



Protecting Your Crown

February 2024

Submitted by: Qasim Ali Abrams

Please check out the newest resource developed by the PA Youth Advisory Board:

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Black and brown youth, when removed from their homes, can be placed into environments where their culture is not reflected. These placements may be in rural areas without access to hair products and salons catering to textured hair. This guide is a resource intended to assist families, workers, and even youth to care for and protect their crown.

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



2024 Wrapped in Support Blankets for Older Youth Kick Off

Submitted by: Andrea Merovich

Each year, a group of crafty knitters, crocheters, and quilters team up to produce blankets for the older youth in attendance at our annual Older Youth Retreat. For the past few years, each youth in attendance chooses their very own handmade blanket, leaving the retreat “wrapped in support.”

We continue these efforts again this year – and you are invited to join in! Here’s how you can help:

- Quilt, knit, or crochet a blanket.
- Want to start smaller? Knit or crochet 8-inch by 8-inch squares (any color, any stitch). Each blanket is 5 squares wide by 7 squares long. That’s 35 squares per blanket. Send us your squares or stitch the blanket together yourself first.
- Want to start even smaller? We can send you a blanket kit with all the tools one needs to assemble the blanket.
- Don’t know how to knit or crochet? We can teach you at one of our monthly Lunch & Learn sessions.

Lunch & Learns are the second Tuesday of every month from 12 noon to 1 p.m. via Zoom. To RSVP and receive a meeting invite, email Andrea Merovich at anm222@pitt.edu.

Have completed blankets or squares?

Send them to:

CWRC c/o Wrapped in Support Project
403 East Winding Hill Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

To join the Wrapped in Support Blanket Project mailing list, email Kathleen Swain at kls120@pitt.edu or Andrea Merovich at anm222@pitt.edu.



Save the Date for Pitt Day of Giving, February 27

Submitted by: Andrea Merovich

Each year in February the University of Pittsburgh holds the Pitt Day of Giving. It’s an opportunity to give back to programs that are near and dear to your heart. This is a fundraising event for alumni, faculty, staff, and friends to support the areas of the University that mean the most to you, including The Pitt Social Work: Child Welfare Education and Research Programs.

Giving starts February 20, with the main event on February 27. Learn more, enjoy the festivities, and donate to the program of your choice, here: <https://pittdayofgiving.com/pages/pitt-day-of-giving>.

*Thinking of going
back to school?*

APPLY TO THE CWEL PROGRAM!



The Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) program strengthens Pennsylvania public child welfare services by providing graduate level educational opportunities for current public child welfare professionals!

BENEFITS

- Fully funded tuition
- Professional growth & leadership development
- Child welfare-focused courses

REQUIREMENTS

- At least 2 years of employment
- County agency approval
- Admission to a participating school

Full-time, part-time, and on-line options available!

Participating Schools

Bryn Mawr College
Kutztown University
Marywood University
Millersville University
Pennsylvania West University
Shippensburg University

Slippery Rock University
Temple University
University of Pittsburgh
University of Pennsylvania
West Chester University
Widener University

The regular CWEL application deadline is April 30. However, some schools have an earlier deadline of March 15.

**Scan for
more info:**



Bridge Update


Submitted by: Kari Giles

Coming Soon to Bridge

- Adding a new INA toggle switch to the demographic employment screen. This option will only be visible to C&Y agency liaisons and trainees who have a role of middle management or executive. The question will state: “If this worker does not carry a caseload, nor supervise someone who does, and should not receive an INA, click the toggle to off”. If this toggle switch is turned off, the INA will not go to the trainee’s queue.
- In the “Instructor Toolbox” located in the “Manage Attendance” screen, a new “Instructor Materials” section will be added, which will display any relevant course material.
- Adding the room name anywhere workshop location is displayed.

