

Families Across Michigan

The Importance of Keeping Brothers, Sisters Together

Inside this issue:

Calendar of Events	2
Cover Story (cont.)	3
Judson Center welcomes MARE	3
Child Highlight	4

Reprinted with permission of the author, Dean Sparks; Originally published in the Toledo Blade

There is no better time to look into your heart to see if you have room for two, three, four, or more brothers and sisters who need a "forever family."

Right now in the United States, there are 129,000 children in foster care who need permanent, loving families, and many of these kids have been waiting for years to be adopted.

In Lucas County, Ohio, approximately 40 children are waiting to find families they can call their own. Many of them have brothers and sisters who deserve to grow up together. When children come to Lucas County Children Services, they come from families - families in crisis, but families nonetheless - and many of these families include more than one child. *(Continued on Page 3.)*



© Cristine Baetz

Sheila Mech, Editor

Published quarterly by The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange

PO Box 980789
Ypsilanti, MI 48197
800-589-MARE
mare@judsoncenter.org

MARE is a program of Judson Center and is funded by the Michigan Department of Human Services.



Upcoming Match Parties in Michigan

January 20th, 2010:
Match Party, 5pm - 7pm
Southeast MI

January 30th, 2010:
Match Party, 11am - 2pm
Lansing Area

Note: You must have an Approved Adoptive Family Assessment to participate in a match party

Get to know children whom are waiting to be adopted, in a comfortable and welcoming environment!

MARE has been collaborating with other agencies and holding match parties for many years. We have planned activities and organized materials to assist social workers select, prepare and support children who attend the parties. The parties are staffed by MARE coordinators and supervisors. *Limited space available. Contact MARE Recruitment Specialist, Sheila Mech, 734.528.1692 ext 23257, if you would like to attend or learn more about future Match Events.*



© Mary Stack



© Jesica Christenson



© Romain Blaquart



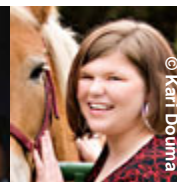
© Romain Blaquart



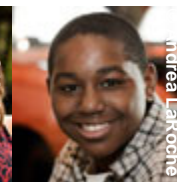
© Kenyon Koop



© Candace Young



© Kart Douma



© Andrea LaRoche

Calendar of Events for December—February

MARE
Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange

Note: This is not the full list of events for Winter 2009/10. To view the entire calendar, please visit www.mare.org.

ALLEGAN COUNTY

Kinship Care Support Group - (6:00 PM - 8:00 PM): December 22; (6:00 PM - 8:00 PM): January 12

Meetings are free, and are held on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. For more information contact Lindsey Iverson at (616) 396-0623, ext. 113.

Location: The Lodge, Calvary Christian Reformed Church, 410 Beeline Rd., Holland

CALHOUN COUNTY

Support Group - (7:00 PM - 9:00 PM): December 28

Monday Support Group at Dr. Haugen's office. For more information please call (269) 660-0448.

Albion Kinship Support Group - (1:00 PM - 3:00 PM): January 7

For more information call (269) 660-0448. **Location:** Grace Temple Outreach Bldg., Albion

IONIA COUNTY

Forever Family Group for Adoptive and Foster Parents - (6:00 PM - 8:00 PM): January 19

Meets on the third Tuesday of (almost) every month. Call Dorrine Schelbaum at (616) 522-0836 for more information. **Location:** Ionia High School

INGHAM COUNTY

Adoption Orientation Meeting - (6:00 PM - 8:00 PM): January 19

Monthly informational adoption orientation meeting. For more information contact Kathy Yates at (517) 323-4734 ext 1619.

Location: St. Vincent Catholic Charities, 2800 W. Willow, Lansing

JACKSON COUNTY

Kinship Care Program - (6:15 PM - 7:30 PM): December 31; (6:15 PM - 7:30 PM): January 14

For information and referrals contact Melissa Davis at 517-787-7920 or at mdavis@fsca-jackson.org.

Location: Family Service & Children's Aid, 330 W. Michigan Ave., Jackson

Adoption and Foster Care Informational Meeting - (9:00 AM - 12:00 PM): January 13; (5:00 PM - 8:00 PM): January 13

For more information, contact Pat Kempker at (517) 787-7920 or email at kempker@strong-families.org.

Location: Family Service & Children's Aid, 330 W. Michigan Ave., Jackson

KENT COUNTY

Adoption/Foster Care Orientation - (7:00 PM - 9:00 PM): January 11; February 8

For more information call 616-774-7632 or email mbomgaars@dablodgett.org. **Location:** D.A. Blodgett, 805 Leonard St, NE, Grand Rapids

MONTCALM COUNTY

Forever Family Groups for Adoptive and Foster Parents - (10:00 AM - 12:00 PM): December 17

Meets on the third Thursday of (almost) every month -- call ahead to check status of meeting. Child care and teen support group will be available.

Call Dorrine Schelbaum at (616) 522-0836 for more information. **Location:** Stanton DHS

OAKLAND COUNTY

Foster Parent Orientation & PRIDE Training - (9:00 AM - 5:00 PM): December 18

Space is limited. Contact: Tina Ellis at 248-552-0750 ext. 3928. **Location:** St. Francis Family Center, 17500 W. Eight Mile, Southfield

OTTAWA COUNTY

Foster Care & Older Special Needs Adoption Orientations - (6:00 PM - 9:00 PM): January 4; February 1

For more information, please call (616) 796-9175. **Location:** Bethany Christian Services, 12048 James St., Holland (East Bldg, Conference Room)

WASHTENAW COUNTY

"Adopting Older Kids is A-Okay!" Group - (7:00 PM - 9:00 PM): January 8; February 12

Have you adopted a child over 2 years of age? Are you considering adopting an older child?

