

# Adoption Day Events: A Planner's Guide

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition



# Dedication

*This guide is dedicated to the memory of Karen Oldham, a dear friend, colleague and a devoted advocate for making every moment of a child's life special and unforgettable. If we were to have asked Karen her thoughts about planning an adoption event, she would have provided these helpful tips that we should all try to follow:*

- \* You can never have too many decorations;*
- \* Give generously of yourself;*
- \* Our children should always be in our hearts and guide our work;*
- \* Always try to incorporate music where possible; and*
- \* When all else fails – be sure to have a bag of Peanut M&M's around because "M&M's make friends!"*



# FOREWORD

In the United States, more than 123,000<sup>1</sup> children and youth in foster care await families they can forever call their own. In Pennsylvania, the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) exists to address the needs of foster children and youth. SWAN includes caseworkers from county children and youth agencies, juvenile court judges, foster and adoptive parents, private adoption agencies, the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange (PAE) and many others, all working together on behalf of children who need permanent homes.

SWAN's Legal Services Initiative (LSI) plays a significant role in addressing delays in the legal process that slow a child's move to a permanent family. By design, a paralegal's role in each county is flexible and varies to suit the county's needs. Over the years, many of these SWAN LSI paralegals (LSIPs) have organized, coordinated and supported events that commemorate adoptions, celebrate families and children and bring awareness to the ongoing need for foster and adoptive family resources.

In 2013, we created *Adoption Day Events: A Planner's Guide* with Pennsylvania's waiting children in mind. The LSI team created this tool for fellow paralegals, county and affiliate workers and additional colleagues throughout the network. Our original hope was to share our stories, successes and lessons learned. Since that time, we have heard of and been part of many exciting Adoption Day celebration events and Finalizations. This updated guide offers many additional suggestions from those who have planned or participated in these amazing events. Keep in mind, this guide is just that—a *guide*; your own creativity has no limits and neither does the positive impact of these events.

"I wish that Adoption Day events were mandatory for every CYS to have, because every family, child, and child welfare professional should get to experience what we get to experience in these moments."

Shelly Castillo, Program Specialist  
at Family Design Resources, Inc.

As you might be aware, the original *Adoption Day* guide also included information about adoption awareness and matching events planned in coordination with PAE. This updated guide focuses solely on the LSI paralegal's role and perspective in supporting county Adoption Day Events/Finalizations. To learn more about planning adoption awareness or matching events, see *Adoption Awareness and Matching Events: Planning for Success* in the SWAN Toolkit at <http://swantoolkit.org/toolkit/10-pae-toolkit/events/>.

We would like to extend a special thank you to all of those who contributed wonderful ideas and suggestions to update this guide, especially the LSIPs and staff from the following counties: Blair County, Butler County, Lackawanna County, Lawrence County, Luzerne County, Mercer County, Monroe County, Northumberland County, Philadelphia County, Washington County and Westmoreland County. Each of these counties provided us with detailed information regarding their successful events, providing us with a glimpse of what's happening throughout Pennsylvania. We couldn't have updated this wonderful resource without your help!

Shelly Castillo, program specialist at Family Design Resources, Inc. sums up the importance of these events: "As a child welfare professional, adoption day events are honestly the most rewarding experiences. I continue to be amazed year after year, as our LSI team produces such a wonderful experience for the children and families they don't personally know, yet feel so very committed to. It is a day when everyone involved in these cases can truly celebrate and reflect with the dedicated families and children, who have been through so much."

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.nationaladoptionday.org/about/>

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# HISTORY

Traditionally, November is recognized as National Adoption Month, and the Saturday before Thanksgiving is recognized as National Adoption Day. It's a wonderful time to get involved with the effort to make a difference in the lives of foster care children awaiting permanent homes in your community. So how did National Adoption Day and National Adoption Month come to be?

## Adoption Week

The roots of National Adoption Day date back to 1976 when then-Governor Michael Dukakis of Massachusetts wanted to bring awareness about the foster care children waiting for permanent homes in his state. Janice Halpern, director of public relations and fundraising for Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange told *Wicked Local Hanover*<sup>2</sup>, "It was a way to highlight the need for adoptive families for children in state care and to celebrate the families who had adopted children." This was the first major effort to promote awareness of the need for adoptive families for children in foster care (from [www.adopting.org](http://www.adopting.org)). Later that same year, President Gerald Ford proclaimed that adoption week would be nationally celebrated, and in 1984, President Ronald Reagan proclaimed the first National Adoption Week.

## Adoption Awareness Month

Because so many communities and organizations wanted to participate in National Adoption Week, President Bill Clinton proclaimed November as Adoption Awareness Month in 1995 to accommodate a greater number of events and celebrations.

Adoption Awareness Month's primary focus is to create awareness for adoption of children in foster care and those children still awaiting permanent families. Activities and celebrations during November help remind people about adoption and the ongoing need for permanent families for children in out-of-home care. These activities and celebrations are kicked off each year with a presidential proclamation, and at the local level, your city's mayor can also issue a proclamation for National Adoption Day.

## National Adoption Day

The first National Adoption Day was held in 2000 by a coalition of organizations dedicated to the cause. The National Adoption Day Coalition worked with courts, child advocates, foster care agencies and law firms to complete hundreds of foster care adoptions in nine cities nationwide. The coalition is made up of nonprofit partners, including The Alliance for Children's Rights, Casey Family Services, Children's Action Network, Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, Freddie Mac Foundation, National Adoption Awareness Month and Lifetime Adoption Foundation.

Nearly 70,000 children have been adopted from foster care on National Adoption Day since its inception in 2000<sup>3</sup>. This special day is celebrated nationwide with events to commemorate and finalize adoptions of children in foster care and celebrate their adoptive families. Help kick off a National Adoption Day event in your own community! Promote awareness for foster care children and the need for loving families to adopt through events, campaigns, educational opportunities and celebrations.



<sup>2</sup> [www.wickedlocal.com/hanover/features/x1966818734/Hanover-family-shares-their-story-of-adoption](http://www.wickedlocal.com/hanover/features/x1966818734/Hanover-family-shares-their-story-of-adoption).

<sup>3</sup> [www.nationaladoptionday.org](http://www.nationaladoptionday.org)

# WHERE DO I START?

You have been asked or have volunteered to plan an adoption event for your agency. Like planning any event, getting started can be the biggest challenge.

This section gives you a place to begin, possible event options, highlights from previous events and a host of helpful planning tool and tips. Please keep in mind that these are only suggestions or points of reference. Your event or combination of events can be as large or small and as simple or elaborate as you and your agency decide! Put your creative hat on and let's get started.

## Adoption Celebration Events

The purpose of an adoption celebration is to celebrate the joy of adoption and honor those children and their families whose lives are enriched by adoption. It is also a time to raise awareness about the many children in foster care who are still waiting to be adopted.

Adoption celebrations often occur during National Adoption Day/Month. It is common for the county commissioners to have an Adoption Day Proclamation in advance of the event that declares November as National Adoption Month, highlighting the specific adoption day within the county and spotlighting the number of children still awaiting permanency locally, statewide and nationally. (See [Attachment A](#) for sample proclamation.)

### Size of Event and County

The size of the adoption day celebration may vary by county. These are some factors that can influence your event:

- Budget
- Number of adoptions that occurred in the county
- Type of celebration

### Location

Another important element to consider is your event's location. Where will the adoption day celebration take place? Be creative. Some examples include:

- *Banquet Facility*  
Consider hosting a recognition dinner for families like [Blair County](#) did.
- *Local Park or Community Facility*  
Suggest that your county plant a commemorative tree to remember the celebration in honor of the family, symbolizing the growth of the family. One of our counties used a community ice skating rink for their adoption day event.
- *Amusement Park (Adoptive Family Networking)*  
Invite families to celebrate a day of fun together at a local amusement park. See [Westmoreland County's](#) story for details.

Consider these questions to guide your event planning efforts:

#### Who?

- Who do you want to reach?
- Whom do you want to honor, celebrate, support, inform or collaborate with?
- Whose presence is needed for that to happen?

*Knowing your desired audience will help you develop your attendee list.*

#### What?

- What is the purpose of your event?
- What is the desired outcome: adoption finalizations, adoption celebrations, family fun?
- What will happen during the event?

*Knowing your intended purpose will help you select the type or combination of event types. This also helps you plan activities that will occur during the event.*

#### When?

- Will your event or multiple events occur in November? Another month? Once monthly? During the week? Weekend?

*Knowing when your event will occur is crucial to your planning process.*

#### Where?

- Will your event occur at the agency? Courthouse? Banquet hall? Community organization? Indoors? Outdoors?

*Knowing where your event will occur and limitations on capacity will help you determine the maximum number of attendees. Knowing if your event will be outdoors will help you plan for potential weather challenges.*

#### How?

- How will your event be funded?
- How will you get the planning done?

*Knowing if your agency has funds for your event will help you determine your need for donations or sponsors.*

When considering venues, family-friendly locations are of utmost importance if children and youth will attend. Choose wisely so that those attending and those supporting your event are comfortable.

- Know your location's capacity; the size of your venue will also limit or expand your desired number of attendees.
- Anticipate extra attendees and guests. It's almost a given that additional guests will show up. Having additional seating and tables preset for these situations will allow for flexibility.
- If outdoors, determine if a rain date is needed. If so, be sure to include that in the invitation.
- Consider handicapped accessibility needs.

## **Audience**

Use this opportunity to build collaboration among local adoption agencies, courts and advocacy organizations. Who are the people who will attend your adoption day celebration?

- Families
- Adoptees
- Caseworkers
- Judges
- Volunteers (include CASA)
- County Commissioners
- Politicians
- Affiliate Agency workers
- Adoption Advocates
- Policy Makers

Consider the following when composing and sending invitations to your event:

- Be clear and concise to avoid confusion or capacity issues.
- Know your attendees' limitations, if any, *before* the invitations are mailed out.
- When inviting families, specify if the invitation is intended for household members only or extended family as well.

Understand the dynamics and communication that occurs among resource families in your county when developing your guest list. If you intend to invite specific families to an event, such as those who have adopted in the past, be prepared for calls from other families who would like to attend regardless of the invitation details. Discuss these possible scenarios with your county colleagues to assure proper and diplomatic responses.

For sample Invitation Letters, see [Attachment B](#).

## Finalization Events

Adoption finalization events are a wonderful way to celebrate the creation of a forever family for a child. Finalization events schedule a number of children and families for a final adoption hearing on the same day. Finalization events patterned after National Adoption Day ([www.nationaladoptionday.org](http://www.nationaladoptionday.org)) are routinely scheduled in November (on or around the Saturday before Thanksgiving). However, adoption finalization events can and have occurred throughout the year. Some larger counties in Pennsylvania host monthly adoption finalization events. Finalization events are often spotlighted in the media, while also highlighting the need for children to achieve permanency with a forever family.

### *Consider these questions as you identify children and families to include in the event:*

- Does a family wish to participate in the adoption day event? (Some families may prefer a more subdued court day.)
- Has the termination of parental rights, TPR, been granted?
- Has the appeal period expired?
- Are the child and family profiles at or near completion allowing ample time for the completion and filing of adoption petitions and other court paperwork?
- Have adoption subsidy and/or post-adoption agreements been discussed, and will parties achieve agreement prior to the scheduled event?
- Will the event include public and private adoptions or only public child welfare adoptions?

*Please remember that a family's participation in the event should not delay permanency for the child. Consider timeliness when identifying which children and families might participate.*

A celebration at the courthouse can be a big undertaking, so you will likely need to form a committee to help. You will need to seek the permission of the judge(s) and assistance from court administration or court scheduling to block off the entire day or arrange a sufficient amount of court time for the finalization hearings. Jurisdictions that have hosted finalization events usually clear the court docket and ensure that only finalization hearings are scheduled for the duration of the event to ensure a joyous and celebratory courthouse atmosphere for the children and families.

### **Audience**

Adoption finalizations are a closed proceeding. The attendees for the finalization are the children, adoptive families, guests invited by the adoptive families, judges, court staff, attorneys, children and youth staff and volunteers to assist with the day. Other potential attendees may include the county commissioners and the media. If the media intends to do a story on the event, remember that confidentiality of the families **must** be maintained unless a family grants permission for an interview and signs a release.

### **Components of the Day**

Decide how you want to begin the event. The judge or county agency director could offer **opening remarks** to the children and families to kick off the event.

Providing **activities** like crafts or hiring performers to keep children busy while waiting for the finalization hearing can be a nice touch. Some jurisdictions select themes for the day and plan activities and characters to fit the theme. Activities can be as simple or as complex as your committee and the venue allow.

**Refreshments** are an easy way to make the day festive.

Consider providing beverages, cookies, a cake, finger foods or anything else your budget and venue can accommodate to celebrate the day.

Consider providing a **gift or memento** for the family to commemorate the day. Some popular gifts include a framed photo or a book about adoption. (See [Attachment C](#) for a list of books about Adoption). [Lackawanna County](#) provides families with a framed poem, which the judges read during the hearing.

### **Fun Tip:**



Take pictures of the child, family, judge and others after the finalization hearing!

