

Good morning,

Please see below/attached for information and resources related to your work with older youth.

- OCYF Trauma Team Tip Sheet (attached)
- YAB Blast Newsletter
- 2026 SWAN/IL Spring Quarterly Meetings
- All-Star College Scholarship Now Open
- Protecting Access to SNAP for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care: Critical Strategies for State Implementation

The Winter Blast Youth Newsletter brings you the latest updates, activities, and celebrations happening this season!

As we move through this season, let's make it a time when youth voices rise bold, clear, and impossible to ignore. When young people speak with purpose, systems shift, communities grow, and real change takes root.

[Welcome to the YAB Winter BLAST.](#)



2026 SWAN/IL Spring Quarterly Meetings



Information regarding the 2026 SWAN/IL Spring Quarterly Meetings is below. Please read the information carefully.

Pre-registration is required and can be done by clicking the registration links below.

Dear Colleagues,

The Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF), the prime contractor for the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN), and the Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center's Independent Living Project (IL) are pleased to announce the agenda for the 2026 SWAN/IL Spring Quarterly Meetings. They will be held in April throughout the state; please see the invitation link for dates and locations. The meetings will be in-person, except for the April 23, 2026 session, which will be held virtually. SWAN affiliates are required to attend quarterly meetings, whether in-person or virtually. We also invite and encourage each county's children and youth agency to attend, including caseworkers, supervisors and administrators.

The morning general session of the 2026 SWAN/IL Spring Quarterly Meetings is titled *Permanency is a Team Sport*. This session highlights the importance of a collaborative approach to permanency and examines how unified efforts contribute to stronger outcomes for youth. Participants will explore the mission of the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network, learn about the roles and contributions of network members, and review examples of how collaboration within the network has strengthened permanency outcomes for older youth. Participants will leave with a renewed understanding that permanency cannot be achieved by any single entity and that effective teamwork is essential to successful permanency efforts.

Following the general session, we are pleased to offer a comprehensive agenda of three concurrent sessions in the afternoon. Please review the session descriptions accompanying the invitation. Approval of continuing education credit provided through co-sponsorship with the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work, a Pennsylvania preapproved provider of social work continuing education, is pending. The SWAN prime contractor will also issue certificates of training that can be credited toward the 20 hours of annual training required for all county children and youth caseworkers.

To register, click on the link(s) below. We look forward to seeing you as we continue to network for permanency on behalf of Pennsylvania's children.

Teresa Musser
Director of SWAN &
IL Unit Supervisor
Division of Programs
Department of Human
Services/OCYF

Shari VanderGast
President &
Chief Executive Officer
Diakon
SWAN Prime Contractor

cc: Tammy Hendrix, DSW, SWAN Program Administrator, Voce

Click the location below to register:

Clarion Quarterly - April 7, 2026

Green Tree Quarterly - April 8, 2026

Philadelphia Quarterly - April 14, 2026

Lansdale Quarterly - April 15, 2026

Harrisburg Quarterly - April 21, 2026

Virtual Quarterly- April 23, 2026

Scranton Quarterly - April 29, 2026

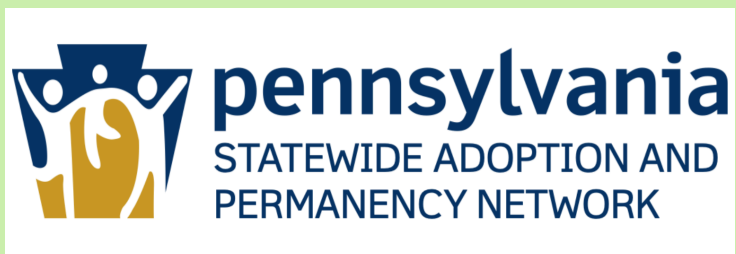
Voce on Behalf of the SWAN Prime Contract

Toll Free: 888-793-2512

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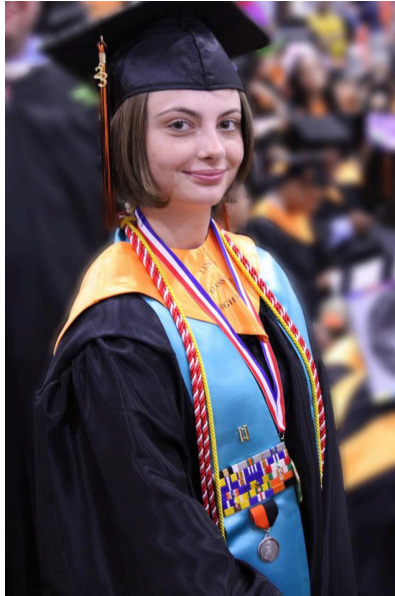
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All-Star College Scholarship Now Open



ALL-STAR SCHOLARSHIP IS
ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS



The 2026 [UMPS CARE All-Star College Scholarship](#) is now accepting applications with a deadline of May 1, 2026. Students may start their application and return to complete it at their convenience.

About the Scholarship: The All-Star Scholarship is designed for youth adopted at or after age 13. Recipients can receive up to \$10,000 per year, along with valuable mentorship and support from an MLB umpire and their family. Find qualifications and additional details [here](#).

The Impact: Watch the video below featuring our first graduate, Josh, who spoke at our annual Golf Classic as we celebrated our 20th anniversary. Josh now serves as a member of our Scholarship Committee alongside other graduates - a testament to the transformative power of this program.

How You Can Help: Know someone who may be eligible? Please encourage them to apply and share this opportunity

with youth and families in your network.

Questions? Contact Jennifer.Jopling@UmpsCare.com

[APPLY TODAY](#)



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Protecting Access to SNAP for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care: Critical Strategies for State Implementation

Young people play an important role in shaping our society and contributing to their families, their communities, and our collective future.

Unfortunately, in a step backward last year, the budget reconciliation bill added significant hurdles for young people accessing SNAP—the single most important anti-hunger program in the U.S.

Specifically, the bill removes important provisions exempting young people aging out of foster care and young people experiencing homelessness who do not have children from SNAP's time limits and work requirements.



Resource: [Protect Youth Access to SNAP](#)

For young people aging out of care, SNAP benefits act as a buffer against the economic and health impacts of food insecurity, allowing youth who have experienced foster care or who are experiencing homelessness to afford groceries.

While these protections have been repealed at the federal level, state agencies can still

Implement strategies to limit the harm, including:

- Leveraging discretion in current regulations to help young people avoid time limits and work reporting requirements.
- Implementing strategies to ensure young people in postsecondary education and training are exempt.
- Working with community-based organizations to ensure young people are aware of SNAP requirements and relevant exemptions.

We owe young people the support they need to stay healthy and pursue their goals without fear of going hungry.

Download our [latest resource](#), the [related brief](#), and the [advocacy guide](#) developed in partnership with Food Research & Action Center, iFoster, National Homelessness Law Center, Think of Us, and Youth Law Center.

Have a great weekend.

Thanks,