Important Announcements

- The Bridge TBL Project is currently underway. We anticipate its launch in early summer of 2024.
- **INAs are coming out on March 1st** for the following counties: Beaver, Berks, Blair, Cambria, Chester, Clarion, Crawford, Cumberland, Elk, Fayette, Greene, Juniata, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Lycoming, Montgomery, Northampton, Northumberland, Pike, Snyder, Sullivan, Venango, and Warren.
- This is a great time to make sure your active agency staff information is correct. You can do this by viewing the “Active Staff” report in Bridge.
- Please make sure your trainees’ information is correct, including their supervisor’s name.
- As a reminder, liaisons are CC’ed on all INA notifications, however, the supervisors are the ones that need to approve the INA in their “**Approval Queue**”. Unless they directly supervise the worker, **liaisons will NOT see the trainee’s INA** in their “Approval Queue”.
- When a trainee leaves your agency, please make sure to enter a “**Termination Date**” in their demographics, otherwise the trainee will continue to be incorrectly associated with your agency.

 Agency Hire Date *

1

▼

/

31

▼


/

2022

▼

Which of the following best describes your role under the Agency? If your role is unknown, please keep the default of Direct Service Worker. *

Direct Service Worker ▼

 Effective Date of Current Role *

1

▼

/

31

▼

/

2022

▼

Termination Date

MM

▼

/

DD

▼

/

YYYY

▼

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- Please make a point of looking for any trainees that are in “**Cancelled**” status. Go to the “**Manage Users**” screen, click on the “**Trainee Status**” dropdown, and select “**Cancelled**” (see screenshot below). Trainees that are in this status are typically missing demographic information, for example: their date of birth, email, or a “**Termination Date**” (see previous bullet point). Once you have checked their demographic information and filled in any blanks, please contact Kara Muir via the Bridge Helpdesk at BridgeHD@pitt.edu to have the trainee’s record resolved.

For Further Assistance

- For anyone who would like to set up a one-on-one Bridge training via Microsoft Teams, please contact BridgeHD@pitt.edu. This training can be for new liaisons or for anyone who may need a refresher.
- We would also love to hear any feedback, suggestions, and ideas you may have about Bridge via our online form at <http://forms.cwrc.pitt.edu/BridgeFeedback/>.
- If you have any technical issues or questions, please email the Bridge team at BridgeHD@pitt.edu.



Let Your Voice Be Heard, Southeast Pennsylvania

Submitted by: Kim Hine

The Resource Center is excited to announce our second Town Hall is scheduled for March 26th in Reading. As you may recall, in September, we began recruiting parents with lived experience to participate in invitation-only town halls that will be occurring regionally around the state. [The purpose of the town halls is to engage parents and to learn about their views on the successes and areas for improvement within our child welfare system.](#) This time, the goal is to recruit 5-10 parents from the southeast region of the state, specifically targeting Berks, Chester, Delaware, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery, and Schuylkill counties. Parents identified for participation in this meeting must have the following:

- Past involvement with a Pennsylvania County Children and Youth agency including in-home and out-of-home placement in which reunification has occurred;
- The family's case must be closed with the County Children and Youth agency at the time of application; and
- The family cannot have connection to an open case with the County Children and Youth office through a family member.

The success of the first town hall is in part due to your support and connections. The majority of the parents who registered were referred by their county children and youth office. We want to thank you for your outreach and we ask that you continue those efforts moving forward. Below is the flyer, which has more information about the event and how to register. If you know a parent who qualifies to participate, please share the flyer with them. If you know a parent that lives outside of the current target counties but meets the other criteria, you can also provide them with a flyer, and they can register their information for possible participation in future events. Please note that this project's goal is to improve family engagement at all levels of Pennsylvania's child welfare system. Information learned during this town hall will not be used by the Office of Children, Youth, and Families to target corrective action toward a specific county agency.

Here are some highlights from the first town hall held in November in Mechanicsburg for five parents from the south-central part of the state. The event began for them by meeting with Resource Center staff to learn more about Pennsylvania's vision for partnering with parents with lived experience. The parents then had the chance to meet with Lavel Miller-Wilson, Deputy Secretary of the Office of Children, Youth, and Families in Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services, as the event's special guest. Everyone present viewed the event as a success and here is what the parents had to say:

"It was wonderful meeting other parents that had been through a similar experience as myself."