## Planning Tips

While you are bound to learn many lessons on the way to planning your own adoption day event, we gathered the following helpful hints or words of wisdom:

### Planning Ahead

As you can imagine, organizing your event will take time and energy. Advanced planning and preparation will be extremely beneficial, not to mention a stress reliever! Whether your event occurs monthly, is a quaint gathering of a few families and staff, or is an all-out yearly extravaganza, the leg work you put in and organization skills you apply will truly pay off.

To help you start thinking about each aspect of planning, we have included a comprehensive event planning checklist and timeline ([Attachment D](#)). This tool can be used to stay focused at each phase of the planning process leading up to and including the day of your special event.

### Funding

Regardless of your county's size, the funds you have available (or not) or the number of people planning, these events are a success because of their purpose.

Don't let money be a barrier to any successful adoption day events. Many events have been held with little funding through the support of donations from the community. Remember to think outside of the box for potential sponsors of your event, including your county advisory board and attorneys.

Check to see if the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services/Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) has offered any mini-grant funding to support adoption-related events during the month of November for National Adoption Month. (See [Attachment E](#) for sample Donation/Sponsorship Tools).

### Thoughts to Consider While Planning:

We know for children in foster care to get to the stage of adoption, they have usually experienced a significant amount of grief and loss. As we look at holding adoption day events, we need to be aware that these events can bring a day of mixed emotions for all parties. For some, while celebrating the formation of their new family, they are also aware of the losses this day fully realizes. Additionally, some families might find themselves stepping up and serving as a parent instead of an extended family member, taking on a role they didn't anticipate. It's important for all of us to be sensitive to these possible circumstances when planning and holding your adoption day event.

### Media Outreach

In some cases, agencies can consider reaching out to traditional media outlets like **newspapers, radio** and **television** stations to highlight their event and generate awareness of the need for resource and adoptive families in the community. Reporters could even attend the event to interview county workers and families about their experiences, like they did for an event in [Luzerne County](#). If reporters will attend your event, consider assigning a county worker to act as the media liaison and speak on behalf of the county. You could also send your local newspaper a summary of your event to showcase your families and their adoption stories, while also promoting general awareness about your county's needs.

If the media intends to do a story on the event, remember that confidentiality of the families **must** be maintained unless a family grants permission for an interview and signs a release. (For an example of a release, see [Attachment F](#).)

**Social media** serves as a high impact, and usually free/low cost tool to help share information, spread awareness, and connect individuals in the community with their specific interests. Popular social media sites include: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram, and Pinterest.

Your county's children and youth agency may not specifically manage any social media accounts, and if this is the case, reach out to local affiliates who are working with the county for the event and ask if they would help you promote it. Additionally, if you are going to have any traditional media coverage for your event, those mediums typically have their own social media accounts that you may be able to share information through. These organizations may be able to help collect donations by reaching out to the community during the planning stages of the event as well.



While you might not share specific details about your Adoption Day Event publicly due to privacy matters, it is still possible to encourage general coverage of the event, basic information such as “Today is Xxxxx County’s 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Adoption Day!” or “Congratulations to the 19 children gaining their forever families today in Xxxxx County!”

Other uses of the sites could include: announcing National Adoption Day or the Proclamation, sharing adoption facts or statistics, sharing links to services/information or thanking participants and donors.

*Note: According to SWAN prime contractor protocol, prime contract staff, other than prime contract Communications staff or other designated spokespersons, may not coordinate, communicate to or have contact with media at any time, including in the scope of assisting with planning county or affiliate agency events.*

*SWAN prime contract Communications staff and prime contract subcontractors, including the Older Child Matching Initiative, are reminded that they must follow the directive of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Office of Press and Communications for any media outreach. Media involvement, communication with the media and press releases pertaining to SWAN require review and authorization by the DHS Office of Press and Communications.*

*Please contact the SWAN program administrator if you have questions about media outreach for SWAN-related events.*

### **Thank You Letters**

Be sure to thank all those who helped make the day possible—from the families, to the judges, to the donors and sponsors, to the support staff or planning committee. Each person had a part in making your event the best it could be! For assistance with thank you letters, see [Attachment G](#).

# RESOURCES

Past events planned by counties have often found success through partnerships with other organizations. Partners from within SWAN, the county, and the community have come together to help support adoption celebrations. Below, we've compiled a list of different resources to explore when planning your event.

## County

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### **Coworkers and County Staff**

Any adoption day event usually involves soliciting the help of many in order for the event to be successful. Develop a committee of coworkers and other county staff who will help throughout the various stages of holding this celebration. From the planning stage, to the actual coordination of the day's event, this committee should include people who will help create the theme for the day, plan activities, solicit donations, coordinate the pick-up of donations and items necessary for the event, and help in the overall flow on the day of the event.

When planning for your adoption day event, consider the resources you already have in your agency. Your coworkers or the people they know may have talents such as photography or playing an instrument that they'd be willing to donate to your event help make the children's day memorable.

### **Judges**

Invite the judge to be involved in the activities beyond the courtroom. Even if your event doesn't include finalizations, judges may want to be involved in celebrating the families they met through the adoption process. Including the judge at the beginning of your planning will help determine how involved he or she may want to be in the day. While some judges are more formal, others may want a more informal atmosphere that could include time for photos with the adoptive families, giving remarks or to give a small memento to the children.

When it comes to finalizations, many adoptions may be scheduled for the adoption day, so let the judge determine the flow of the day. Involve the judge with as many other activities on adoption day as their schedule allows.

→ *Note:* A collage of pictures from the day with a frame noting the date and event name can make a great "thank you" gift idea for your judge.

### **County Commissioners**

Your county commissioners can be a great resource if they are invited to participate in the celebration. Consider asking them to read a proclamation announcing the significance of the day.

## Community

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### **Places of Worship**

Churches and other places of worship are often willing to get involved, and they often have larger halls or meeting areas where you might host your event. These groups may be willing to donate their space for free, a minimal fee or in exchange for a donation to their church.

Congregations may be ready, willing and able to volunteer their time and energy to help support you event. Individuals

may be able to contribute food or baked goods for your guests. Churches and religious groups could also help by making gift giveaways (quilts, knickknacks) or by providing music or live entertainment. Leaders of area churches may be able to connect you with church groups that can offer help and support.

### **Medical Providers**

Local physician or pediatrician offices may contribute donations or want to become involved with your event. A pediatrician's office may be able to connect you with donations through the philanthropy wings of large healthcare providers or pharmaceutical companies.

### **Schools/Colleges/Universities**

Schools provide unique and creative pools of volunteers. Teachers and guidance counselors make excellent and skilled volunteers who will also hold current clearances if this is a requirement for your agency. Additionally, the guidance office at local high schools may be your best point of contact for recruiting student volunteers as they may need community service hours or to complete senior class projects.

### **Local Businesses**

Your local communities are filled with businesses that can provide endless resources for you: grocery stores, clothing stores, malls, restaurants, movie theaters, ice cream shops, florists, photographers, magicians, DJs, etc.

Some may be willing to donate food, drinks or flowers for your event and attendees. Others may donate gift cards, certificates, tickets or special discounts used as prizes, giveaways and gifts. Some businesses may be willing to donate at no cost to you. Others may charge a discounted rate. It's never too early to make contact with a local business. Keep in mind that many plan their charitable giving a year in advance.

### **Community Groups/Organizations**

While we have listed multiple opportunities in your communities from which you can receive support and assistance, try to think about any additional groups and organizations that may want to partner or aid you in some way. There may be rotary clubs, women's/men's groups and sports teams, just to name a few.

### **Service Providers**

Service providers are a large category of professionals, which can include those such as SWAN affiliate foster and adoption agencies, mental health providers and parenting centers. These agencies can be great partners and collaborators for your event. Some affiliates may want to help support the event, and other providers may be able to display posters and flyers to help promote your event. Affiliate agencies may even have space to host the event at no cost.

## **SWAN**

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### **SWAN LSI**

The great news is that there are SWAN LSI paralegals situated in all of the county children and youth agencies throughout Pennsylvania. The SWAN LSI staff have demonstrated strong initiative, volunteer spirit and willingness to assist the county agency with creating awareness, celebrating families, creating matching opportunities and finalizing forever families. They are all available to attend, volunteer and help support your event. As is always the case, you are welcome to reach out to the SWAN LSI staff for more information and ideas.

*"Planning for Adoption Day events are a great way for SWAN prime contract staff to collaborate and support one another in the work we do on behalf of our kids and families."*

Judi Damiano  
SWAN Program Administrator

### **SWAN Regional Technical Assistants (RTAs)**

Your county's assigned SWAN regional technical assistant may have insight into funding that could be available through OCYF to support events occurring in November as part of National Adoption Month. The RTAs and TA division managers are all happy to roll up their sleeves and volunteer to help support and attend events. (*Note for LSIPs: If you reach out to your RTA, be sure to keep your LSIC in the loop!*)

### **SWAN Helpline**

The SWAN Helpline is a tremendous resource for families, is the point of entry for Post-permanency services and is staffed with information and referral specialists. These specialists receive calls from families interested in adoption and foster care. First-time callers to Helpline are primarily prospective resource families seeking information about providing permanency to available children in the child welfare system. PAE and the SWAN Helpline work together with county children and youth agencies and affiliate agencies to bridge the gap between waiting children and waiting approved adoptive families. The SWAN Helpline provides in-depth information about available children to families with a completed approved family profile who are registered with PAE.

The SWAN Helpline acts as a contact for resource and adoptive families throughout the permanency process. They provide education, encouragement and follow-up to assess how families are progressing in their journey, and connect them with any resources and services they may need. The SWAN Helpline may be reached by phone at 1-800-585-7926 or by email at [SWANHelpline@diakon-swan.org](mailto:SWANHelpline@diakon-swan.org).

### **Post-permanency Services**

All families who live in Pennsylvania and provide permanency through adoption, whether or not they adopted a child from the child welfare system, even if the adoption was a private or international adoption, are eligible for Post-permanency services through the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN). In addition, formal kinship or permanent legal guardianship families who step forward to provide permanence to a Pennsylvania foster child are eligible for SWAN post-permanency services. These services are provided through SWAN at no charge to the family.

The services available are case advocacy, respite and support groups. Case advocacy focuses on making sure the family has the community resources that best meet their needs. The respite unit of service supports eligible families by developing resources to alleviate the pressures of parenting children with special needs. Support groups provide parents and children a chance to get together with other families and youth dealing with similar issues. The focus of this program is to help the family identify their strengths, establish goals and locate community resources for ongoing support after a family completes the SWAN services.

SWAN's Post-permanency brochure promotes Pennsylvania's free Post-permanency services that are available to eligible families. You may copy and distribute the brochure as you need. The brochure is located at: [http://www.diakon-swan.org/media/uploads/postpermbrochure\\_11092015.pdf](http://www.diakon-swan.org/media/uploads/postpermbrochure_11092015.pdf).

## **Program Technical Assistants (PTAs)**

The program technical assistants are experts on SWAN units of service. The SWAN PTAs train county agencies on topics such as grief and loss issues, the importance of maintaining sibling connections and Post-permanency services. The Post-permanency technical assistants could be an excellent partner for your event. PTAs can share information with families about the supports available to them after finalization.

## **The Network**

In many areas of the state, adoption and permanency coalitions have formed to support awareness, training and collaboration about adoption and permanency. Perhaps your county is already a part of a coalition? Perhaps a coalition would be willing to partner with your county for an adoption day event?

One of the most valuable resources available to SWAN are the children and families who have participated in the matching process, the child welfare system, the court process and finalization and who are willing to share their adoption story.

## *Helpful Websites*

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Below is a list of websites you can use to learn even more about National Adoption Day/Month celebrations and provide as resources about adoption-related topics:

[www.adopt.org](http://www.adopt.org) (National Adoption Center)

[www.diakon-swan.org](http://www.diakon-swan.org) (SWAN prime contract website)

[www.adoptpakids.org](http://www.adoptpakids.org) (PAE website)

[www.nationaladoptionday.org](http://www.nationaladoptionday.org) (National Adoption Day website)

[www.davethomasfoundation.org](http://www.davethomasfoundation.org) (Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption)

[www.courtkids.org](http://www.courtkids.org) (Comfort for Court Kids, Inc.)

[www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/](http://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/adoption/) (Child Welfare Information Gateway)

[www.adoptuskids.org](http://www.adoptuskids.org) (AdoptUSKids - National organization for foster youth)

# STORIES FROM THE COUNTIES

This section contains a collection of accounts gathered from several different counties describing how they have successfully planned and executed Adoption Celebration and Finalization events. We hope these examples can help boost your creativity and inspire your planning.

## Adoption Celebration Events

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### Blair County

Blair County Children, Youth, and Families along with the Blair County Children’s Roundtable recently held its second annual “Foster, Kinship, and Adoptive Families: Recognition and Appreciation Awards.” The ceremony recognizes families who have been nominated for outstanding service to the children and youth of Blair County. Executing such a special event for National Adoption Month requires a lot of hard work and collaboration.

