



The **Blast** NEWSLETTER

Summer Edition 2026

**Official Newsletter of the
Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board**

YAB
PA
YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

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Regional Updates



Southwest Region:

Armstrong County

Big things are happening with the Armstrong County YAB! Two new members joined the board this month, and members helped shape a meaningful community project by selecting items for a sensory-friendly child room at the courthouse. Thanks to their contributions, children and families who visit the courthouse will have access to a more welcoming and supportive environment.

Jefferson County

The Jefferson County YAB continues to make an impact! This month, members attended the YAB Leadership Summit and Northwest Regional YAB meeting, where they connected with fellow youth leaders and shared ideas for positive change. Locally, they are advancing their Community Resource Project, exploring peer mentoring opportunities, and leading efforts to promote mental health and strengthen community connections. To top

Regional Updates

it all off, their dedication and fundraising achievements have earned them a summer celebration trip to DelGrosso's Amusement Park.

Somerset County

Somerset County youth continued to make a meaningful difference in their community through volunteer service and acts of kindness. Members dedicated their time to the Somerset Mobile Food Bank, helping provide support to local families experiencing food insecurity. They also worked to spread positivity by placing motivational yard signs and kindness rocks throughout the community and brightened the days of nursing home residents by creating and delivering handmade tea light jars and wind chimes. Through these efforts, Somerset County youth demonstrated compassion, strengthened community connections, and inspired others through their commitment to service.

Southeast Region:

Chester County

Chester County youth had the opportunity to hear from motivational speaker Frederick "Freddy" Shegog during a special YAB event focused on resilience, personal growth, and creating a positive future. His inspiring message encouraged youth to reflect on the impact they hope to have on others.



Bucks County

Bucks County celebrated the achievements of local graduating seniors during its annual High School Graduation Celebration. Youth gathered to recognize this important milestone with food, fellowship, and special gifts honoring their accomplishments. The event highlighted the hard work and perseverance of youth as they prepare for their next chapter.

Southeast Regional YAB

Youth from across the Southeast Region came together in June to continue work on their Citizens Review Panel project: What to Expect After Adoption. With support from Youth Ambassador Qasim Abrams and CWRC staff member Cindy Gore, participants collaborated to finalize the resource and provide feedback designed to strengthen its impact. The project reflects the region's commitment to amplifying youth voice and creating meaningful resources for young people and families.

Regional Updates



Northeast Region

Lackawanna County

Lackawanna County youth are preparing for their upcoming Bingo Fundraiser by building community partnerships and reaching out to local businesses and organizations for support. Their efforts are helping lay the foundation for a successful event while increasing community awareness of YAB initiatives.

Susquehanna and Wyoming Counties

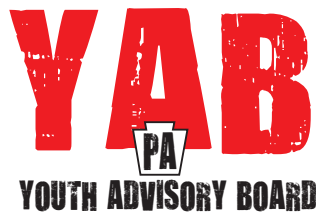
Youth in Susquehanna and Wyoming Counties are partnering with Trehab to expand resources for participants in the Independent Living Program. Through an Amazon Wish List drive, they are collecting essential items such as hygiene products, school supplies, educational resources, and technology for college-bound youth. The project aims to provide practical support that promotes stability and success.

Lehigh, Carbon, and Northampton Counties

Youth from Lehigh, Carbon, and Northampton Counties continued demonstrating their commitment to community service through monthly volunteer visits to a local nursing home. During these visits, youth spend time engaging with residents, participating in activities, and building meaningful connections across generations. Their ongoing efforts not only bring companionship and joy to nursing home residents, but also foster a spirit of service, empathy, and community engagement among participating youth.

Northeast Regional YAB

The Northeast Regional YAB recently completed its Family Connections Project, a youth-developed resource designed to support conversations about family relationships and connections. Featuring interactive activities, guidance from youth, and practical tools for both youth and professionals, the resource promotes understanding, communication, and preparation for important milestones such as dependency hearings. Regional youth showcased the completed project at the 2026 Youth Leadership Summit, sharing their work and insights with participants from across Pennsylvania.



Statewide Updates

Youth from across Pennsylvania gathered on June 10–11, 2026, for the Older Youth Summit, a two-day experience focused on leadership, advocacy, learning, and connection. The summit brought together 31 youth from across the state to build skills, strengthen relationships, and collaborate on issues impacting young people involved in the child welfare system.

The summit began with welcoming activities and opportunities for youth to connect with one another. Participants then heard from keynote speaker Jim Donovan, who delivered an engaging and interactive presentation that highlighted the benefits of music, teamwork, and positive self-expression. Through hands-on activities and drumming exercises, youth explored strategies for reducing stress and supporting their overall well-being.

