very sociable and loves hugs. He enjoys storybooks being read to him, and looks forward to reading a book every night before bed.



Derek

Derek is an enjoyable, energetic and inquisitive youth that is searching for his forever family to provide him with guidance and support as he enters into adulthood. He loves swimming, watching cartoons, playing video games and being outdoors. He is a caring young man who will thrive with a family who will love him the way that he will love them, with all of his heart!



Isaiah

Isaiah is a young man who values fairness, being heard and feeling included. He likes to be busy and feel he is contributing in some way by mowing the lawn and doing tasks around the house. As an avid fisherman, Isaiah recently tried night fishing for the first time and loved it. He seems to enjoy working with his hands, particularly woodworking. He enjoys watching sports, especially cheering for Pittsburgh Steelers. Football season is his favorite season!





BOOK DRIVE FOR FOSTER CARE CHILDREN

Troy and Claudia Pankowski (pictured), one of our Diakon adoptive families, coordinated a book drive for children in foster care. With the support of Saint Ignatius Loyola Regional School in West Lawn, PA, the Pankowskis arranged a fundraiser to purchase books for our children. Claudia brought them to our Tipton office in October.

What a great way to both commemorate their own adoption and give to our current foster children! Thank you to Troy, Claudia and everyone at Saint Ignatius who participated!

If you or anyone you know would like to arrange for any gift donations at any time of the year, please email Stacy at KlannS@diakon.org.



Pasos Program for Unaccompanied Children


Unaccompanied Children (UC) served in the LTFC Program (long-term foster care) arrive to the United States without a parent, relative or other adult to care for them. Unaccompanied Children are under the age of 18, typically ages 14 to 17 and 75% male. They are most often Spanish speaking and come predominantly from the Northern Triangle countries (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador) although Unaccompanied Children can be from countries around the world.

Pasos means “steps” in Spanish; we see our role as helping young people step forward safely toward a successful future. As Unaccompanied Children cope with all the uncertainties they face coming to the United States, our goal is to surround them with supportive teams and caregivers so they can focus on healing and just being kids.

Please contact us at 717-845-9113 or visit us at diakon.org/adoptionpasos to learn more.

Mark Your Calendar!

Families interested in learning more about adoption and foster care are invited to attend Diakon Adoption & Foster Care's free informational sessions, now being held virtually.



Please consult our website at diakon.org/adoption for updated lists as meeting times can change.

Contact Info:

EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

(610) 682-1504

BartholomewA@diakon.org

PENNSYLVANIA (Mechanicsburg)

(717) 795-0320

BaconJ@diakon.org

PENNSYLVANIA (York)

(717) 845-9113

KirkpatrickL@diakon.org

INFORMATION SESSIONS hosted by Diakon staff. Please register to receive the Zoom link by emailing recruitment@diakon.org.

- Nov. 2, 2023, 6-8 p.m.
- Nov. 8, 2023, 6-8 p.m.
- Nov. 14, 2023, 6-8 p.m.
- Nov. 29, 2023, 6-8 p.m.
- Dec. 7, 2023, 6-9 p.m.
- Dec. 13, 2023, 6-8 p.m.
- Dec. 19, 2023, 6-8 p.m.
- Dec. 27, 2023, 12-2 p.m.

TRAINING SESSIONS hosted by Capital-based staff. Please register to receive the Zoom link by emailing Lois Kirkpatrick at kirkpatrickl@diakon.org.

- Dec. 2, 2023, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Dec. 9, 2023, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Dec. 16, 2023, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

TRAINING SESSIONS hosted by Topton-based staff. Please register to receive the Zoom link by emailing April Bartholomew at BartholomewA@diakon.org.

- Nov. 4, 2023, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Nov. 11, 2023, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Nov. 18, 2023, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

PASOS SESSIONS hosted by Diakon-based staff. Please register to receive the Zoom link by emailing Emily Ubiera at UbieraE@diakon.org.

- Nov. 7, 2023, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 9, 2023, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 14, 2023, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 16, 2023, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 28, 2023, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Nov. 30, 2023, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 5, 2023, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 7, 2023, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 12, 2023, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 14, 2023, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 19, 2023, 6-7:30 p.m.
- Dec. 21, 2023, 6-7:30 p.m.

KINSHIP SESSIONS hosted by Topton-based staff. Please register to receive the Zoom link by emailing Gwen Albert at albertg@diakon.org.

- Dec. 6, 2023, 6-9 p.m.
- Dec. 13, 2023, 6-9 p.m.
- Dec. 20, 2023, 6-9 p.m.

HAVE YOU SEEN DIAKON ADOPTION & FOSTER CARE POP UP AT VENDOR FAIRS IN MONTGOMERY, LEHIGH, BERKS, CARBON AND CENTRAL PA COUNTIES?



We are always thrilled to meet with our partners and meet new staff at the counties. We know this wonderful collaboration is so crucial to the high quality of services provided to youth and families in each area.

THE DIAKON FAMILY SAFETY & SECURITY FUND



YOU MAY DIRECT YOUR GIFT IN NUMEROUS WAYS:

- Visit diakon.org/familygiving to make a secure online gift and read more about how you can make a difference.
- For donations via check (payable to “Diakon”), please mail to: Attn: Heather Hauser Diakon Office of Advancement One Home Ave., Topton, PA 19562.

HELP CHILDREN IN YOUR AREA THRIVE IN SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS!

In 2022, 60% of our foster children were placed in homes with a family member or friend. These “resource families” are stepping up as caregivers at a moment’s notice, incurring unexpected costs to provide the best homes for our youth.

If a caregiver for the children is struggling financially, your help can cover one-time costs to help this family member or friend be approved as a kinship caregiver. Kinship care can provide a safe and familiar environment in which significant attachments, identities, and cultures are preserved. While foster parents always do their best to provide a safe and nurturing environment, some children struggle to adapt to completely new situations. Kinship care offers a historically proven method of supporting children within their existing familial and cultural systems. A trained and supported kinship caregiver is able to care for children in a profound, intentional and successful way. Kinship caregivers have immediate unexpected costs for food, clothing, toys and supplies and often must wait several weeks into the placement for their first monthly stipend to help offset these expenses.

For these reasons, in 2023, we developed the Family Safety & Security Fund—which allows donors to support families to help them overcome obstacles that would otherwise delay a successful placement and can improve their quality of life.