*“The job that foster and adoptive families are asked to do is not an easy one. [...] Blair County CYF decided to celebrate the dedication, perseverance, hard work and love that these families embody.”*

Ashley Gehrdes  
Blair County Children, Youth and  
Families Administrator



Prior to the event, service providers submit nominations in the following five categories: Outstanding Kinship Family, Outstanding Adoptive Family, Outstanding New Foster Family, Outstanding Foster Family (Service to Younger Youth), and Outstanding Foster Family (Service to Older Youth). The families are presented to the Advisory Board with their identifying information removed for an unbiased selection of the winners. Many people from Blair County CYF and the community are invited to attend the event, including: the remaining nominees and their nominators, county commissioners, CYF advisory board, CYF solicitors, judges and hearing officers, JPO/CYF/human services administrators, LSI/PAE, and even the state senator and congressman representing the district. The event is held along with dinner

at a local hotel’s banquet hall. The event starts with a welcome reception followed by dinner and dessert. Next, the winners are each announced and invited to the stage to accept their awards. The families received a certificate as well as gift basket filled with many family-friendly items. Typically, a photographer captures the remarkable moments of the night. We also reach out to local news stations who may want to cover the event.

Blair County Children, Youth and Families Administrator Ashley Gehrdes discussed the agency’s commitment to recognizing these families, saying: “The job that foster and adoptive families are asked to do is not an easy one. The road to foster and/or adopt is not an easy one to travel., Blair County CYF decided to celebrate the dedication, perseverance, hard work and love that these families embody. We are honored to work with these families, and our Foster, Kinship and Adoptive Recognition and Appreciation Awards Dinner is only one way in which we hope to express our appreciation.”

Click [here](#) for supplemental documents provided by Blair County to help your planning efforts.

## Lawrence County

Almost every year, Lawrence County Children and Youth Services holds their annual Adoption Day Event during the month of November. This past year, our event was held on a Saturday at the Lawrence County Community Action Partnership's Ben Franklin Early Learning Center. Past events have been held at the Lawrence County Government Center, the agency itself and a local fire hall. When planning the event, the first thing we do is choose a new theme, such as "Superheroes," "Happily 'For'ever After," "Down on the Farm," "You're a Star," "Under the Big Top" and "Under the Sea." We invite nearly 100 adoptive families to the event, and the list is growing! We provide a plethora of food and beverages, all of which is either donated completely or in part by local businesses. Our menu has included: pizza, hot dogs, chicken tenders, salad, water, donuts, cases of potato chips, Eat'n Park Smiley Cookies, and more! We typically have a variety of activities on site. For past events, we've had: face painting, balloon animals, a large bounce house with a slide, a Velcro wall, a photo booth and a pick-a-prize auction. Some of our affiliate agencies provide crafts for the children to make, which is usually based on the year's theme.

This doesn't just come together overnight; it takes time and planning that starts early. We begin planning during the summer months. We have an initial meeting to discuss the previous year's event (what worked and what didn't work) then we pick our date and theme and start working. Once the venue is secure, we mail or hand-deliver donation request letters. Later, we have to follow up with the businesses to make arrangements for collecting the donated goods. We secure funding from the Advisory Board, Juvenile Court Hearing Officer, and the Adoption Day Mini Grants to pay for the venue, activities, invitations, decorations, treat bags, paper products, and anything else that was not donated. Because our families are very busy, we tried something new this past year and sent out Save the Dates in July, prior to the formal invitations. While it takes a lot of time and planning to pull off a great event, the true success of the day is the joy we see on the children's faces.

Click [here](#) for supplemental documents provided by Lawrence County to help your planning efforts.

## Luzerne County

Luzerne County Children and Youth Services holds an annual Adoption Celebration. The most recent event, which marked the celebrations 25<sup>th</sup> year, was a brunch held at the Holiday Inn Wilkes Barre-East Mountain, honoring the 2018 adoptive families, or as the invitation says, "Adoption Superstars," with brunch, guest speakers, and entertainment. The theme for the event was "A Star is Adopted" (an homage to the popular film, *A Star is Born*). Organizers made large stars were with each adoptee's name, and the children and families walked a red carpet as they entered the venue. A local magician provided entertainment for the event. This event not only celebrated the children and families whose lives were enriched through adoption, but also helped to raise awareness in the local community as WBRE TV (a local news station) covered the event. As part of the preparation, we sent press releases to local radio and TV outlets. The news station interviewed adoptive families that day and later aired a segment on it.

This annual celebration is the culmination of a year's worth of work from our Adoption Day Planning Committee, which meets regularly throughout the year assigning and accomplishing tasks in preparation for the special day.

Click [here](#) for supplemental documents provided by Luzerne County to help your planning efforts.

## Mercer County

*“Adoption Day is about celebrating our families and reminding them that we care.”*

Amy Hooks  
Resource Care Caseworker

Mercer County Children and Youth Services has hosted a variety of Adoption Day or Adoption Month events, including celebration and awareness events at a local fun center and bowling alley. Most recently, Mercer County has been hosting an annual ice cream social in November right at the agency. The event is a chance to celebrate current resource families, as well as generate interest for foster care and adoption by permitting curious families to stop by for more information.

Invitations are mailed to current resource families and anyone who recently inquired about becoming a resource parent. We use additional advertising methods such as print and television media, fliers and Facebook to reach potential families. During the event, we provide refreshments and set up coloring and craft activities for the children. There is also a pick-a-prize auction. Past activities have included candy tables, raffle baskets, a photo booth, ornament making station and rollerblading.

Mercer’s most recent event had over 100 people in attendance, and the agency received several phone calls from prospective families who had seen the advertisements or fliers. Mercer’s Adoption Day celebration is a fun and unique way to honor the current families we serve, as well as bring awareness and encouragement for others the get involved. Resource Care Caseworker Amy Hooks discussed the celebration, saying: “Adoption Day is about celebrating our families and reminding them that we care. At Mercer County, we do our best to provide our families with a fun, memorable event that they will cherish as a family.”

Click [here](#) for supplemental documents provided by Mercer County to help your planning efforts.

## Northumberland County

Northumberland County Children and Youth Services has celebrated National Adoption Awareness Month for the last eight years. Planning starts very early; as soon as the current celebration concludes, we schedule the next year’s celebration. The LSIPs take the lead in planning and set time aside throughout the year to discuss ideas. They write grant requests to local foundations to secure funding for the event. They send letters to local businesses seeking donations, shop for gifts for the families, schedule vendors, send invitations and help prepare the necessary paperwork to schedule the finalizations.

In 2018, the event was held at the Northumberland County Courthouse. The day was filled with joy as the children who were adopted throughout the year gathered at the courthouse with their forever families to play games in the courtroom, have their face painted, do arts and crafts and collect toys and other goodies. Northumberland County CYS arranged a photo booth for the event, a caricature artist to create masterpieces and a magician who wowed the crowd with balloon animals for the little ones. The event featured a small ceremony later in the morning with remarks from the president judge, dependency judge, CYS administrator, solicitor, and a guest speaker. The children and families all received a gift, and the children were invited to bang the Judge’s gavel – a moment that was truly a crowd pleaser!

Following the ceremony, everyone gathered for a special luncheon at a nearby restaurant, and the families continued to mingle and share stories of their joyful experience, having expanded their hearts and families through adoption. After lunch, everyone returned to the courthouse for an afternoon of adoption finalizations. Adoption Day is a rare court day in

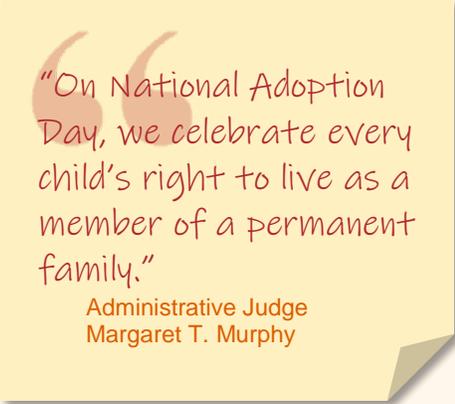
child welfare that agency staff, court personnel, and resource families look forward to!

Click [here](#) for supplemental documents provided by Northumberland County to help your planning efforts.

## Philadelphia County

The Philadelphia Department of Human Services and First Judicial District of PA, Court of Common Pleas, Family Division celebrated National Adoption Month in 2018 by hosting a party and public awareness event on November 16, 2018. Ten children and youth were adopted that morning and after the finalizations, their families joined together for a mini-festival in recognition of National Adoption Month.

The event was held on North Broad Street at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. There were more than one hundred attendees at the event, which was emceed by Mutha Knows, radio personality from Power 99. The celebration included breakfast with entertainment for the children including face painting, a photo booth, and arts and crafts activities. Mayor Jim Kenney gave remarks. Organizers set up a resource table with parent support material for all the attending guests. Fox29 and CBS3 news stations attended, and the event was heavily promoted through social media. Family Court Administrative Judge Margaret T. Murphy also gave remarks during the program, stating: “On National Adoption Day, we celebrate every child’s right to live as a member of a permanent family. Our goal is to minimize the length of time children live in foster care by either safely reuniting them with their families, or by accelerating their adoption. We applaud and thank the loving and nurturing adoptive parents, who make a child’s dream of being a member of a permanent and loving home their new reality.”



“On National Adoption Day, we celebrate every child’s right to live as a member of a permanent family.”

Administrative Judge  
Margaret T. Murphy

The Philadelphia Department of Human Services and the Philadelphia Family Court not only brought joy to the lives of children and families through this celebration, but they also helped to increase awareness of the many children still waiting for their forever homes by hosting this special event.

Click [here](#) for supplemental documents provided by Philadelphia County to help your planning efforts.

## Washington County

Washington County Children and Youth has had National Adoption Month celebrations for over ten years. Each year, we form a committee to plan the event. One of the first and most important tasks is choosing a theme! Some of our past themes have been: “King and Queen,” “Carnival,” “Autumn,” “Talent Show,” “Magic,” “Jungle,” and “Lego.” Additional committee tasks include: deciding a date, time, entertainment, and menu. We also assess the budget and from where we will be able to receive donations. Washington typically tries to apply for the National Adoption Month Mini Grant.

National Adoption Month in Washington kicks off with a Commissioner’s Meeting, during which commissioners read a proclamation and share information about National Adoption Month, as well as discuss the need for adoptive parents. The local newspaper and radio station are usually in attendance. Kate Grant, program specialist, discussed the county’s annual events, saying: “To celebrate adoptions each year gives adoptive families the opportunity to come together and

support each other during and after the adoption process. Our celebrations also give our staff the opportunity to see the family that they had a hand in creating.”

This past year, Washington County Children and Youth hosted a Saturday evening at Snapology, an education-focused family fun center, for a “Building Families Through Adoption” event. We invited 110 adoptive families who had adopted dependent children in the last two years. Agency staff members, judges, CASA staff, attorneys, and Advisory Board members are also invited. We provided a dinner of pizza, breadsticks, and chicken tenders, along with cupcakes and beverages. The children and families were able to engage and work together on activities provided through Snapology. In addition to providing dinner and entertainment, we held giveaways throughout the evening and also gave gifts to each family. Gifts included personalized adoption day blocks that had the new name of the child, the parents’ names, and the adoption day printed on them, gift bags, family photos at the event, and personalized chocolates. The event was well received and worth the work! In doing this for many years, there are few tips we can share:

- Start early!
- Keep it simple!
- Keep it kid-friendly!
- Look within your agency for talented staff (bakers, artists, photographers), it can save money!
- Send out donation letters early to local businesses, and follow up!
- Apply for grants! (Washington County was once the recipient of a \$500 Wal-Mart grant.)
- Reach out to social work clubs at local colleges and universities for help; they usually have community services requirements to fulfill.

Click [here](#) for supplemental documents provided by Washington County to help your planning efforts.

## Westmoreland County

The Westmoreland County Children’s Bureau celebrates the joy of adoption by hosting an annual event every summer, usually in July, at a local amusement park. Held at Idlewild & SoakZone in Ligonier, PA, this event is held for all children and families who had been adopted within the prior year. Idlewild donates tickets for the event, and a pavilion is reserved for the families to enjoy lunch at the park. After lunch and a few speeches, the rest of the day is spent exploring the park, enjoying a special family outing and maybe even making connections with other adoptive families.

Shara Saveikis, Westmoreland County Children’s Bureau executive director, explained how the event came to fruition: “As a new administrator in 2008, I recognized that there was often a delay in permanency, as many families waited to be adopted on the actual November event. This concern, prompted the need to establish an adoption day celebration that would be inclusive of all children that were adopted throughout the year, in a more conducive environment for children and their forever families. We chose Idlewild Park as the venue, and received financial assistance through our Advisory Board, and through other donors/donations.”

Click [here](#) for supplemental documents provided by Westmoreland County to help your planning efforts.

## Finalization Events

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### Allegheny County

Allegheny County holds nine to ten monthly Adoption Day (finalization) celebrations per year, including National Adoption Day. These celebrations are held the first Friday of every month, and usually three to four Judges volunteer to handle the adoptions. On Adoption Days, regular court business usually ends by 1 pm, when families start to arrive. County volunteers set up a separate waiting area for families, so as not to disrupt anyone involved in other hearings. The families check in with our volunteers, and the waiting area hosts entertainment including a balloon artist and a button maker. We also provide a table with refreshments for the kids while they wait for their hearing to be called. Rather than using the courthouse intercom, county staff personally inform the families that it's their turn to come to the courtroom. Each courtroom has an individual assigned to take pictures with the judge after the hearing and to hand out the gift bags to each child.