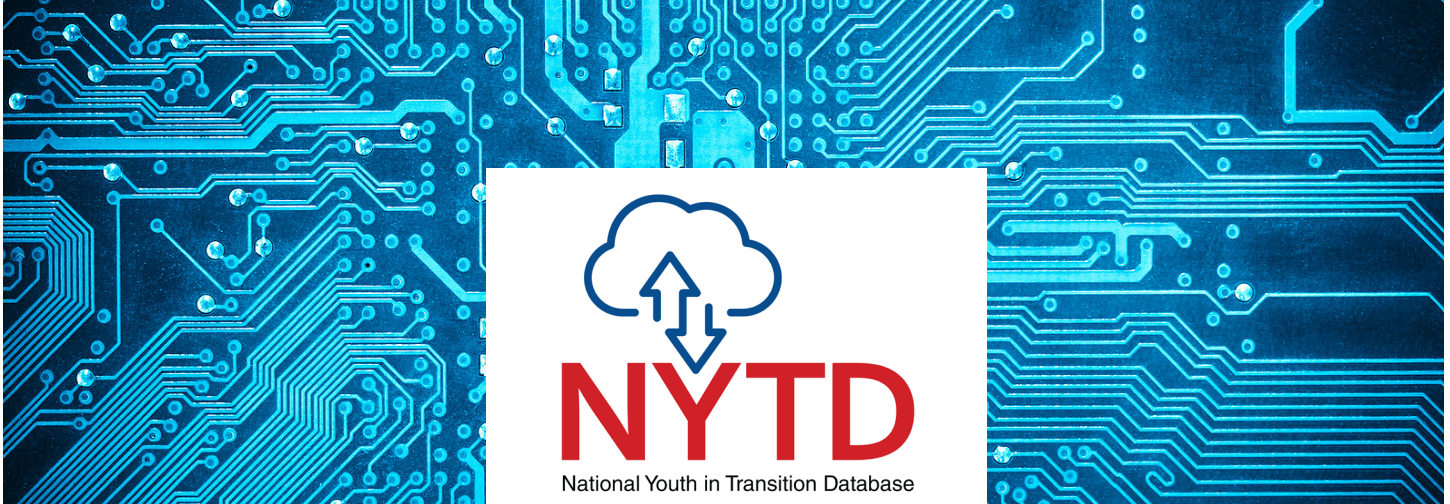




Throughout the summit, youth participated in trainings on Child Welfare 101 and Engagement & Collaboration, gaining a deeper understanding of the child welfare system while strengthening communication, teamwork, and advocacy skills. An evening outing to ABC East Lanes gave participants the opportunity to continue building connections through bowling, escape rooms, and other team-building activities.

A major highlight of the summit was the presentation of regional Citizen Review Panel (CRP) projects. Youth showcased resources they developed to support family connections, employment readiness, adoption education, and parenting youth. These projects reflected the creativity, leadership, and commitment of young people working to improve outcomes for youth in care.

The summit concluded with an interactive advocacy challenge where teams debated whether Android or iPhone was the superior technology platform. The activity encouraged critical thinking, public speaking, and persuasive communication, with Team Android ultimately earning the win. The event ended with a certificate ceremony recognizing each participant's dedication, leadership, and commitment to making a positive impact on the child welfare system.



Survey Youth Training

NTYD Survey Youth Training:

<https://www.payab.pitt.edu/videos/NYTDIntroduction.mp4>

During this training, youth will learn what the NTYD survey is, why it matters, and how their participation helps create positive changes in the foster care system. The survey gives youth and young adults with lived experience a way to share what life in and after care is really like.

Ideally, the NTYD survey helps educate decision makers, influence policies, and improve services for youth. This training helps youth understand how the survey is used, how their privacy is protected, and how to share honestly and safely.

During This Training, You'll Learn:

- What the NTYD survey is
- Why your participation matters
- How the information is used
- How your privacy and safety are protected

Taking the survey is a choice, but it's also an opportunity to help shape change.

Additional material can be found here:

<https://www.payab.pitt.edu/files/NYTDTraining/NTYDSurveyYouthTraining.pdf>.



NYTD COUNCIL

What the NYTD Council Is All About:

The NYTD Council is a group of young people who have experienced foster care and want to help improve outcomes for transitioning youth. As a member, you'll learn what NYTD is all about, speak up for youth in the child welfare system, and encourage others to share their experiences through NYTD surveys. Your voice helps strengthen Independent Living (IL) programs across Pennsylvania and makes sure youth are heard.

What NYTD Council Members Do:

Advise & Share Insight

- Give feedback on how NYTD collects and reports information
- Help Pennsylvania and partner organizations understand real experiences behind the numbers

Provide Youth Voice

- Advocate for foster youth and young adults transitioning out of care
- Recommend policy change based on NYTD data

Interpret Data

- Look at NYTD reports and help identify trends
- Simplify information for youth to understand

Training & Outreach

- Help create youth-friendly resources, videos, and training materials
- Join webinars, conferences, and community events to teach others about NYTD

Working With Community Partners

- Collaborate with child welfare groups, state agencies, and federal partners to improve how data is collected and how services are delivered



Expectations of NYTD Council Members:

Be Active & Engaged

- Participate in meetings, trainings, and webinars—online or in-person
- Engage in conversations, share your thoughts, and bring your experiences to the table

Be Willing to Learn

- Familiarize yourself with how NYTD works and why the data matters
- Stay informed about foster care policies and transition-age services

Show Leadership & Professionalism

- Represent the Council and system-involved youth respectfully
- Maintain confidentiality of sensitive information and conduct all discussions responsibly

Work as a Team

- Collaborate with other youth and professionals
- Support your fellow Council members in outreach and advocacy

Give Helpful Feedback

- Review videos, reports, and training materials to ensure they are youth-friendly
- Suggest ways to make NYTD more engaging and easier to understand

By agreeing to participate in the NYTD Council, members will help shape the policies and services that affect youth currently in foster care as well as youth who have exited foster care and youth who will be in care in the future. Your voice helps make sure decisions are based on real experiences, not just numbers.

