

# The Many Hands of our Mission

*The Many Hands of our Mission* provides information on Diakon staff members celebrating anniversaries in April, May and June. A list of all staff members celebrating work milestones is shown at the end of this online publication.

Everyone celebrating an anniversary is asked to provide additional information by answering a brief survey, along with submitting a photograph.

Those who responded are listed below. Please congratulate everyone celebrating work anniversaries.

Thank you for your continuing service and commitment to our ministries and to those we serve!

## JENN BRAUN

Adoption & Foster Care -  
Mechanicsburg

Family Recruiter/Match Specialist  
Years celebrated: 5

### FAVORITE ASPECT OF YOUR ROLE... AND WHY...

My favorite aspect of working in foster care and adoption is getting to see such an amazing and life-changing outcome every day, not just through our families and kids, but staff as well. Everyone is just so dedicated to bettering someone else's life. Our staff are here for the families; our families want to help children; and our children get matched to their forever families. It's just always rewarding seeing all these relationships being built.

**FUN FACT...** I'm currently training for my second half marathon and my first-ever sprint triathlon!

**ADVICE FOR NEW COWORKERS...** Stay organized and ask lots of questions!

**FAVORITE QUOTE...** "One person's 'annoying' is another person's 'inspiring and heroic'"  
Leslie Knope

### FAVORITE SUMMER VACATION MEMORY...

My favorite summer vacation memory is all the summers spent in upstate New York. It's so peaceful and beautiful.



## TAMMY STRUNK

Luther Crest  
Fitness Coordinator  
Years celebrated: 5

**FAVORITE ASPECT OF YOUR ROLE... AND WHY...** Walking with the residents on their fitness and

wellness journey. It is amazing to see older individuals improving their quality of life!

**FUN FACT...** I love to fish, I find it peaceful. I am also a crazy dog lady, and if I could, I would own a dog kennel.

### ADVICE FOR NEW COWORKERS...

Always remember that no matter what the challenges are, the residents are why we do what we do. Some are here by choice, many not, but this is their home—we may be all they have.

**FAVORITE QUOTE...** "I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." —Maya Angelou

### FAVORITE SUMMER VACATION MEMORY...

The residents and my coworkers. They work hard, work as a team, are supportive, creative and have fun in the process.

## JAMES HAHN

Cumberland Crossings  
Maintenance Specialist  
Years celebrated: 5

**FAVORITE ASPECT OF YOUR ROLE... AND WHY...** Working with the residents.

**FUN FACT...** Enjoy working in my yard and taking care of our chickens.

**ADVICE FOR NEW COWORKERS...** Treasure your time with each resident. They offer so much joy. They are always glad to see you and talk to you.

**FAVORITE QUOTE...** It's not just a job it's an adventure.

**FAVORITE THING ABOUT WORKING AT DIAKON...** The great teammates I have the opportunity to work with.



## KAREN KNODEL

Adoption & Foster Care - Topton  
Manager of Permanency Services  
and Grants  
Years celebrated: 5

**FAVORITE ASPECT OF YOUR ROLE... AND WHY...** I love supporting workers as they seek to find permanency for older youth. It can be a difficult job for the recruiters and I hope to

encourage them as they encounter difficult situations. I also enjoy celebrating the recruiters' successes with them.

**FUN FACT...** I am the director of a puppet team with my church.

**ADVICE FOR NEW COWORKERS...** While you may not see the impact you are having on others, your impact is changing generations to come.

**FAVORITE QUOTE...** "One hundred years from now it won't matter what kind of car I drove, what kind of house I lived in, how much money I had in the bank, nor what my clothes looked like BUT the world may be a little better because I was important in the life of a child." Author: excerpt from "Within My Power" by Forest Witcraft

**FAVORITE THING ABOUT WORKING AT DIAKON...** The compassion and caring the employees have for not only their clients but for each other.



## PAULA KOCEN

Statewide Adoption and  
Permanency Network (SWAN)  
Accountant  
Years celebrated: 5

**FAVORITE ASPECT OF YOUR ROLE... AND WHY...** Seeing the

growth, determination and hope of children in foster care seeking forever families. Hearing success stories.

## LIKES OUTSIDE OF WORK...

My great-grandfather came to the U.S. from Italy. I recently inherited his immigration papers and found that he was a gardener. I also inherited my grandparent's pasta machine. Everything my grandmother made was from scratch. Now I understand why outside of work I love to experiment in the garden and the kitchen, and especially to share these with my family.

**MOTIVATION TO FULFILL DIAKON'S MISSION...** The children in the state's care whom, through no fault of their own, need a place to feel secure and to be loved... a home.

**ADVICE FOR NEW COWORKERS...** Take every opportunity to do projects that others do not want to do. It will teach you something new and build in yourself humility and a strong work ethic.

**DEFINITION OF SUCCESS...** Every day doing ordinary things with great love.

**FAVORITE THING ABOUT WORKING AT DIAKON...** To be a part of the SWAN mission.

**ADVICE FOR NEW COWORKERS...** Take every opportunity to do projects that others do not want to do. It will teach you something new and build in yourself humility and a strong work ethic.

## APRIL 2023 SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

Name	YOS	Program/Community Office	Department	Position
Lynn Hertzog	50	Heilman House	HUD Operating	Maintenance Technician
Pamela Gerlach	10	Community Services	RSVP Clinton Lycoming Snyder Union	Program Assistant (RSVP)
Ashley Pyne	5	Cumberland Crossings	Nursing Support	Scheduler
Rachel Coughlin	5	Luther Crest	Social Services	Director of Social Services
Tammy Strunk	5	Luther Crest	Facility Administration	Fitness Coordinator
Karen Knodel	5	Permanency Services	SWAN OCMI Grant	Mgr. of Permanency Services & Grants
Emily Lipare	5	Permanency Services	Adoptions	Prep & Profile Specialist II
Raul Morales	5	YouthServices	Bridge Program	Program Manager

## MAY 2023 SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

Name	YOS	Program/Community Office	Department	Position
Danielle Reed	20	Ministry Support	Finance	Business Office Associate
Geanna Stenger	15	Permanency Services	Foster Care	Case Manager II
Theresa Autry	10	Buffalo Valley	Skilled Nursing	Nursing Assistant (NCC)
Jennylyn Longacre	10	Buffalo Valley	Skilled Nursing	Nursing Assistant (NCC)
Joseph Sees	10	Buffalo Valley	Plant Operations	Maintenance Technician
James Hahn	5	Cumberland Crossings	Plant Operations	Maintenance Specialist
Raymond Holloway	5	Cumberland Crossings	Plant Operations	Maintenance Director
Jennifer Braun	5	Permanency Services	Adoptions	Prep & Profile Specialist II
Paula Kocen	5	SWAN	SWAN	Accountant (SWAN)

## JUNE 2023 SERVICE ANNIVERSARIES

Name	YOS	Program/Community Office	Department	Position
Sharlotte Masters	35	Luther Crest	Medical Records	Senior Health Information Coordinator
Susan McGowan	20	The Lutheran Home at Topton	Skilled Nursing	Nursing Assistant (NCC)
Tamara Wachter	10	The Lutheran Home at Topton	Skilled Nursing	RN (NCC)
Shannon Knorr	5	Buffalo Valley	Skilled Nursing	Nursing Assistant (NCC)
Courtney Werner	5	Cumberland Crossings	Medical Records	Health Information Coordinator
Cynthia Smith	5	The Lutheran Home at Topton	Skilled Nursing	Nursing Supervisor
Terri Zerbe	5	YouthServices	Weekend Alternative Program	Counselor I