*"Adoption Day reinvents the courthouse into a place that celebrates the creation of new families."*

Michael Wahlen, Esq.  
Director of the Adoption Legal  
Services Project

The hearings are ordered with the youngest adoptees first and older kids following. Each judge has a unique style, but everyone makes the process much more of a celebration than a formal hearing. The judges also make efforts to accommodate families which means everyone can invite as many as they want to see the adoption. Families may video chat with relatives who want to watch, and the court can also accommodate families using video conferencing if an adoptive parent needs to participate in the hearing remotely.

Michael Wahlen, Esq., director of the Adoption Legal Services Project, summarizes the event, saying: "Adoption Day reinvents the courthouse into a place that celebrate the creation of new families. The event creates an atmosphere of celebration, happiness and, in some cases, relief that their adoption journey has come to a happy end and a new journey begins. Each family gets their own moment to cherish with a private hearing (which is much more of a celebration than hearing) and our judges conclude by inviting the families up for pictures to make the adoption a memorable moment. For everything that goes into making the adoption possible, we are so fortunate to be able to provide families with this special experience."

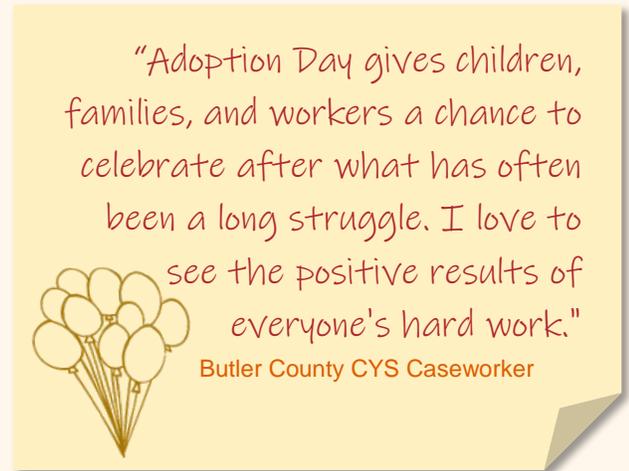
### Butler County

Butler County's Adoption Day is typically held every November at the Butler County Courthouse. The event occurs on a weekday in conjunction with the finalization of a dozen or more adoptions. The celebration goes on all day, and children and their new forever families enjoy refreshments and activities/entertainment before or after their adoption hearing. The event is for children adopted through CYS, as well as privately/internationally. This past year, approximately 25 children were adopted on Adoption Day. Adoptive families are invited, as well as any family members or friends that they choose to invite. Service providers and affiliate agency staff also attend and usually supply some sort of craft as well as volunteer their time for the day. A volunteer photographer takes photos of the children and families with the judge after each hearing to send to them later. The children and families are presented with gifts and sometimes balloons or flowers.

Although we don't always have a theme aside from fall decorations, our most recent Adoption Day celebration focused on the Dr. Seuss book *Oh, the Places You'll Go*, and CYS Agency staff members set up a photo booth to fit the theme. There

was also a balloon artist to provide entertainment for the children. We've had other activities in the past such as arts and crafts, a caricature artist, therapy dogs, raffle baskets and staff dressed up as princesses and superheroes for photos with the kids. While we do have a budget for refreshments, much of the food and drinks are provided by CYS staff and community donors. We typically have plenty of cookies, brownies, and donuts, as well as bagels, meat and cheese trays, fruit and vegetable trays, chips, coffee, water and lemonade. On a few occasions, a reporter and photographer have been present to cover some of the event for the local newspaper. The Adoption Day celebration comes together thanks to the agency's Adoption Day Committee, which starts the process early in the year to ensure there are enough funds and donations. Additional support is received from the Judge, attorneys, community partners, the advisory board, affiliate agencies, and of course, our families.

Once November comes around, the festivities kick off with an adoption day proclamation by the Butler County commissioners. On the day of the event, adoptions are finalized, and international adoptions are recognized as well. The families enjoy refreshments, gift bags, entertainment, and family portraits with Judge Kelley Streib. It's a special day that wouldn't be possible without the support of the children and youth staff, judges, attorneys, community partners and most importantly, the resource families. "Adoption Day gives children, families, and workers a chance to celebrate after what has often been a long struggle. I love to see the positive results of everyone's hard work," explains a Butler County CYS Caseworker.



LSIP Nicole DeSignore shares that, "For nearly two years, caseworkers, supervisors, paralegals, foster parents, service providers, attorneys, the courts and so many other individuals work toward permanency for a child. As a paralegal, a lot of our work is behind the scenes. We know their names and birthdates, we know the date they came into the system and why, but we don't get to know them. On that day in November, we get to know that all of the work that we did helped get them to this moment where they were adopted. It's really something to be proud of."

Click [here](#) for supplemental documents provided by Butler County to help your planning efforts.

## Lackawanna County

In Lackawanna County, planning for the annual Adoption Day event begins long before that special day in November arrives. To begin planning, event organizers choose a theme based on the ages of the children who will be adopted. Then, they plan the rest of the event around that theme with food, decorations and costume characters for entertainment. The theme for the Adoption Day event held in 2018 was "Disney Characters," and many members of the Lackawanna County Children and Youth team dressed up in costumes to entertain the children. All families who adopted throughout the year are invited to attend, as is the entire Lackawanna County team including CYS and other supportive agencies and court staff.

Adoption Day takes place at the Lackawanna County Courthouse. The event organizers decorate the hallways and courtrooms and set up games, food, drinks and a basket raffle for guests. Children and families mingle and enjoy each other's company. Throughout the day, families come and go—entering the courtroom with a special bond, then exiting as

a newly formed family. Approximately eight adoptions occur on Adoption Day in Lackawanna County, and each of the five judges share in the experience of hearing an adoption or two. At the end of each adoption hearing, the judge reads a poem and presents the child(ren) with a framed version of the poem as a commemorative gift. A photographer also donates her services for the day, and takes pictures of the event, including a beautiful photo of each family after their adoption has occurred. As the day draws to a close, everyone involved seems to feel that they are part of a greater cause. When asked about what the day means to her, the agency’s adoption supervisor replied: “Providing permanency and a life-long connection for every child is the most rewarding experience.” Following Adoption Day, the agency releases a newsletter containing information on adoption and pictures from that very special event.

Click [here](#) for supplemental documents provided by Lackawanna County to help your planning efforts.

## Monroe County

Monroe County has been holding annual Adoption Day celebrations since 2013, with the event held on the Thursday before Thanksgiving every November. Monroe County’s Adoption Day consists of as many adoption finalizations as can be scheduled that day, with the celebration held after from 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm. The event began as a small celebration with only the CYS Agency, court staff, and the families adopting that day in attendance. The event grew much larger after that first year, and with help from members of the Adoption Day Committee, which formed through the local Children’s Roundtable, the celebration moved to the ballroom of a local hotel. The event now includes not just the children and

families adopting that day, but also families that adopted in the past (both on previous adoption days and throughout the prior year). Also included are the judges, CYS staff, LSI paralegals, commissioners and state representatives. The local television stations also send reporters to cover the event.

“Adoption Day allows the CYS workers the opportunity to celebrate adoptions with our children and families. It also brings awareness of adoption to the community.”

Michele Haydt, Supervisor of the Placement Services Unit of Monroe County CYS

Donations are abundant for this event. A local bakery donates cupcakes, a local costume store donates a costume for a mascot, and a photographer donates their services to take photos of the families that day. The event is also made possible through grants, as well as financial assistance from the Monroe County Bar Association

and the CYS Advisory Board. Those funds are used to purchase gifts for the families and arrange for fun activities for the celebration. For example, one of the committee members purchased picture frames for the families, and the committee hires a DJ and a local magician, “Fancy Nancy,” to provide entertainment. Another committee member sets up arts and crafts for the kids and creates a special pin for each of the adoptees. Michele Haydt, supervisor of the Placement Services Unit of Monroe County CYS, believes that Adoption Day is a wonderful celebration and states: “Adoption Day allows the CYS workers the opportunity to celebrate adoptions with our children and families. It also brings awareness of adoption to the community and allows for greater involvement in the process. It is a very special day for our families, and to be a part of that celebration is very rewarding in the work that we do providing permanency for our waiting children.” Adoption Day is a very special day in Monroe County, and the teamwork that is involved to pull it all together is truly admirable.

Click [here](#) for supplemental documents provided by Monroe County to help your planning efforts.

## Westmoreland County

Westmoreland County Children’s Bureau holds two Adoption Day celebrations every year. One celebration is held in the summer to celebrate adoptive families (mentioned [above](#)), and the other is held in November to celebrate National Adoption Day. The LSI paralegal team is instrumental in planning the National Adoption Day event. The event is held at the courthouse, which allows professionals and service providers to participate in the celebration, including judges, hearing officers, county commissioners, CASA, and children’s bureau staff, in addition to the families involved in the adoptions that day. Adoption finalizations take place in the morning, and afterward, everyone gathers for lunch and activities. Every year, the LSI paralegals choose a theme for the celebration and plan the day according to that theme. The theme for the most recent event held on November, 29, 2018 was “Everyone’s a Star,” complete with galaxy and planet décor. That morning, 13 adoptions were finalized!

Executive Director of CASA of Westmoreland Inc. Mandy Zalich sums up the event: “The Adoption Day events of Westmoreland County are so heartwarming. They are a great way to celebrate the joy of finding permanent homes for the children and the forming of families. From newly formed, adoptive families to SWAN staff, CASA staff and volunteers, caseworkers and supervisors, solicitors and administrators, and local elected officials and Judges, everyone comes together to share in this commemoration of teamwork and collaboration to ensure that children have a safe, permanent, and nurturing home.”

Click [here](#) for supplemental documents provided by Westmoreland County to help your planning efforts.

# ATTACHMENTS



## Attachment A – Sample Proclamation



### National Adoption Day Proclamation

By Governor [NAME] Of [STATE]

WHEREAS: The state of [STATE] recognizes the importance of giving children permanent, safe, and loving families through adoption; and

WHEREAS: More than 114,000 children in the United States foster care system are waiting to be adopted; and

WHEREAS: More than [NUMBER] children in [STATE] are waiting for permanent families; and

WHEREAS: To help these children find permanent, nurturing families, the local courts of [CITY NAME] will open their doors on National Adoption Day, Saturday, November 19, to finalize the adoptions of local children and join other organizations to celebrate all adoptions; and

WHEREAS: This effort along with similar celebrations in all 50 states, the District Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico will offer children the chance to live with stable and loving families and encourage other dedicated individuals to make a powerful difference in the lives of a child through adoption;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, \_\_\_\_\_, Governor of \_\_\_\_\_, by virtue of the authority vested in me, do hereby proclaim November 19, 2011, as NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY in this state, and in so doing, urge all citizens to join in a national effort to raise awareness about the importance of adoption.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Governor



Additional Proclamation examples are available through the National Adoption Day website.

## Attachment B – Sample Invitation

(COUNTY LETTERHEAD) DATE:  
NAME ADDRESS

Dear:

November is National Adoption month! It is a time to honor and give thanks to adoptive families for the willingness to open their hearts and home to children in need. It is also a time to raise awareness, both locally and nationally, about the needs and number of foster children seeking permanency. This month, organizations across the country are holding events to celebrate adoptive families and educate their communities about how they can get involved.

Here in [XXXXX] County, we would like to invite you to our [XX] annual [XX] Event on [DAY, MONTH, YEAR,] at [TIME,] at [LOCATION.] This year's event is being sponsored by [XXXXX] County Children and Youth Services, and [LIST ALL PARTNERS, JUDGES, COURTS.]

Please join us for [LUNCH BRUNCH REFRESHMENTS] immediately after at Location. If you plan to attend the [LUNCH/BRUNCH/REFRESHMENTS], please RSVP by [DATE], to [CONTACT PERSON] at xxx-xxx-xxxx, extension xxx, or by email at [xxx@xxxx.org](mailto:xxx@xxxx.org) in order for us to plan accordingly. Please help us make a difference in the lives of children and help to celebrate National Adoption Month.