SUN Bucks

Pennsylvania's Summer EBT program

Pennsylvania's SUN Bucks program is a permanent federal nutrition assistance program through the U.S. Department of Agriculture. With \$120 per eligible child, the SUN Bucks program helps cover grocery costs during the summer break from school. From fresh fruits and veggies to protein-packed meats and dairy, your benefits can be used for all the essentials. Plus, many families will receive benefits automatically. The application deadline is August 31st. For more information, contact the SUN Bucks FAQ line at **1-877-762-1575**.

Check to see if you qualify: dhs.pa.gov/SUNBucks

SUN Bucks Provides

\$120 per Eligible Child

SUN Bucks provides \$120 per eligible child to Pennsylvania families to buy groceries during the summer.

Many children will get these benefits automatically, but some households will need to apply. Scan the QR code for an eligibility navigator to check if you qualify.



USDA SUN Bucks U.S. Department of Agriculture Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Pennsylvania Department of Education



34th Annual *Pennsylvania Permanency Conference*



From June 16–17, 2026, professionals and advocates from across Pennsylvania gathered for the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network Summer Statewide Meeting, followed by the 34th Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference, held June 17–19, 2026; youth and families were invited as well at The Kalahari Resorts and Conventions in Pocono Manor. Together, these events provided valuable opportunities for learning, collaboration, and networking focused on permanency, lifelong connections, and positive outcomes for youth and families.

Youth voice played a central role throughout the week. YAB member Kandy Gomez inspired attendees with her poem, *We Rise*, while YAB member Mayala Kirkland showcased her musical talent through a clarinet performance. X Harlan also shared selections from her book, *There's Sun After Rain and Love After Pain*. Their presentations highlighted the creativity, resilience, and strength of young people while reinforcing the importance of including youth perspectives in conversations about permanency and child welfare.

Another highlight of the conference was the Matching Reception, which helped promote meaningful permanency connections for youth waiting to be adopted. YAB also hosted a resource table where attendees could learn more about youth advocacy, leadership opportunities, and statewide YAB initiatives. The table provided a valuable opportunity to connect with professionals, families, and youth from across Pennsylvania while showcasing the impact of youth-led work.

The week served as a powerful reminder of what can be accomplished when youth, families, caregivers, and professionals come together with a shared commitment to helping young people succeed. Through learning, advocacy, and collaboration, participants reinforced the importance of ensuring every youth has both the support systems and opportunities needed to thrive.



Youth Spotlight:



We are proud to celebrate former Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board (YAB) member Xavier Littlejohn for receiving the Youth Advocate Award at the 34th Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference, held June 17–19, 2026, in Pocono Manor.

The Youth Advocate Award recognizes current and former foster youth who have demonstrated exceptional leadership, raised awareness about the experiences of young people in care, and created positive changes through advocacy and service. Xavier's dedication to uplifting youth voice and improving opportunities for young people involved in the child welfare system makes him a deserving recipient of this honor.

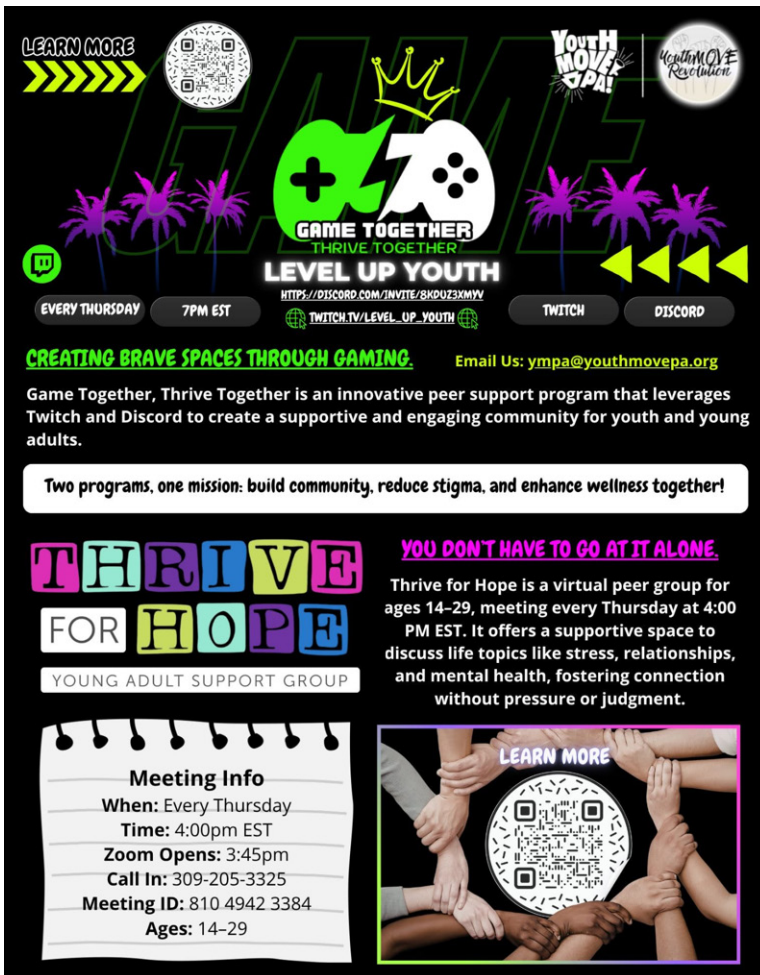
A Pittsburgh native with eight years of foster care experience, Xavier has used his lived experience to make a lasting impact on youth across Pennsylvania. One of his most notable accomplishments was helping develop Horizon Scholars, a University of Pittsburgh program focused on eliminating barriers and expanding support for students who have experienced foster care and other challenges while pursuing higher education.

