

Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference

June 26, 2015

On June 24, DHS Secretary Ted Dallas kicked off the 23rd Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference in Lancaster, PA. The Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network (SWAN) event is designed to train participants to prepare children and families on their journey through the child welfare system towards permanency, educate and support all those involved in finding permanent homes for Pennsylvania's foster children, and provide an opportunity for prospective families to match with children. The three-day conference welcomed around 700 attendees, including child welfare professionals, advocates, and current and potential foster or adoptive families.

Child Welfare and Permanency Facts at a Glance

- Approximately 15,000 Pennsylvania children are in the foster system on any given day
- More than 2,500 Pennsylvania children are currently waiting to be adopted
- In 2014, there were 1,861 adoptions and 602 permanent legal custodianships in Pennsylvania

“Every child deserves a home,” said Dallas. “SWAN has helped facilitate over 38,000 adoptions since it began in 1992. We are grateful that so many Pennsylvanians have opened up their homes and hearts to these children and we look forward to helping all of our kids find the loving homes they deserve.”

SWAN is both a broad-based cooperative effort and a centralized information and facilitation service through DHS. It includes: county children and youth agencies, juvenile court judges, foster and adoptive parents, private adoption agencies, the Pennsylvania Adoption Exchange, and many others who work together on behalf of the Pennsylvania children who need permanent homes.

Impact: #MeetTheKids

The theme of this year's conference, #MeetTheKids, encourages attendees to meet children in Pennsylvania's foster care system. #MeetTheKids started in 2013 as a film highlighting a few children in the system.

A matching brunch kicked off the conference, allowing prospective and approved adoptive families to meet with agency workers and youth waiting for adoptive families. Youth attended the event and spoke with 43 families about their interests and what they are looking for in a forever family.

The conference also introduced a panel of four teens from the #MeetTheKids campaign who either were adopted, or are still looking for permanency. Nakada and Chance, both age 16, and Nasir and Alex, both age 18, all shared their journey in the foster care system and the positive impact #MeetTheKids has in their lives.



To learn more, go to www.adoptpakids.org, or call 1-800-585-SWAN. Follow SWAN on Facebook at Pennsylvania Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network.