Sincerely,

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## Attachment C – Books About Adoption

Adoption related books are a wonderful gift bag item for children and families participating in Adoption Day events. Below is a list of popular books on adoption compiled by SWAN Post Permanency Technical Assistant Charity Brailer. Charity shares that Tapestry Books, [www.tapestrybooks.com](http://www.tapestrybooks.com), is a great site from which to order books on adoption. This site lists over 300 books on adoption, infertility and parenting challenges. Here are a few of our favorites:

### Children's Books

***The Mulberry Bird: An Adoption Story*** by Anne Braff Brodzinsky

*In this classic adoption picture book for children, common issues in adoption are addressed—from the enduring force of a birth parent's love and contact post-adoption to the importance of nurturing an adopted child in his or her new environment. It is a timeless and enduring tale of sacrifice, wisdom and love.*

***Elliot*** by Julie Pearson

*Elliot's parents love him very much, but all is not well. When he cries, they do not understand why. When he yells, they do not know what to do. When he misbehaves, they do not know how to react. One day a social worker named Thomas comes to visit, and Elliot's world turns upside-down.*

*The new families that care for the little boy are kind, but everything is strange and new, and the sudden changes make him want to cry and yell AND misbehave. Then, when it becomes clear that Elliot's parents will never be able to take him back, Thomas sets out to find Elliot one last home - a forever, forever home with a family that will love and care for him no matter what.*

***Pablo's Tree*** by Pat Mora

*In a heartwarming intergenerational story, Pablo cannot wait to visit his grandfather and discover what treasures will be placed on his tree, a tree that was purchased when Pablo was adopted and that, each year, is decorated with special surprises.*

***Home at Last*** by Vera B Williams

*After Lester is adopted by Daddy Albert and Daddy Rich, he develops a big problem—he can't fall asleep. Night after night he creeps into his parents' room and attempts to crawl in between his two daddies, confident that if he's with them and their dog, Wincka, nothing bad will happen to him ever again. But every night, Lester's new dads walk him back to his own room, hoping that eventually Lester will get used to the new house and his new family and feel as though he belongs. They buy him a bike and take him for ice cream. They make cocoa and introduce him to his cousins. But no matter how happy Lester seems during the day, he still gets scared and worried at night! It's the sweet dog Wincka who finally solves the problem when she climbs into Lester's bed and promptly falls asleep, serving as both his pillow and his protector. Lester feels home at last.*

***Lucy's Family Tree*** by Karen Halvorsen Schreck

*Lucy, an adopted child from Mexico, is convinced that her family background is too complicated for her to make the family tree she is supposed to create for a homework assignment.*

***Adoption*** (Mr. Rogers Neighborhood) by Fred Rogers

***Adoption is for Always*** by Linda Walvoord Girard

***All about Adoption: How Families are Made*** by Marc Nemiroff

***The Day We Met You*** by Phoebe Koehler

***Families are Forever*** by Craig Shemin and Deb Capone

***How I was Adopted*** by Joanna Cole

***Mother for Choco*** by Kiko Kasza

***My Family is Forever*** by Nancy Carlson

***My Family, My Journey: A Baby Book for Adoptive Families*** by Zoe Francesca and Susie Ghahremani

***Over the Moon*** by Karen Katz

***Tell Me Again about the Night I was Born*** by Jamie Lee Curtis

## Tweens/Teens Books

### ***See No Color*** by Shannon Gibney

*For as long as she can remember, sixteen-year-old Alex Kirtridge has known two things:*

*1. She has always been Little Kirtridge, a stellar baseball player, just like her father. 2. She's adopted.*

*These facts have always been part of Alex's life. Despite some teasing, being a biracial girl in a white family didn't make much of a difference as long as she was a star on the diamond where her father her baseball coach and a former pro player counted on her. But now, things are changing: she meets Reggie, the first black guy who's wanted to get to know her; she discovers the letters from her biological father that her adoptive parents have kept from her; and her body starts to grow into a woman's, affecting her game.*

*Alex begins to question who she really is. She's always dreamed of playing pro baseball just like her father, but can she really do it? Does she truly fit in with her white family? Who were her biological parents? What does it mean to be black? If she's going to find answers, Alex has to come to terms with her adoption, her race, and the dreams she thought would always guide her.*

### ***Returnable Girl*** by Pamela Lowell

*Abandoned. That's how Ronnie Hartman feels after her mother and Kenny, her mom's good-for-nothing boyfriend, move to Alaska, bringing Ronnie's two younger brothers with them and leaving her behind. Now thirteen years old, Ronnie has been "returned" from multiple foster homes because of her impulsive lying and stealing. Her latest foster mom, Alison, is Ronnie's very last chance—if she doesn't want to end up in some awful residential treatment center.*

### ***Last Chance Texaco*** by Brent Hartinger

*Lucy Pitt is 15 when she is sent to Kindle Home, a group home and her last chance at a semi-normal life. If she makes any errors, she'll be sent to the high-security facility known as Eat-Their-Young Island. Kindle Home is different from the other places she's lived, primarily due to the dedication of the counselors and the way in which they connect with the kids. Lucy realizes that she wants to stay there, and although she manages to weather the consequences of her own impulsive tendencies, she can't control the lack of funding that threatens the Home or the arson that is causing the neighbors to become even more leery of having such an establishment nearby.*

### ***Adopted Teens Only*** by Danae Gorbett

***Adopted: The Ultimate Teen Guide*** by Suzanne Slade

***Face in the Mirror: Teenagers and Adoption*** by Marion Crook

***All about Adoption: How to Deal with the Questions of Your Past*** by Anne Lanchon

***How it Feels to be Adopted*** by Jill Krentz

***Pieces of Me-Who do I want to be?*** by Bert Ballard

***The Secret of Me- A Novel in Verse*** by Meg Kearney

***Invisible Tears*** by Abigail Lawrence

***Twenty Things Adopted Kids Wish Their Adoptive Parents Knew*** by Sherrie Eldridge

## Attachment D – Checklist – Event Timeline

### 6 to 12 Months Ahead

Yes No

- Decide event purpose (awareness, matching, celebration or court finalizations)
- Discuss and determine desired attendees (fost/adopt families, adoptees, community members, county and affiliate staff)
- Check proposed date for potential conflicts, court availability, etc.
- Choose a theme
- Determine venue (if not occurring in courthouse or CYS agency)
- Determine rain date and location if outdoor event
- Confirm date based on venue availability
- Research/select a committee/chairpersons (paralegal, adoption staff, foster/adoptive parent representative)
- Chairperson forms subcommittees, if needed
- Determine available budget
- Gather cost estimates (venue rental, food, drink, gifts, advertising materials, etc.)
- Gather ideas for entertainment (magician, music, etc.)
- Gather cost for entertainment
- Gather cost for decorations
- Gather cost for other major items
- Create donation list of individuals, community businesses and organizations (for entertainment, food/drink, venue, publicity)
- Contact potential donors to discuss event and possible donations
- Compile list of confirmed donations
- Compile mailing list of donors
- Develop alternative site (if event is outdoors)
- Invite/confirm high profile guests (commissioners, community celebrities/personalities)
- Create logo and invitations for event
- Create marketing/public relations schedule
- Develop press release and calendar listings
- Contact and confirm photographer (check on donation of his/her time)

### 3 to 6 Months

- Begin monthly committee meetings
- Contact affiliates
- Follow-up with donors
- Prepare invitations
- Complete mailing lists for invitations
- Order invitations, posters, if not printing in-house
- Obtain radio/TV sponsors, public service announcements, promos
- Set menu-food and beverages
- Get written confirmation of celebrity participation/special needs

- \_\_\_\_\_ Finalize audio/visual needs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Select/order awards/prizes

## **2 Months Ahead**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Assemble/address invitations (with personal notes when possible)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Mail invitations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Distribute posters/begin publicizing event
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confirm TV/radio participation
- \_\_\_\_\_ Release press announcements
- \_\_\_\_\_ Follow up to confirm donations
- \_\_\_\_\_ All major chairpersons to finalize plans
- \_\_\_\_\_ Hold walk-through of event with responsible committees, chairpersons and responsible site staff
- \_\_\_\_\_ Review/finalize budget/donation/costs

## **1 Month Ahead**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Phone follow-up of mailing list
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confirm dates to pick up donations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pick up donations (non-perishable)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Place newspaper ads, follow up with news media, on-air announcements
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confirm staff/volunteers for event support (welcoming, introductions, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get enlarged site plan/room diagram, assign seats/tables
- \_\_\_\_\_ Give estimate of guests expected to attend for food beverage needs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meet with all outside vendors, if any
- \_\_\_\_\_ Review timeline
- \_\_\_\_\_ Continue assigning seats, speaker's platform
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule deliveries of special equipment, rentals
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confirm setup and tear down times with event site/courthouse/CYS agency
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finalize plans with party decorator
- \_\_\_\_\_ Give caterer revised numbers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Meet with chairpersons, key staff to finalize any of the above

## **1 Week Before**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Meet with all committees for last-minute details
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finish phone follow-ups
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confirm number attending
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finish seating/table arrangements
- \_\_\_\_\_ Secure two or three volunteers to assist with emergencies
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule pickup or delivery of any rented or loaned equipment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule and pick up donations (perishable)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reconfirm event site
- \_\_\_\_\_ Finalize catering guarantee, refreshments
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confirm number of volunteers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make follow-up calls to news media for advance and event coverage
- \_\_\_\_\_ Distribute additional fliers

- \_\_\_\_\_ Final walk-through
- \_\_\_\_\_ Schedule volunteer assignments for day of event

### **Day Before Event**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Recheck all equipment and supplies to be brought to the event
- \_\_\_\_\_ Decorate venue site

### **Event Day**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrive early
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reconfirm refreshments/meal schedule for volunteers
- \_\_\_\_\_ Go over all the final details with caterer and set-up staff
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check with volunteers to make sure all tasks are covered
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check sound/light equipment and staging before rehearsal

**\_\_\_\_\_ Have Fun!!**

## Attachment E – Donation Letters/Donor List

### Sample 1:

(COUNTY LETTERHEAD) DATE:

NAME ADDRESS

To [name]

I am writing on behalf of the [XXXX] *County Children and Youth Service* to ask if your business is able to support a donation to celebrate the children and their families in our county who found a permanent home through adoption during the past year.

Hundreds of communities across the country are holding events during November's National Adoption month to celebrate adoptive families and raise awareness about the ongoing needs of children in foster care. If your business can support our event with a donation of food or gifts for the children or provide monetary support, it would be greatly appreciated. Items will be accepted at [ADDRESS] or you can contact [CONTACT NAME] at xxx-xxx-xxxx. Thank you for any contribution that your business can make.

Please contact me xxx-xxx-xxxx at [XXXX] Children and Youth offices, between the hours of [00:00am] and [00:00pm] Monday through Friday with any questions you may have. Your contribution will make a big difference in celebrating the commitment of and new families created through adoption.

Sincerely,

Sample 2:

\_\_ (COUNTY LETTERHEAD)

DATE

Name Address

To [name]

November is National Adoption Month. On [DATE], we will recognize and honor our adoptive families in [XXXX] County by holding [INSERT YOUR TYPE OF EVENT]. This event will consist of awards, a dinner, a raffle ticket drawing, speakers to show their appreciation of adoptive families' roles in helping children in need throughout our communities. We truly value these families and their efforts in making a difference in the children's lives that they forever impact.

If you would be willing to support our event by either offering an item/gift card from your establishment, a monetary donation or a gift card for a local restaurant or business, it would greatly appreciated. Your business would be recognized for their contribution at the [type of event] as well as in [the local newspaper publication]. If you choose to send a check, please make it payable to: [XXXX] County Children and Youth Services. Please write on the memo line: [any wording required by your agency]. Please also provide your name and business/organization in order for you to receive proper recognition. Donations/Checks can be sent to the following address:

Agency Name Address

Attn: Contact Person

Thank you for your kind consideration of this request. If you have any questions, please contact me by using the following contact information: email address or xxx-xxx-xxxx, ext. xxx.

Sincerely,





**County of Allegheny**  
**Department of Human Services**  
Marc Chernus, Director

**Office of Community Relations**

Karen Blumen, Deputy Director  
One Smithfield Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222  
Phone: 412-350-5707 Fax: 412-350-5891

**STATEMENT OF PERMISSION**  
**Media and Publication Requests**

I / We, the undersigned, hereby give my / our permission for my / our child or myself:

NAME (S) [Please Print]

AGE(S)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE INDICATE (X) IF YOU GIVE PERMISSION**

to be photographed / videotaped and to have the pictures used at the discretion of Allegheny County Department of Human Services for present and / or future public education / outreach efforts.

to be interviewed by a DHS or media representative and to have the interview used at the discretion of Allegheny County Department of Human Services for public education / outreach efforts.

for use of first and last name.       for use of first name only.       for use of age

**Individual/Parent(s)**

**Witness**

Signature

Signature

Address

Address

Date

Date

OCR:Office\Forms\Photo Release & Statement of Permission\Statement of Permission

## Attachment G – Sample Thank You Letter

(COUNTY LETTERHEAD) DATE

Name Address

To [name]:

The [XXXX] County Children and Youth Services wishes to express its sincere appreciation to you for your donation of [XXXX] for our adoption [event details].

Your donation helped to make our [*ADOPTION DAY EVENT NAME*] a success and a more enjoyable day for all the children and families who participated! Again, thank you for your kindness and generosity.

Sincerely,

---

# Supplemental Materials from Counties

In addition to providing accounts of Adoption Day celebration/finalization events, several counties have provided examples of materials they used to make their events a success. These materials range from invitations, flyers, and programs to photographs and gift ideas. We've compiled them below to serve as a reference while planning your event.