Xavier is also a graduate of the University of Pittsburgh School of Social Work and continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to serving others. This fall, he will further his education by pursuing his Master of Social Work (MSW) at the University of Pittsburgh while beginning his professional career with Allegheny County Children and Youth Services.

Xavier's achievements reflect the power of youth leadership, perseverance, and advocacy. His commitment to improving outcomes for young people continues to inspire others and create meaningful change throughout the child welfare community.

Congratulations, Xavier, on this well-deserved recognition!

Level Up Youth



LEARN MORE >>>>>

GAME TOGETHER
THRIVE TOGETHER
LEVEL UP YOUTH

EVERY THURSDAY 7PM EST
TWITCH.TV/LEVEL_UP_YOUTH

CREATING BRAVE SPACES THROUGH GAMING. Email Us: ympa@youthmovepa.org

Game Together, Thrive Together is an innovative peer support program that leverages Twitch and Discord to create a supportive and engaging community for youth and young adults.

Two programs, one mission: build community, reduce stigma, and enhance wellness together!

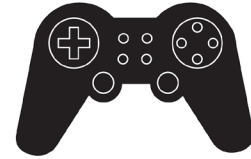
THRIVE FOR HOPE
YOUNG ADULT SUPPORT GROUP

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO AT IT ALONE.

Thrive for Hope is a virtual peer group for ages 14-29, meeting every Thursday at 4:00 PM EST. It offers a supportive space to discuss life topics like stress, relationships, and mental health, fostering connection without pressure or judgment.

Meeting Info
When: Every Thursday
Time: 4:00pm EST
Zoom Opens: 3:45pm
Call In: 309-205-3325
Meeting ID: 810 4942 3384
Ages: 14-29

LEARN MORE



Need a place to connect? We've got you.

Whether you're looking for real conversations or a gaming community, Youth Move PA has a space for you.

 Thrive for Hope
 Thursdays | 4 PM EST
 Virtual peer support for ages 14-29
<https://www.pmhca.org/Thrive-for-Hope>

 Level Up Youth
 Thursdays | 7 PM EST
 Gaming, community, and support on Twitch & Discord
No pressure. No judgment. Just people who get it.
<https://www.pmhca.org/Game-Together>

#YouthMovePA #ThriveForHope
#LevelUpYouth #PeerSupport
#YouthMentalHealth
#GamingCommunity #YouAreNotAlone
#CommunityMatters





Safe Driving

for Young Adults and Youth in Pennsylvania This Summer



- ✓ **No phones**
- ✓ **No distractions**
- ✓ **Don't speed**
- ✓ **Limit passengers**
- ✓ **Buckle up**





NEW DRIVER

WORK ZONE SAFETY PROGRAM



- Learn how to drive safely in work zones.
- Experience scenarios you might encounter on the road.
- Understand the laws related to work zone driving in PA.

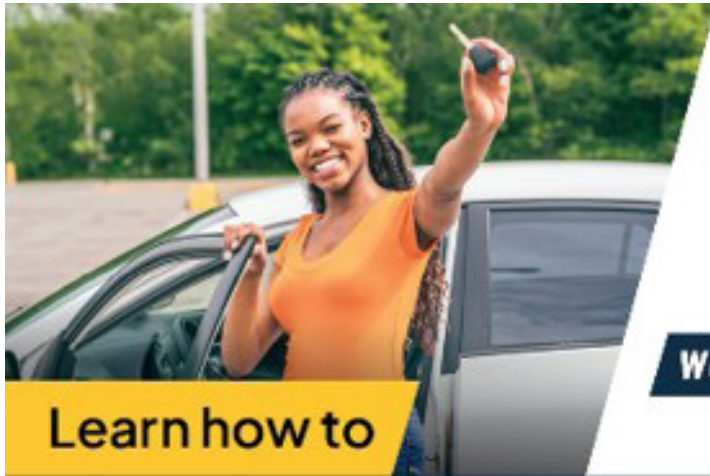


TAKE THE FREE COURSE!

Available in English & Spanish



Pennsylvania
Department of Transportation



Learn how to



NEW DRIVER

WORK ZONE SAFETY PROGRAM



NAVIGATE WORK ZONES



TAKE THE FREE COURSE!