"It was also extremely empowering and comforting that the ladies at the Child Welfare Resource Center and the deputy secretary, and his colleagues, treated us all with respect, and warmth, and care."

"The comfort of being heard."

"Collaborating with other parents."

"Having a painful experience acknowledged and knowing that positive change could come from it was cathartic."

Please direct any questions to Kimberly Hine, Family Engagement Project Manager, or Felicia Matriccino, Parent Ambassador, at PAParent@pitt.edu.

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This is your opportunity to partner with the Office of Children, Youth, and Families and use your voice to inform Pennsylvania's Child Welfare System.

- Are you a birth parent that was involved with one or more of Pennsylvania's county children and youth agencies?
- Did your lived experience help you develop insight that could inform Pennsylvania's child welfare system?
- Do you want to have the opportunity to share your insights, expertise, and perspectives?

If so, please [register](#) for this event to learn more about how you can partner with the system and share your voice. The Pennsylvania Child Welfare Resource Center is excited to announce that Laval Miller-Wilson, Deputy Secretary of the Office of Children, Youth, and Families in Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services will be joining us as a guest for the event.

Here is what other parents are saying about this event:

"Having a painful experience acknowledged and knowing that positive change could come from it was cathartic."

"The comfort of being heard."

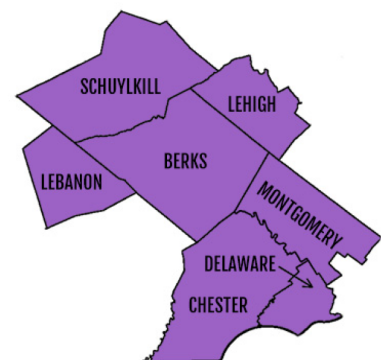
"Collaborating with other parents."

"It was wonderful meeting other parents that had been through a similar experience as myself."

Date:

March 26, 2024
3:00 PM - 6:00 PM

Location: Reading, PA



This event is by invitation only. Selected participants will receive a \$200 honorarium for time and travel.



If you are not available on this event date or do not live in one of the above pictured counties and want to be considered for future opportunities click [here](#) to register your information.

If you know a birth parent with lived experience that you believe would be interested in participating, please feel free to share this registration information with them.



Please direct any questions to: Felicia Matriccino, Parent Ambassador at PAParent@pitt.edu or 717-605-0230

Opportunity to Participate in a Research Project

Submitted by: Marlo Perry

Recruitment continues for our research project entitled, “*Supporting Superwomen: Emotional Labor, Gendered Racial Microaggressions, and the Superwoman Schema in Black Female Child Welfare Professionals.*” Funded through the School of Social Work’s Center on Race and Social Problems, this grant builds on earlier research on emotional intelligence competencies in Pennsylvania child welfare professionals (CWPs), and is led by Marlo Perry, Helen Cahalane, and Deb Gadsden.

We know that emotional labor (faking and/or suppressing emotions) is inherent in child welfare work. However, there is an additional layer of emotional labor for Black women working in child welfare, who are faced with navigating gendered racial microaggressions -- or even outright racism -- in their daily work, whether by colleagues, leadership, and/or families on their caseloads. We want to better understand how these experiences relate to elements of emotional health, professional well-being, and commitment to the field. Findings from this project will be used to develop trauma- and racially-informed supports and interventions for these valuable members of our workforce.

Participation involves completing various surveys (some daily over a two-week period on your computer) and an invitation to participate in a focus group or interview. Eligible participants are Black females who are employed by a Pennsylvania public child welfare agency, carry a caseload, and are at least six months post-certification. Participants will be compensated. Interested participants can sign up for an information session to learn more: <https://bit.ly/SupportingSuperwomen>. They can also contact Dr. Marlo Perry directly with questions: map225@pitt.edu.



Regional Team Contact Information

Our local number is 717-795-9048

Our fax number is 717-795-8013

Registration and winter weather number 1-877-297-7488

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