Supplemental Materials: Blair County

*Mr. and Mrs. ,*

*Blair County Children's roundtable formally  
request your presence in honoring families for the  
2017 Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Families of  
the Year*

*Award ceremony activities begin at 5:00pm on  
Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at the*

---

*location.*

*As a **nominated** recipient, you and your  
significant other have displayed **outstanding**  
services to the children and youth in our County.  
For this reason, we welcome you to this event  
and thank you for your constant contribution to  
the success of our youth and adolescents.*

*Please RSVP to Kerrie Baughman by November  
13<sup>th</sup>, 2017 with the total number of additional  
guests:*

*[KBaughman@blairco.org](mailto:KBaughman@blairco.org)*

*814-693-3130*



*Menu:*

*Stuffed Chicken Breast*

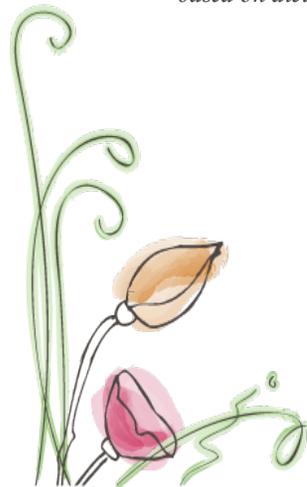
*Garlic Mashed Potatoes*

*Corn*

*Tossed Salad & Dinner Roll*

*Beverages: Water, Iced Tea, Soda, Coffee*

*\*\*Please let us know when you RSVP  
if you or a guest require an alternative meal  
based on dietary restrictions\*\**



Supplemental Materials: Blair County

*Dear Professional:*

*Blair County Children's Roundtable formally requests your presence in honoring the 2017 Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Families of the Year.*

*Award ceremony activities begin at 5:00pm on Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017, at the US Hotel – Liberty Hall, 401 S. Juniata Street, Hollidaysburg, PA 16648.*

*As a contributor to the award recipient's success, we are requesting your attendance. We understand that members like you contribute to the success of our youth and adolescents. We will cover the meals for up to 3 guests. If you have additional guests, please fill out the information below and provide a check made payable to the County of Blair in the appropriate amount.*

*Please RSVP to Kerrie Baughman by November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017:*

*[KBaughman@blairco.org](mailto:KBaughman@blairco.org)*

*(814) 693-3130*



*Dinner Menu:*

*Stuffed Chicken Breast*

*Garlic Mashed Potatoes*

*Corn*

*Tossed Salad & Dinner Roll*

*Beverages: Water, Iced Tea, Soda, Coffee*

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---  
# of guests 0-3 \_\_\_\_\_ (free)  
# of guests 4-10 \_\_\_\_\_ (\$9.98)  
# of guests 11 and up \_\_\_\_\_ (\$15.95)

*\*\*Please let us know when you RSVP  
if you or a guest require an alternative meal  
based on dietary restrictions  
(gluten free, peanut free, etc.)\*\**



# COUNTY of BLAIR

## Blair County Children's Roundtable<sup>2</sup> (CR<sup>2</sup>)

**GROUP 1:  
STRENGTHS-BASED FAMILY,  
SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY  
ENGAGEMENT**

Nancy Williams, Jon Frank, Judge  
Kopriva

**GROUP 2:  
FATHERHOOD AND TRAUMA**

Ashley Gehrdes, Georgette Ayers

**GROUP 3:  
COMMUNICATION,  
ORGANIZATIONAL  
STRUCTURE AND DATA**

Judge Sullivan, Kerrie Baughman

423 Allegheny Street  
Suite 132  
Hollidaysburg PA 16648  
Telephone (814) 693-3130  
Fax (814) 695-5640

**BRUCE ERB**  
President  
**TERRY TOMASSETTI**  
Vice President  
**TED BEAM, JR.**  
Secretary  
**HELEN P. SCHMITT**  
County Administrator  
**NATHAN W. KARN, SR.**  
Solicitor

Insert Date Here

Dear Mr. & Mr.:

It is an honor and a privilege to notify you that you have been nominated as one of the most OUTSTANDING families for Blair County Children's Round Table \_\_\_\_\_ (Foster, Kinship, etc) Family of the Year. Someone close to you or a representative of the agency you are employed with recently nominated you as part of Blair County Children's Roundtable annual event to honor families that open their hearts and their homes to the children that need it the most.

Blair County Children's Round Table, also known as the CR2, is a team of dedicated children's service organizations, non-profit providers, and County agencies that meet regularly to address the ongoing permanency, safety, and behavioral/mental health needs of Blair County children and youth. The CR2's mission is to partner and collaborate for safe homes, healthy children, strong families, and protective communities.

Blair County Children's Round Table personally thanks you for your commitment to caring for children and youth - one of our most vulnerable and valuable populations. Our County needs loving families like you to provide a safe place for children who are unable to live with their families and/or have no one else to care for them.

As such, you are cordially invited to attend this year's annual Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner and Award Ceremony. As nominated, you are permitted to bring your significant other who was also nominated with you and who has impacted your outstanding achievement in supporting Blair County children and youth. We are asking award recipients to RSVP, as per the enclosed invitation. While we recognize there are many people that potentially influence the success of each award recipient, we are welcoming you and your significant other to come and enjoy a night out for dinner, thanks and appreciation for all that you do for these children. You will also be witness to all those families who among you displayed the most outstanding care. Four families of which were selected as an award recipient to receive the Award of the year. All those nominated members are also welcome. We really want to center this event around you all to send a special thanks for everything you give to these children in their time of need.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions and/or concerns. You can reach us at [asmyder@blairco.org](mailto:asmyder@blairco.org) or [bfeaster@blairco.org](mailto:bfeaster@blairco.org) or by phone at 814-693-3130 and ask for Ashley Smyder or Brittany Feaster.

Again, thank you for all that you do to support the children and youth of Blair County. The system would not work without support from the community and dedicated families such as yours.

Respectfully,

Kerrie A. Baughman  
Blair County Children, Youth and Families  
423 Allegheny Street, Suite 132  
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648



**FOSTER, KINSHIP AND  
ADOPTIVE FAMILIES:  
RECOGNITION AND  
APPRECIATION AWARDS  
DINNER**

**Outstanding Kinship Family**

6:30 pm

**Outstanding Adoptive Family**

6:40 pm

**Outstanding New Foster Family**

6:50 pm

**Outstanding Foster Family (Service to Younger Youth)**

7:00 pm

**Outstanding Foster Family (Service to Older Youth)**

7:10 pm

5:00 pm  
November 29, 2017  
US Hotel's Liberty  
Hall, Hollidaysburg

Welcome

5:30 pm  
Dinner

6:00 pm  
Dessert

6:30 pm  
Recognition Awards

7:30 pm  
Closing Comments

Thank you!

BLAIR COUNTY  
CHILDREN'S  
ROUNDTABLE<sup>2</sup>  
423 Allegheny Street,  
Suite 132, Hollidaysburg, PA  
16648

[www.blairco.org](http://www.blairco.org)

(814) 693-3130



**IN RECOGNITION**

**NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH IN BUTLER COUNTY**

**WHEREAS,** *All children deserve strong families who are there to protect and love them. Every year, thousands of Americans extend the gift of family to a child through adoption. During National Adoption Month, we recognize the compassion of adoptive and foster families and renew our pledge to finding loving and stable homes for children in need; AND*

**WHEREAS,** *Today, approximately 16,000 children remain in foster care in Pennsylvania. Finding families is the goal for waiting children in Butler County. Many of these children are brothers and sisters who want to grow up together; AND*

**WHEREAS,** *Currently, Pennsylvania has over 3,000 children waiting for an adoptive family to be identified. In 2016 over 1,900 children from foster care were adopted in Pennsylvania; AND*

**WHEREAS,** *Every child deserves a place to call home. National Adoption Month is an opportunity to spread awareness on behalf of the children in Butler County who are waiting for a loving family; NOW*

**THEREFORE,** *We, the **Butler County Board of Commissioners** do hereby proclaim the month of November officially National Adoption Month in Butler County. In honor of National Adoption Month, we encourage the community, businesses, groups, schools, faith-based organizations and families to help secure permanent, loving homes for each and every child in Butler County regardless of race, age, gender, health, emotional or behavioral challenges and past distress*

**COUNTY OF BUTLER  
CHILDREN & YOUTH AGENCY**

124 West Diamond Street, PO Box 1208, Butler, PA 16003-1208  
Phone 724.284.5156 Fax 724.284.1433 TDD 724.284.5473

**Commissioners**

Leslie A. Osche, **Chairman**  
Kimberly D. Geyer, **Vice Chairman**  
Kevin E. Boozel, **Secretary**



**Executive Director**

Charles L. Johns

**Human Services Finance Director**

Ann M. Brown

To: All Local Businesses/Organizations/Individuals

From: Butler County Children and Youth Community Outreach Committee

August 13, 2018

RE: Sponsorship Opportunities

Each year, the Butler County Children and Youth Agency reaches out to community members to help enrich the lives of the children we serve. Through the continued generosity of our sponsors, these programs continue to exceed our expectations every year. There are a couple of exciting opportunities, which we hope you will consider.

**ADOPTION DAY CELEBRATION**

November is an exciting time, as it is recognized as National Adoption Month. Here in Butler County, we will be celebrating the adoption of approximately 25 waiting children on November 16, 2018. Your generous donations would help make this day even more special for the children and their forever families. There are a variety of ways that you may help and those opportunities are listed on the enclosed, "Adoption Day Celebration Form". For more information on the Adoption Day Celebration, you may contact Nicole Burdett at 724-284-5156 or [nburdett@co.butler.pa.us](mailto:nburdett@co.butler.pa.us)

**CHRISTMAS PROGRAM**

The Butler County Children and Youth Agency believes that all children in Butler County should have presents to open on Christmas Day. Last year over 400 deserving children were sponsored for Christmas. There are a variety of ways that you may help and those opportunities are listed on the enclosed "Christmas Program Sponsorship Form." For more information on the Christmas Program, you may contact Cathryn Heakins at 724-284-5156 or [cheakins@co.butler.pa.us](mailto:cheakins@co.butler.pa.us)

Thank you so much for your consideration in supporting either of these two programs! With your help we can continue to make Butler County a place where children are happy and thriving.

Sincerely,

Cathryn Heakins  
Community Outreach Committee

Charles L. Johns  
Executive Director

---

**BUTLER COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES**

Area Agency on Aging\*Children & Youth Services\*Community Action\*Drug & Alcohol\*Early Intervention & Intellectual Disabilities\*Mental Health

**COUNTY OF BUTLER  
CHILDREN & YOUTH AGENCY**

124 West Diamond Street, PO Box 1208, Butler, PA 16003-1208  
Phone 724.284.5156 Fax 724.284.1433 TDD 724.284.5473

**Commissioners**

Leslie A. Osche, **Chairman**  
Kimberly D. Geyer, **Vice Chairman**  
Kevin E. Boozel, **Secretary**



**Executive Director**

Charles L. Johns

**Human Services Finance Director**

Ann M. Brown

**Adoption Day Celebration Sponsorship Form**

**WHO WE ARE:**

We are the Butler County Children and Youth Agency Adoption Day Committee. Our goal is to raise money for National Adoption Day in Butler County on November 14, 2018 and the Butler County Children and Youth Agency's adoptions that will occur throughout the calendar year. Through your generous donations this committee will be able to provide a fun, warm, and loving environment for families who are finalizing their adoptions.

**THE NEED:**

Our need is both monetary donations and in kind donations.

**WHAT YOU GET:**

In return for your sponsorship we will display your business'/organization's name at our event. You will also receive a tax deduction.

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO BUTLER COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH AGENCY ADVISORY BOARD**

-----

**Sponsorship Amount:**

\_\_\_ \$100.00

\_\_\_ \$50.00

\_\_\_ \$25.00

\_\_\_ Other Amount

**In Kind Donation:**

\_\_\_\_\_ Refreshments  
\_\_\_\_\_ Gift Certificate  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other Item

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you for your kind donations and support for the families and children in Butler County!*



**BUTLER COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES**

Area Agency on Aging\*Children & Youth Services\*Community Action\*Drug & Alcohol\*Early Intervention & Intellectual Disabilities\*Mental Health

## ADOPTION DAY IN LACKAWANNA COUNTY

In Lackawanna County, planning for our annual Adoption Day event commences long before that day comes to life. First things first, a date must be identified in the month of November. Why November, you ask? Well, of course, it's Adoption Awareness Month! This date also takes our county Judges' availability into consideration.

The next step is to choose a theme for the event. This theme is based upon the ages of the children involved with the adoptions that day. Last year, the theme was "Disney Characters". The theme sets the pace for the planning of the food, decorations, and participating characters. Agency workers eagerly participate in dressing in character for the children (See Exhibit "A" attached – Planning Memo 2016). Of the many expenses of this event, one of the largest is the cost of the character costumes. Other services are provided through donation, such as our photographer. She takes pictures of the event, and a beautiful picture of the family after the adoption has occurred.

An email invitation to the event is sent to the entire Agency and all the court staff (See Exhibit "B" attached – Invite 2017). In fact, the invitation is extended to all county employees along with the adoptive families throughout the year.

The event utilizes the entire space on the floor of the building where the Courtrooms are located. The hallways and courtrooms are decorated in the chosen theme for that year's event. Games, food, drinks, and a basket raffle are set up in the hallways for the guests. Many of the county agencies and employees aid in the success of the event by donating baskets and coming to support the event. The monies raised from the basket raffle go into a Teen Fund. This fund assists foster families with special cash needs for teens that arise during the year. Some of these cash needs include: prom dresses, tux rentals, and costs associated with playing sports. One year, for example, the monies helped a child attend spring break.

The day has arrived! Imagine, if you will, an everyday, business-like hallway outside the Courtrooms suddenly coming to life decorations, food, and games. There are Disney Characters walking around talking to the children. There is a long line of county employees eager to purchase tickets for the beautiful display of baskets to be raffled off. These baskets were so kindly donated to support this annual event we call "Adoption Day"! The families are coming and going, as they enter the courtroom with a special bond and exit as a family.

Approximately eight adoptions occur on Adoption Day. Each of the five Judges share in the experience of hearing an adoption or two. At the end of each adoption hearing, the Judge reads a poem and presents the child/children with a framed version of the poem (See Exhibit "C" attached -Poem).