Available in English & Spanish



Pennsylvania
Department of Transportation

Summer is a great time for road trips, vacations, and spending time with friends, but it can also be one of the most dangerous times of the year for young drivers. With schools out and more people traveling, Pennsylvania roads become busier with vehicles, pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorcyclists. Young drivers should stay focused, avoid distractions such as texting or using social media, and always wear a seatbelt. Even a moment of inattention can lead to a serious crash.

Safe driving also means following speed limits, never driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and adjusting driving habits during summer thunderstorms and heavy traffic. Slowing down, maintaining a safe following distance, and staying alert can help prevent accidents and protect everyone on the road.

To help new drivers stay safe, PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission created the New Driver Work Zone Safety Program, a free 35-minute online training course that teaches drivers how to safely navigate construction and work zones. The program covers work zone signs, safe driving behaviors, lane closures, merging techniques, Pennsylvania work zone laws, and what to do during emergencies in a work zone. By learning these important safety skills and practicing responsible driving habits, young adults and youth can enjoy a fun, safe, and memorable summer while helping keep Pennsylvania roads safe for everyone. [pa.gov], [paturnpike.com]



Free Summer Gym Pass for Youth



Teens Can Work Out FREE All Summer?!

This is HUGE for teens! Planet Fitness is bringing back its High School Summer Pass — meaning teens ages 14–19 can work out for FREE all summer long!

Starting June 1 through August 31, teens get access to thousands of gym locations across the U.S. and Canada, plus free fitness training and workout programs.

Registration opened ahead of time on May 18th online or in-club — and yes, a parent/guardian is required for those under 18.

This is a perfect way to stay active this summer — don't miss it!

planet **fitness** **HIGH SCHOOL**
SUMMER PASS POWERED BY GYMSHARK

TEENS 14-19
WORK OUT
FREE
ALL SUMMER
JUNE 1 - AUGUST 31

PLUS GET 20% OFF GYMSHARK

Sign up today at the front desk or at
planetfitness.com/summerpass

Under 18? Sign up with a parent/guardian (online or in-club)
Locations independently owned and operated.
See club for details. ©2020 Planet Fitness Franchising LLC.





Are you **18–25 years old** and looking for a paid opportunity to build your future, gain career skills, make new friends, and help protect the environment? The **Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps** could be the perfect fit for you! [pa.gov]

Through a partnership between the **Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR)** and the **Student Conservation Association (SCA)**, young adults gain hands-on experience, professional training, leadership development, and exposure to exciting careers in conservation. [thesca.org], [pa.gov]

★ Why Join?

- ✓ Earn **\$17.31** per hour while gaining valuable work experience.
- ✓ Build leadership, teamwork, and career-readiness skills.
- ✓ Receive nationally recognized conservation training.
- ✓ Explore careers in environmental conservation, parks, forestry, and recreation.
- ✓ Work alongside other motivated young adults making a positive impact in their communities. [pa.gov], [thesca.org]

What You'll Do

Pennsylvania's park system includes **124 state parks and forests covering more than 300,000 acres**. Corps members help preserve and protect these treasured public lands through projects such as: [thesca.org], [pa.gov]

-  Tree planting
-  Trail building and maintenance
-  Habitat restoration
-  Infrastructure improvement projects
-  Environmental stewardship and conservation work

An Inclusive Opportunity

The Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps welcomes young people from **all backgrounds, identities, cultures, abilities, and experiences**. The program is committed to creating equitable pathways into green careers and includes opportunities that support participants who are deaf or hard of hearing through specialized crews. [pa.gov]

Program Details

Position: Crew Member (Waitlist Candidate)

Age Requirement: 18–25 years old at the start of the program.

Program Dates: April 6 – November 25, 2026.

Pay: \$17.31/hour. [pa.gov], [thesca.org]

Looking Beyond Pennsylvania?

Interested in opportunities outside of PA? The **Student Conservation Association (SCA)** offers conservation, environmental, and service opportunities for young people **across the United States**, giving you access to internships, crew programs, and career-building experiences in national parks, forests, and public lands nationwide. [thesca.org]

Ready to Start Your Next Adventure?

Whether you're exploring your future career, looking for paid experience, or passionate about protecting the outdoors, the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps can help you build skills, earn money, and make a lasting impact.

 [Learn More & Apply for the 2026 Waitlist Today!](#)

Crew Locations



National Breastfeeding Month

Hey Moms, Did You Know?

If you're pregnant or have recently had a baby, you may be able to get FREE breastfeeding support, counseling, supplies, and breast pumps through your health insurance thanks to the Affordable Care Act (ACA)!

This is especially great news for young moms, first-time parents, and mothers involved in the child welfare system who may need extra support while caring for their babies. Parenting a newborn can be exciting, stressful, and overwhelming all at the same time—but you don't have to do it alone.



♥ What's Available for Free?

If you have ACA-compliant health insurance, you may qualify for:

- ✓ Breastfeeding counseling and education
- ✓ Lactation consultant visits
- ✓ Peer support services
- ✓ Breastfeeding supplies
- ✓ A new or rented breast pump
- ✓ Support before and after your baby is born

Best of all, these services are provided without copays, deductibles, or coinsurance.