As the day comes to an end, all those involved feel that they were part of a greater cause. When asked about what the day means to her, our adoption supervisor replied, "Providing permanency and a life-long connection for every child is the most rewarding experience". She also stated that there is a bonus in providing a child to parents in need and parents to a child in need.

After the event has come and gone, a newsletter is released by the Agency containing information on adoption and pictures from the very special event (See Exhibit "D" attached - Newsletter). Lastly, the Director of the Agency sends out a "thank you" email to all staff (See Exhibit "E" attached – Thank You).

And that's Adoption Day in Lackawanna County!

Supplemental Materials: Lackawanna County

Hello all,

I just wanted to touch base with everyone to review who is doing what for Adoption Day. So far we have 8 children to be adopted that day and 5 Judges that are participating in the Adoptions.

Patty is the Witch and has her own costume

Trisha is the Mayor of Munchkin City and has her own costume .... why? I don't know.

Jen is Dorothy (costume will be provided)

Kristin is Glenda (waiting on costume)

Lou is the Lion (waiting on costume)

Nick is the Scarecrow (costume will be provided)

Rob is the Tin Man (costume will be provided)

Jason is the Wizard ( you are on your own for your costume)

Megan is Auntie Em

Kelly & Brian's Unit are the Lollipop Guild

Mary Kay & Sadie's Unit are the Flying Monkeys

Barbara is providing our cupcakes

Dana is our face painter

Mindy is making treats

Gayle is in charge of publicity

Claire is in charge of scheduling and resolving problems before they occur

Becca , Kristin & Kim are working on transforming Auntie Em's farm into Munchkin Land.

Most all units, including Area on Aging, are donating baskets for the basket raffle that will benefit our Teen Fund.

If I have missed someone please let me know asap. Thank you for all your help.

Lisa Sohara

Supervisor

Lackawanna County

Office of Youth & Family Services

- EXHIBIT "A" - PLANNING MEMO -

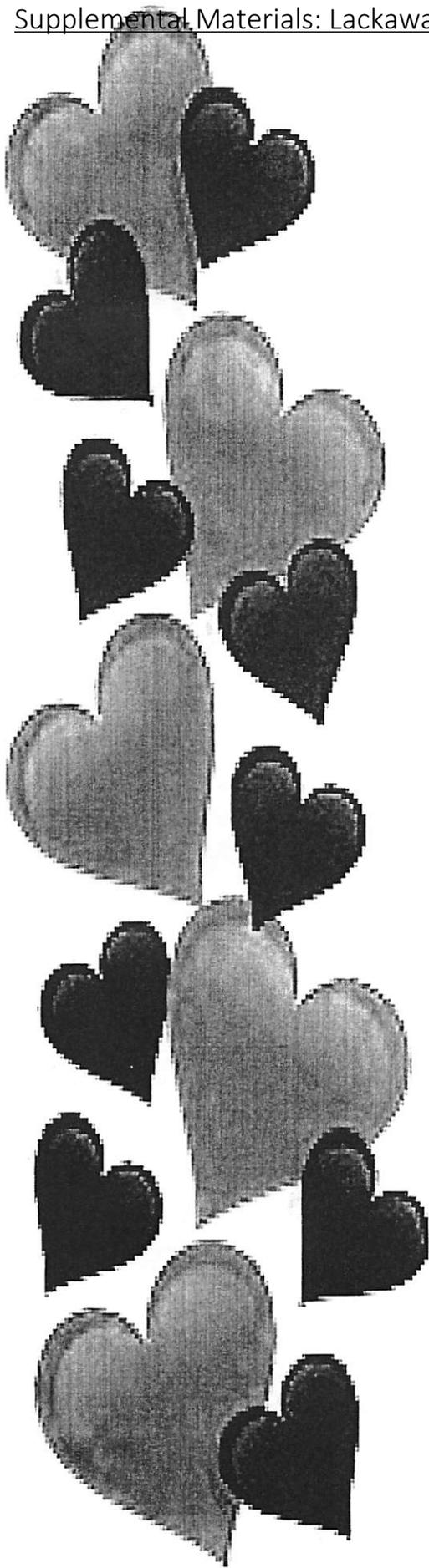
Supplemental Materials: Lackawanna County

On November 3, 2017, we will celebrate National Adoption Month in Lackawanna County by recognizing all of the adoptive children and families who have achieved permanence through adoption in 2017. The celebration of 10 additional children who are being adopted on this date will be highlighted. As part of the festivities, we would like to continue the tradition of our basket raffle which supports our agency's teen fund. We are asking that each unit donate a basket to be raffled off with the winner of most tickets sold the beneficiary of a pizza lunch. Please feel free to pick your basket theme and be creative. All baskets need to be submitted to my office by October 30<sup>th</sup>. As always we thank you for your dedication to the work you do with our children and families and appreciate your support of this great day.

If you have any questions feel free to see me or Lisa at any time.

Nancy Johnson  
Case Work Manager  
Lackawanna County  
Office of Youth & Family Services

- EXHIBIT "B" - INVITE -



I didn't give you the gift  
of life,  
But in my heart I know.  
The love I feel is deep  
and real,  
As if it had been so.  
For us to have each  
other is like a dream  
come true!  
No, I didn't give you  
The gift of life,  
Life gave me the gift of  
you.

# Adoption Day 2018





**POW!**

**CALLING ALL  
SUPERHEROES!**

**BAM!**



**KAPOW!**

**WHAM!**



**SAVE THE  
DATE**



**LAWRENCE COUNTY  
ADOPTION DAY**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3<sup>RD</sup>, 2018  
11:00AM-2:00PM**

**INVITATION TO FOLLOW!**





-OFFICE OF-  
**Lawrence County**  
**Children & Youth Services**  
1001 East Washington Street  
New Castle, PA 16101  
Phone (724) 658-2558  
Fax (724) 658-5503

**WILLIAM R. BETZ, JR.**  
Director

**FRANK G. MERLINO**  
Deputy Director

**THOMAS W. LESLIE**  
County Solicitor

**COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**DANIEL J. VOGLER**  
Chairman

**STEVE CRAIG**  
**ROBERT DEL SIGNORE**

To Whom it May Concern:

November is National Adoption Month and across the nation Agencies and Courts dedicated to permanency for children will be celebrating by hosting National Adoption Day activities. Lawrence County Children and Youth Services continues this tradition year after year by hosting an event during the month of November.

This year our event is scheduled for Saturday, November 3, 2018 at Lawrence County Community Action Partnership's Ben Franklin Early Learning Center. Our theme this year is "SUPER HEROS." We will be inviting approximately 100 adoptive families and multiple community members who support the adoption process in Lawrence County.

In addition to the refreshments and many games and activities available for the children and their families, we will also be holding a Chinese Auction.

Any Contribution you are able to make to see this project move forward would be greatly appreciated.

We thank you in advance for your consideration and support for our Agency. Your involvement and generosity makes a difference in the lives of the children in Lawrence County.

Sincerely,

Adoption Supervisor

Placement/Foster Care Supervisor

# Supplemental Materials: Lawrence County

Photos from Lawrence County's Adoption Day celebration



# *A Star Is ~~Born~~ Adopted*



## *Luzerne County Children and Youth Services*

25th Annual Adoption Celebration

Please join us in celebrating this year's adoption  
*SUPERSTARS* and their new families on

Friday, November 30, 2018

Holiday Inn WB-East Mountain, 600 Wildflower Drive, Wilkes-Barre, PA

10:00 am — noon

Brunch, Guest Speakers and Entertainment by Toe Knee Magic

RSVP with your name/agency, number of adults/children by 11/16/18 to

Georgine Meyers at 570-826-8700 ext 2014

**PLEASE JOIN MERCER COUNTY  
FOSTER CARE AS WE CELEBRATE  
NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH**

**WHEN: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2017 1-3 P.M.**

**WHERE: MERCER COUNTY CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
SERVICES**

**8425 SHARON MERCER RD.**

**MERCER, PA 16137**

**MERCER COUNTY FOSTER CARE WILL BE  
CELEBRATING NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH  
WITH AN ICE CREAM SOCIAL (FLOATS &  
SUNDAES), FEATURING THE MERCER COUNTY  
DAIRY PRINCESS. INCLUDED WILL BE A CHINESE  
AUCTION(1 FREE TICKET FOR EVERYONE IN  
ATTENDANCE), EXTRA TICKETS WILL BE GIVEN TO  
THOSE THAT DONATE A CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR  
FOSTER CHILDREN. PLEASE COME JOIN US FOR  
COMPLIMENTARY REFRESHMENTS AND GOODIES.  
THIS EVENT IS FREE TO THE PUBLIC.**

Supplemental Materials: Mercer County

ADOPTION DAY BUDGET

**Venue and Food**

Item	Quantity Needed	Estimated Cost
Ten Pin Bowling Alley	\$300 per hour for 2 hours(150 people)	\$600
Pizza/Pop & Shoes	2 slices per person/ a drink and shoes(150 People)	\$300
		<hr/>
		\$900

**Decorations**

Item	Quantity Needed	Estimated Cost
Helium Tanks	3	\$75
Tablecloths	5	\$5
Postage/Shipping	120 stamps	\$58.80
Personalized Balloons	200	\$100
Roll of Tickets	250	\$2.00
Photo Booth Props	3 dozen	\$50.00
		<hr/>
		\$290.80

**Favors**

Item	Quantity Needed	Estimated Cost
Film Strip Picture Frame	10	\$75
		<hr/>
		\$75

**Advertisement**

Item	Quantity Needed	Estimated Cost
Sharon Herald/Record Argus	7 days	\$379.30
		<hr/>
		\$379.30

Total: \$1645.10

# ADOPTION DAY EVENT!

FREE TO PUBLIC!

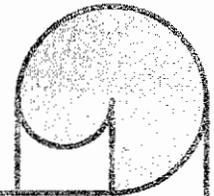
NOVEMBER 4<sup>th</sup>

12-3PM

Come and Celebrate Adoptions and Learn what it takes to be a foster parent! There will be pizza, chips and pop

8425 Sharon Mercer Rd

Mercer, PA 16137



## ***Join us for the Annual Adoption Day Celebration***

*To celebrate the adoptions throughout Monroe County*

*When: Thursday, November 15, 2018*

*4:00pm—6:00pm*

*Where: Wesleyan Church, 915 N 5th St, Stroudsburg, PA 18360*

*Refreshments will be served*

*We will be celebrating adoptive families and the commitment they have made for the children.*

**RSVP by 11/05/18 to Michele Haydt**

*570-420-3590 Ext. 3258*

*[mhaydt@monroecountypa.gov](mailto:mhaydt@monroecountypa.gov)*



## 9th ANNUAL NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY

### ADOPTION DAY

2018



**10:00 AM – 11:00 AM**

**Fun Games & Activities**

- Entertainment for the children will be provided in Court Room #1
- Including: Photo Booth, Face Painting, Caricatures, Lollipop Game, Arts & Crafts, Hand Tracing

**11:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Ceremony & Speakers**

- Opening Remarks
  - Ann Targonski, Solicitor for Children and Youth Services
- Special Guest Speaker: Owner and Chef of the Hotel Edison Restaurant
  - Brian Pope
- Comments from Northumberland County Children and Youth Administrator
  - Katrina Gownley
  - CASA Recognition
- Closing Remarks from the Honorable Judge
  - Judge Hugh Jones
- Banging of the Gavel

**12:00 PM – 1:00 PM**

**Lunch Provided for all families at the Edison**

**1:30 PM – 2:00 PM**

**Adoptions**



**Special Thanks:**

- To all our contributors: Charles and Betty Degenstein Foundation, The Edison, and Dunkin Donuts, Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network
- To the Adoption Day Committee: Katrina Gownley, Mandy Wagner, Machel Drumheller, Sara McIntyre, Mandie Flickinger, Allison Milbrand, Jordan Watkins, and Nicole Matrey

# Northumberland County Adoption Day

Join us to celebrate  
Friday, November 9, 2018 at 10 a.m.  
Lunch will be provided

Northumberland County Court House  
201 Market Street, Sunbury, PA  
RSVP by 10.26.18 to [nicole.matrey@norrycopa.net](mailto:nicole.matrey@norrycopa.net) or  
(570) 495-2126

# Northumberland County Adoption Day

Join us to celebrate  
Friday, November 9, 2018 at 10 a.m.  
Lunch will be provided

Northumberland County Court House  
201 Market Street, Sunbury, PA  
RSVP by 10.26.18 to [nicole.matrey@norrycopa.net](mailto:nicole.matrey@norrycopa.net) or  
(570) 495-2126

## PRESS RELEASE ADOPTION DAY CELEBRATION 2018

On Friday, November 9, 2018, Northumberland County will hold its ninth annual “Adoption Day,” sponsored by Northumberland County Children and Youth Services. At this year’s event, Northumberland County will be celebrating all of the adoptions that took place throughout the year as well as the adoptions that will take place on Adoption Day. Beginning at 10:00 A.M., the children will kick off the festivities by taking part in several fun activities at the Northumberland County Courthouse.

Part of this year’s celebration will include a guest speaker who has been adopted and will share his story of how his life has changed for the better.

During this event, Northumberland County will be celebrating 27 children who have been adopted this past year.

In addition to family and friends, also present will be caseworkers, foster parents, and other individuals who have supported these children throughout their journey to reach their forever family.