☆ Why This Matters for Young and New Moms

Being a new parent comes with lots of questions, especially if this is your first baby. Having access to breastfeeding support can help you:

- 😊 Learn how to feed and care for your baby
- 💪 Build confidence as a parent
- ♥ Create a strong bond with your child
- 🧠 Reduce stress and anxiety
- 🏠 Continue breastfeeding while attending school, work, or appointments

For mothers who are receiving child welfare services or other family support services, these resources can provide additional guidance and encouragement during an important stage of a child's development.

A Message from Pennsylvania's Insurance Commissioner

"After welcoming a child, the last thing a parent should have to worry about is figuring out how to afford essential resources that assist with breastfeeding," said Pennsylvania Insurance Commissioner Michael Humphreys.

Were You Charged for Breastfeeding Services?

If you have an ACA-compliant health plan and were charged a copay, deductible, or coinsurance for covered breastfeeding equipment, supplies, or counseling, you may be eligible for a refund. Contact your insurance company using the phone number on the back of your health insurance card.

Need Help?

If you have questions about your coverage or need to file a complaint, contact the Pennsylvania Insurance Department Consumer Services Bureau:

 1-877-881-6388

 Visit the Pennsylvania Insurance Department Consumer Help Center

 Remember

Every parent deserves support. Whether you're a young mom, a first-time parent, or balancing additional challenges while raising your child, these free breastfeeding resources are here to help you and your baby thrive. Don't miss out on benefits that can make your parenting journey a little easier and a lot more supported!



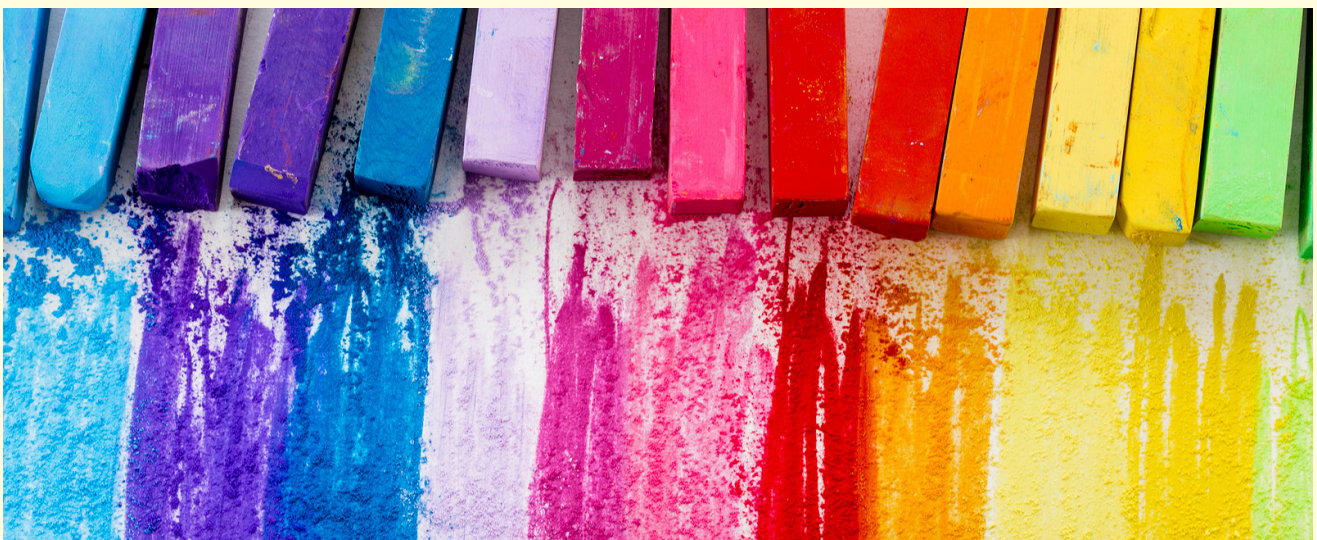
PA *Back-to-School Events*

For youth involved in the child welfare and foster care system, the end of summer can bring additional anxiety related to school changes, new placements, transportation challenges, or concerns about having the resources needed to succeed. Community outreach events help reduce these barriers by providing essential school supplies, clothing, backpacks, educational resources, and access to supportive services.

These events also offer a chance for young people to celebrate the end of summer in a positive and engaging environment. Family friendly activities, games, music, food, health resources, and community partnerships help create lasting memories while building a sense of belonging and connection. For foster youth who may experience frequent transitions or disruptions, these opportunities can be especially meaningful.

Back-to-school outreach efforts strengthen connections between youth, caregivers, schools, child welfare professionals, and community organizations. They help foster positive relationships, increase confidence, and encourage school readiness by ensuring children feel prepared and supported on the first day of school.

Most importantly, these events send a powerful message to every child and young person: you are important, your community cares about you, and you deserve every opportunity to succeed. By celebrating the end of summer and preparing for a successful school year, communities help create a strong foundation for educational achievement, social emotional well-being, and long-term success for youth in foster care and the child welfare system.



Philadelphia & Southeast Region



Back-to-School Community Day 2026

- **Date & Time:** Saturday, August 15, 2026, at 11:00 AM
- **Location:** MQ Factory – Ricky Codio Studio, 126 Leverington Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19127
- **Description:** Hosted by the ITAV Foundation, this event focuses on school readiness, family support networks, community engagement, and connecting families with local resources.
- **Cost:** Free





SDP Back-to-School Celebration & Bus Tour

- The School District of Philadelphia is excited to announce the 6th Annual Back-to-School Celebration & Bus Tour! We cannot wait to hit the streets and help families prepare for the first day of the 2026-2027 school year – Monday, August 24, 2026.
- This summer's Bus Tour is powered by Independence Blue Cross and Live Nation and will continue the tradition of providing critical Back-to-School information and services in neighborhoods across Philadelphia. This year's tour will include 4 fun-filled Mega-Events hosted in partnership with Radio One, Comcast, Roosevelt Mall, The City of Philadelphia Office of Emergency Management, and more. While we will host fewer events this year, we have invested in ensuring the events are more accessible, organized, family-focused, and entertaining than ever before.
- So, join us at one of our events on August 3, August 7, August 11, or August 15, where you'll be able to:
 - Enjoy snacks and frozen treats
 - Participate in fun games and raffles
 - Chat with our Street Team Ambassadors to get the back-to-school information you need
 - Register your child for pre-kindergarten through 12th grade
 - Sign-up for a Parent Portal account
 - Find out about School District of Philadelphia job openings
 - Get a free backpack and school supplies
 - Receive critical information from dozens of our partner organizations from around the city
 - At select locations, have your child receive, at low cost, immunizations and school physicals required to attend school
- Find the full Bus Tour schedule, latest back-to-school updates, immunization opportunities, and other important information at www.philasd.org/ringthebell. Click the "Need Help?" button on the website if you have additional questions. I hope to see you at one of the bus tour stops, and I cannot wait to ring in a new school year this fall.



3rd Annual Back-to-School Fair (Delco)

- Taking place **August 15, 2026**, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM at the Delaware County Wellness Center (125 Chester Pike, Eddystone, PA 19022). Hosted by the county health department to provide health checks and gear. See updates on the [Delaware County Pennsylvania Official Site](#).

South Central Region



Back-to-School Giveaway

- **Date & Time:** Sunday, August 9, 2026, at 2:00 PM
- **Location:** Sixth Ward Park, 640 East Ross Street, Lancaster, PA 17602
- **Description:** Community Park event providing free school supplies and family-friendly activities for local youth.
- **Cost:** Free





Back-to-School Bash

- **Date & Time:** Saturday, August 8, 2026, at 11:00 AM
- **Location:** Word of Life Chapel, 27 Fellowship Drive, Halifax, PA 17032
- **Description:** Outdoor family event featuring lunch, inflatables, water activities, face painting, live music, and a giant slip-and-slide.
- **Cost:** Free

2026 Back-to-School Extravaganza

- Taking place Saturday, **August 15, 2026**, from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM at the Pennsylvania Farm Show Complex & Expo Center (2300 N Cameron St, Harrisburg, PA 17110). Offers free backpacks filled with supplies, vision checks, and free haircuts. Reserve a slot on the [Harrisburg Extravaganza Eventbrite Link](#). [[1](#), [2](#)]

Back-to-School Extravaganza

Step into success for the school year with this preparatory, interactive event!

Saturday, August 15

9:30 am – 12:30 pm

Farm Show Complex

2300 N Cameron St
Harrisburg, PA 17110





15th Annual Back-to-School Event

- Scheduled for Sunday, **August 9, 2026**, from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM at Penn Medicine Park (650 N Prince St, Lancaster, PA 17603). A major outdoor community giveaway day hosted by local representatives. For confirmations, visit the [Representative Nikki Rivera Event Page](#).



Back-to-School Outreach at Bethel

- Set for Wednesday, **August 12, 2026**, at 7:00 PM at the Bethel Assembly of God (400 Miller St, Chambersburg, PA 17201). Students in grades K-5 can pick out a brand-new backpack packed with essential supplies. Pre-registration is encouraged via the [Bethel Assembly Chambersburg Facebook Event](#).

Greater Zion Baptist Church Presents

**BACK
TO
SCHOOL**



**CHURCH
COOKOUT**

For more information
and to register
for your free
backpack, visit

**SATURDAY
AUGUST 15
1 PM - 5 PM**

SAVE The Date!

Registration to open soon

<https://www.greaterzionbaptist.org>

212 North Progress Avenue

Harrisburg, PA 17109

(717) 541-0388

Poconos & Northeast Region

KCC Poconos Back-to-School '26

- **Date & Time:** August 3–8, 2026, beginning daily at 2:00 PM
- **Location:** Blakeslee Community Center, 5669 PA-115, Blakeslee, PA 18610
- **Description:** Large children's consignment marketplace offering affordable clothing, toys, books, baby gear, shoes, and maternity items.
- **Cost:** Free admission during public shopping days.