Adoption Day is designed to help celebrate National Adoption Awareness Month, which is celebrated annually in the month of November. While the focus of National Adoption Day is on the finalization of adoptions, it is also a day to raise awareness of the growing need for foster families. According to the National Adoption Day website, National Adoption Day is a collective, national effort to raise awareness of more than 100,000 children in foster care waiting for permanent and loving families. Since its inception, this annual, one-day event has made the dreams of nearly 54,500 children come true. In 2014, approximately 4,500 youth in foster care were adopted by their forever families over the 15 annual National Adoption Day Celebrations.

If you are interested in becoming a foster parent through Northumberland County Children and Youth please contact Meghan Weaver at 570-988-4237.



PHILADELPHIA'S  
**National Adoption Day**

**November 16, 2018** • 10am-12pm  
10:45am program

*A celebration of family...  
Food! Face Painting! & Fun!*

Location:

**Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts**

128 N. Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

**HISTORIC LANDMARK BUILDING;  
HAMILTON AUDITORIUM**

**Immediately following adoption finalizations for families, The Department of Human Services & Philadelphia Family Court will host a celebration for adoptive families.**

Thank you to our venue sponsor:  
**Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts**

**PAFA**  
Pennsylvania Academy  
of the Fine Arts





## 2018 Adoption Day Celebration Outcomes Report

The Philadelphia Department of Human Services and First Judicial District of PA, Court of Common Pleas, Family Division hosted a party and public awareness event on November 16, 2018 to celebrate adoption. Ten children and youth were adopted that morning and their families joined together for a mini-festival in recognition of National Adoption Month directly after their legal adoptions were completed.

- Ten children were adopted
- There were more than 100 attendees at the event
- A resource table was staffed with parent support material for all the attending guests
- Fox29 and CBS3 news stations attended
- The event was promoted through DHS' Facebook (1,699 followers), Instagram (644 followers) and Twitter (1,682 followers) social media platforms.



[This Twitter post was our most popular in November!]



National Adoption Day

November 16, 2018

PAFA

[PLACE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS HERE]

## ENTERTAINMENT ELEMENTS

PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE	ACTIVITY	NOTES	STATUS
		Secure face painter.		Completed
		Do we want a photo booth?		
		T-shirts for children		

## MATERIALS / SIGNAGE

PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE	ACTIVITY	NOTES	STATUS
		Resource table outside of room with parenting support info.	Need to ask Harriet to table	
		National Adoption Day welcome signage displayed by entrance		
		DHS retractable banner by podium		

## REFRESHMENTS

PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE	ACTIVITY	NOTES	STATUS
		Order breakfast		

## PRESS

PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE	ACTIVITY	NOTES	STATUS
		Identify family to be interviewed and to speak at event		
		Press release /media advisory		

## PROGRAM

PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE	ACTIVITY	NOTES	STATUS
		Talking points for Cynthia		
		Talking points for the Mayor		
		Talking point support for family		
		MuthaKnows as Emcee		

## SOCIAL MEDIA COMPONENT

PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE	ACTIVITY	NOTES	STATUS
	Day of event	Post live from the event on social media platforms		
		Photography/ video	Need to get releases from families. Work with Comm. Team on strategies of how to do this in the most efficient and comfortable way.	



## CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

### PRESS RELEASE

November 16, 2018

Contact: Heather Keafer 267-275-2637  
Heather.Keafer@phila.gov

#### National Adoption Month Celebration

##### Ten adoptions Recognized as Partners Highlight the Need for Older Youth Adoption

**PHILADELPHIA, PA** – On Friday, November 16 at 10:00 a.m. The Philadelphia Department of Human Services and Philadelphia Family Court celebrated National Adoption Month with a celebration, following the finalization of ten adoptions earlier that morning.

A brief program emceed by Mutha Knows, Radio Personality from Power 99 included remarks from Mayor Jim Kenney, Honorable Margaret T. Murphy, Family Court Administrative Judge, City of Philadelphia Commissioner Cynthia Figueroa, and Lynne Budnovitch, a mother who adopted through foster care.

National Adoption Month is a collective effort to raise awareness of the more than 100,000 children across the United States who are waiting to be adopted. In Philadelphia, there are over 1,000 children and youth living in foster care who are waiting to be adopted. Of these children and youth, 244 are older youth. Last year 803 children and youth were adopted through the child welfare system.

City of Philadelphia DHS Commissioner Cynthia Figueroa says, “We work incredibly hard helping families reunify, but when that cannot safely happen, we look towards adoption. Every child, no matter their age deserves a family to call their own. Youth thrive when they feel needed, loved and have the encouragement that a family provides. I want this for every child.”

Family Court Administrative Judge Margaret T. Murphy stated “On National Adoption Day, we celebrate every child’s right to live as a member of a permanent family. Our goal is to minimize the length of time children live in foster care by either safely reuniting them with their families, or by accelerating their adoption. We applaud and thank the loving and nurturing adoptive parents, who make a child’s dream of being a member of a permanent and loving home their new reality.”

Lynne Budnovitch, a mother who finalized the adoption of her son and daughter shared, “I wanted to focus on some of the kids who didn’t immediately pop into people’s minds when on this journey. Those a little older, had been in the system a while, who were starting to get lost in it. Those were the kids I was looking for. Then I found Richard and Allyssa. Or they found me. And they have felt like family from the day they walked thru my door.”

The event highlighted the need for families interested in adopting older youth from foster care. The celebration included breakfast with entertainment for the children including face painting, a photo booth

## Supplemental Materials: Philadelphia

and arts and crafts activities.

For more information on how to adopt, please email us at [DHS.FosteringPhilly@phila.gov](mailto:DHS.FosteringPhilly@phila.gov).

###

### **About Us**

The Philadelphia Department of Human Services is the county child welfare agency. We lead, support, coordinate and implement services to prevent and address child abuse and neglect; and operate juvenile justice programs for Philadelphia.

First Judicial District of PA, Court of Common Pleas, Family Division. The Family Division, sometimes referred to as Family Court, is one of the three major divisions of the Court of Common Pleas. The Family Court of Philadelphia, located at 1501 Arch Street, consists of two major branches: the Juvenile Court and Domestic Relations. The Administrative Judge of the Family Division is the Honorable Margaret T. Murphy, and the Supervising Judge is Walter J. Olszewski.



NATIONAL

# ADOPTION DAY

Celebrating a Family for Every Child

## BUILDING FAMILIES THROUGH ADOPTION

YOU'RE INVITED TO CELEBRATE WITH US!

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3

**SNAPOLOGY**

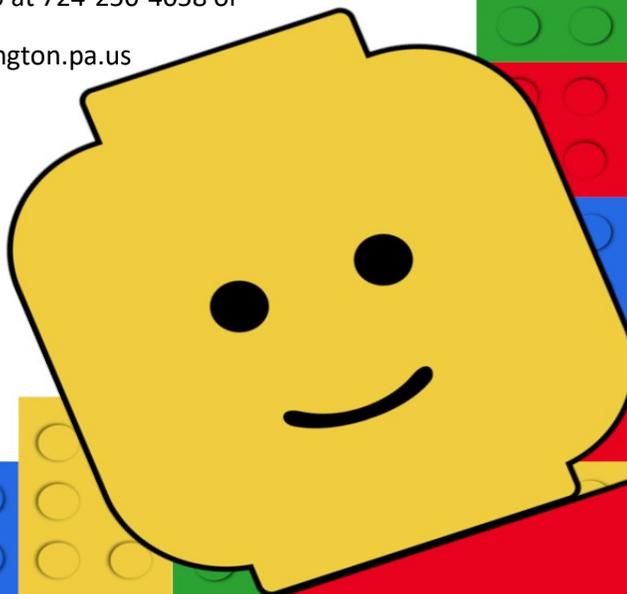
1350 Old Pond Road, Bridgeville, PA 15017

5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

RSVP by 10/12 to: Julie Yusko at 724-250-4058 or

[yuskojul@co.washington.pa.us](mailto:yuskojul@co.washington.pa.us)

*Dinner and refreshments will be provided.*



Supplemental Materials: Washington County



**Invitation:**

Date

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ Family:

In celebration of your family, expanded by the joy of adoption, the Westmoreland County Children's Bureau (WCCB) invites you to attend our annual **Adoption Day Celebration at Idlewild & SoakZone**. This year's event will be held on **Wednesday, July 11, 2018** and each parent and child involved in a WCCB adoption during the last 12 months will receive a free admission ticket to the park. Park gates open at 10:30am and **Pavilion A-2** has been reserved for our use for the day. Plan to enjoy access to the park all day and a picnic lunch with staff from the WCCB and other adoptive families.

The celebration will begin at 12:00 pm with opening remarks, after which lunch will be provided. Lunch will include fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, cold beverages, and cake. Each family is asked to bring a side dish to share (enough for approximately 20 people). Please indicate what dish you will be bringing – choose from the enclosed list or bring your family's favorite! We will be keeping a record to avoid duplications, so you may also ask for a suggestion when you call to RSVP

**RSVP to the event is required.** Please RSVP to \_\_\_\_\_ no later than **June 27<sup>th</sup>**. When calling, please indicate the number in your family attending the picnic lunch, the number of adoptive parents and children attending (for ticket counts), and what food item you will be bringing. If leaving a message, please provide a telephone number where we can reach you. Admission tickets will be distributed at the park on July 11<sup>th</sup> – just follow the signs at the main entrance for Adoption Day and staff will have your tickets for you before you get in line at the entrance booths. Tickets will be available for pick-up from 10:30am to 11:45am.

We are grateful for the kindness and generosity of our sponsors - the **WCCB Advisory Board** and **Idlewild & SoakZone** – it is only with their support that this event is possible.

We hope you can join us and look forward to seeing you there!

DATE

Supplemental Materials: Westmoreland County

ADDRESS HERE

RE: Adoption of \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

In celebration of your family, expanded by the joy of adoption, the Westmoreland County Children's Bureau (WCCB) invites you to attend our **Fall Festival Adoption Day Celebration** at the Westmoreland County Courthouse. This year's event will be held on **Thursday, November 2, 2017 at 11:30 a.m.**

Plan to enjoy lunch beginning at 11:30 a.m. with other adoptive families. The celebration will begin at 12:15 p.m. with opening remarks and fun activities for the children.

**RSVP to the event is required.** Please RSVP to \_\_\_\_\_ no later than **October 27<sup>th</sup>**. When calling, please indicate the number in your family attending.

We are grateful for the kindness and generosity of our sponsors: **the Department of Human Services, the Westmoreland County Children's Bureau Advisory Board**, and donations from the **employees of Westmoreland County**. It is only with their support that this event is possible.

We hope you can join us and look forward to seeing you there!

May 25, 2018

**Miscellaneous:**

Store Manager Curt McGinnis  
Eastgate Giant Eagle  
5142 Route 30, St. 140  
Eastgate Plaza  
Greensburg, PA 15601

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Greetings! The Westmoreland County Children's Bureau (WCCB) will host its annual picnic at *Idlewild and SoakZone* on July 11<sup>th</sup> to celebrate all of the local families grown this past year by adoption through the foster care system. We have an all-time-high number of children and families to celebrate this year and we are really hoping that you can help in our endeavor as we anticipate having approximately 200 people in attendance this year!

Our families are always willing to pitch in and bringing side dishes to the picnic to share; however, the WCCB provides the main food dishes, beverages, sheet cake, paper products, utensils, and decorations for the pavilion. If you would be able and willing to assist with a gift card donation towards the expense of these items, we would be most grateful!

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. As I am unable to travel to pick up donations, I have included a postage paid envelope for your convenience. For your records, Westmoreland County is Tax Exempt as a county government and our EIN Number is 25-6001046.

Your generosity and prompt reply is very much appreciated as we plan and prepare for this event. We will happily publicize your kindness to our adoptive families, staff, and supporters!

Very Sincerely,

Westmoreland County Children's Bureau

# County of Westmoreland



## PROCLAMATION

### NATIONAL ADOPTION DAY NOVEMBER 29, 2018

**WHEREAS**, National Adoption Week was first proclaimed in Massachusetts in 1976, and the number of states declaring a special week to recognize adoption gradually increased, leading to the inception of National Adoption Month in 1990; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2017, Westmoreland County has served 492 children in foster care. To date, 148 of those children have achieved permanency, 66 percent were returned to their parent or legal guardian, 30 percent were adopted, and four percent were placed with permanent legal custodians; and

**WHEREAS**, through adoption, Americans can forever change not only a child's life but also their own. By providing children in need with the opportunity to grow and succeed through adoption, we can help them become confident, compassionate and successful members of society; and

**WHEREAS**, on November 29, 2018, Westmoreland County will hold ceremonies to finalize 13 adoptions that will create nine new families.

**THEREFORE**, we the Commissioners of Westmoreland County, Gina Cerilli, Ted Kopas and Charles W. Anderson do hereby proclaim November 2018 as National Adoption Month and November 29, 2018, as National Adoption Day in Westmoreland County.

**IN WITNESS THEREOF**, we have hereunto set our hands and cause the Seal of the County to be affixed this 29<sup>th</sup> day of November 2018.

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*Gina Cerilli, Chairman*

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*Ted Kopas, Vice-Chairman*

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*Charles W. Anderson, Secretary*