Back-to-School Giveaway & Drive

- **Date & Time:** Saturday, August 8, 2026, at 10:00 AM
- **Location:** M-Ashanti Crafts, 106 Columbia Drive, East Stroudsburg, PA 18301
- **Description:** Community initiative serving more than 150 local families with backpacks, notebooks, and school supplies.
- **Cost:** Free



2026 Back-to-School Celebration

- Hosted on **Monday, August 17, 2026**, starting at 9:00 AM at the Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley (520 E 4th St, Bethlehem, PA 18015). Free to Northampton County families, offering school supply bags, haircuts, music, and face painting. Details are accessible on the [Hispanic Center Lehigh Valley Facebook Event](#).

Allentown's Back-to-School Bash 2026

- Set for Wednesday, **August 12, 2026**, from 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM at Cedar Beach Park (2600 Parkway Blvd, Allentown, PA 18104). Features live music, games, prizes, and school resources. View the schedule details through the [Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce Portal](#).





ANGELS & DRAGONFLIES

Back to School



SATURDAY
AUGUST 22, 2026
10AM-1PM

**BACKPACKS, SCHOOL SUPPLIES, COMMUNITY
RESOURCES, & PETTING ZOO**



PARKING LOT
146 NORTH COURTLAND ST.
EAST STROUDSBURG, PA 18301



Angels & Dragonflies Back-to-School Drive

- Happening Saturday, **August 22, 2026**, starting at 10:00 AM at the charity headquarters near Harris Street (East Stroudsburg, PA 18301). Free supply distributions and family resource booths are available. Visit the [Angels & Dragonflies Facebook Event](#)

Pittsburgh & Southwest Region



YMCA Backpack & School Supply Giveaway

- **Date & Time:** Thursday, August 20, 2026, at 2:00 PM
- **Location:** Butler County Family YMCA, 339 North Washington Street, Butler, PA 16001
- **Description:** Distribution of free backpacks and school supplies to local students while supplies last.
- **Contact:** (724) 287-4733
- **Cost:** Free (*Student must be present.*)





Rocket Graffix 2nd Annual Back-to-School Bash

- Set for Thursday, **August 13, 2026**, at 5:00 PM at Saltsburg Canal Park (West Penn Trail, Saltsburg, PA 15681). Open to all surrounding school districts for free school supplies and outdoor fun. Check the [Saltsburg Canal Park Facebook Event](#).

Northwest Region



Erie Queer Community Back-to-School Drive

- Scheduled for Sunday, **August 9, 2026**, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at Central Outreach Erie (3104 State St, Erie, PA 16508). This collaborative drive benefits local youth and provides free notebooks, binders, backpacks, and classroom essentials. For more information, check the [Erie Gay News Event Page](#).

Resources

Mental Health Support

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

Call: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

National Crisis Text Hotline

Text "HOME" to 741741

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline Visit:

988lifeline.org

Available 24/7/365.

Call, chat, or text.

ASL Videophone available for

Deaf/Hard of Hearing.

Housing & Safety

Homeless National Hotline

Call: 1-800-786-2929

National Youth & Teen Runaway Hotline

Call: 1-800-Runaway

National Domestic Violence Support Hotline

Call: 1-800-799-SAFE

Visit: www.thehotline.org

Health & Wellness

National STD Hotline

Call: 1-800-227-8922

Legal Support

Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network Call:

1-800-322-7572

Child Protection

National Child Abuse Hotline

Call: 1-800-422-4453

LGBTQ+ Support

988 LGBTQ+ Line

Dial 988, Press 3

Text "PRIDE" to 988

Talk with an LGBTQ+ trained crisis counselor, available 24/7 for individuals under 25.

Visit: 988lifeline.org/help-yourself/lgbtqi/

Call Blackline

Call or Text: 1-800-604-5841

24/7 support for Black, LGBTQ+, and Black Femme communities

Visit: callblackline.com

LGBT National Hotline

Call: 1-888-843-4564

Visit: lgbthotline.org

Hours: Mon-Fri: 1 PM - 9 PM PT /

4 PM - Midnight ET

Sat: 9 AM - 2 PM PT / Noon - 5 PM ET

Muslim Alliance for Sexual and Gender Diversity (MASGD)

Call: 717-QTM-INARA (717-864-6272)

Hours: Fri-Sat, 5 PM - 11 PM CT

Visit: themasgd.org/Inara-helpline

Youth Support

Q Chat Space

Chat with peers in live, facilitated chats (Ages 13-19).

Visit: qchatspace.org

The QTP Loveline

Call: 1-855-578-5683

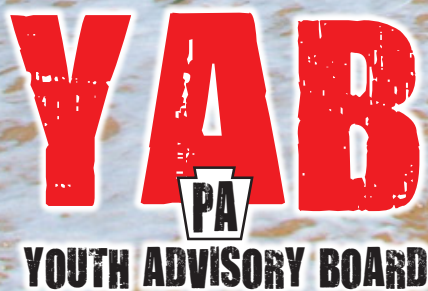
24/7 on-demand service.

Visit: queertransproject.org

Upcoming Dates

YAB Statewide Meetings

- Thursday, September 17, 2026
- Thursday, November 19, 2026
- Thursday, January 21, 2027
- Thursday, March 18, 2027
- Thursday, May 20, 2027



University of
Pittsburgh

School of
Social Work

Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center