Group meets 2nd Friday of each month. Please call to register. (734) 477-0135 **Location:**

Hands Across The Water, 2890 Carpenter Rd., Ste. 600, Ann Arbor

"Helping Hands, Waiting Families" Group - (7:00 PM - 8:30 PM): January 13; February 10

Hands Across the Water is offering this group for all families who are waiting: waiting for a

referral, waiting to travel. Group meets the second Wednesday of every month FREE!

Please call to register. (734) 477-0135. **Location:** Hands Across The Water, 2890 Carpenter

Rd., Ste. 600, Ann Arbor

WAYNE COUNTY

Foster Care Orientation - (10:00 AM - 1:00 PM): December 17

Call 313-794-5653 ext. 2016 for more information and reserve your spot. **Location:** The

Judson Center, 12723 Telegraph Rd., Ste. 200, Redford

Adoption/Foster Care Orientation - (9:00 AM - 12:30 PM): January 6; (5:30 PM - 9:00 PM):

January 6. For more information, please call at (313) 862-1000. **Location:** Evergreen Chil-

dren's Service, 10421 West Seven Mile Rd, Detroit

Foster Care Orientation - (5:30 PM - 7:30 PM): January 13

This orientation provides information for people interested in becoming foster parents.

For more information, please call 313-883-2296 **Location:** Catholic Social Services, 9851 Hamilton Ave., Detroit



© Cynthia Scott

For detailed event information, go to www.mare.org or www.miheart.org

The Importance of Keeping Brothers, Sisters Together (Cont.)



© Lisa Kae Ruff

Contact Your MARE Staff

Heidi, Program Manager

heidi_raubenolt@judsoncenter.org

Michelle, Supervisor

michelle_parra@judsoncenter.org

Jamee, Support Staff

jamee_zielke@judsoncenter.org

Kim, Intake Specialist

kim_jablonski@judsoncenter.org

Loren, Youth Specialist

loren_sanders@judsoncenter.org

Sheila, Recruitment Specialist

sheila_mech@judsoncenter.org

In many cases, sibling relationships have been particularly important to these kids because they have learned to support, nurture, and rely on each other for things their parents have been unable or unwilling to provide. If they go into foster care or the care of a relative, siblings who remain together continue that mutual support and provide a buffer against the worst effects of separation from their parents.

For those children who are unable to return safely home, keeping brothers and sisters together becomes more important than ever. Many families ask us if they can adopt one or two children out of a group of siblings. While that occasionally happens, we try very hard to keep siblings together, even when one or more of them has a special need such as a medical, developmental, or behavioral issue.

These children have already lost their parents, a safe, secure childhood, and connections to extended family, friends, or neighbors. Losing their brothers or sisters is one more loss they should not have to endure.

You might think that adopting more than one child at once would be too difficult. However, our best, most experienced foster and adoptive families say that adopting groups of brothers and sisters is easier than you'd think.

By building a support network of family, friends, teachers, counselors, and other community resources, everyone in the family can get the care they need. By focusing on what's really important for your family and having a sense of adventure (and humor), brothers and sisters can successfully adapt to their new home.

Because the children waiting for adoptive homes have all kinds of different needs, LCCS needs all kinds of adults to step forward and become adoptive parents. It doesn't matter whether you are married or single, own or rent your home, or live in a house, apartment, or mobile home.

You don't need to be wealthy; you just need to earn enough to support yourself. You'll need to attend training classes to prepare for parenting adopted children and to make sure your home is a safe and welcoming place for them.

We'll also check to make sure that everyone living with you is a safe person to have around kids. LCCS will provide support before, during, and after the adoption to help everyone make a good adjustment and link your family with services in the community.

Once you get to know them, I bet you won't be able to adopt just one.

Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange Has Found a New Home.



As of October 1st, 2009 the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange has moved to a new agency. Judson Center is a non-profit human service agency, empowering individuals and families to live the best life possible. Since 1924, Judson Center has offered personalized support services for children of all ages and their families.

MARE is now located at Judson Center's Washtenaw County regional office. Please check out our website, www.mare.org, to learn more about our upcoming events and ongoing services for prospective adoptive parents interested in adopting children with "special needs" and for adoption workers looking for homes for these children.

We have settled into our new home and we are working diligently to fulfill our mission in the most effective and innovative ways possible. Contact the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange at 734-528-1692 or 1-800-589-MARE.



MARE
Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange

Judson Center
PO Box 980789
Ypsilanti, MI

Phone: 734-528-1692
Fax: 734-528-1695
E-mail: mare@judsoncenter.org

Mailing Address Line 1

Mailing Address Line 2

Mailing Address Line 3

Mailing Address Line 4

Visit us on the web:

www.mare.org

The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is an information and referral service for prospective adoptive parents interested in adopting children with "special needs," and for adoption workers looking for homes for these children.

John, Age 12

John, goes by Dylan, and is a true outdoorsman who enjoys fishing and exploring the great outdoors. He also enjoys creating artwork and collecting things, and playing video games with others. Dylan is very animated and comfortable expressing his feelings to others. He has a vivid imagination and loves to shock and entertain adults with his stories. Dylan's worker may have said it best when she declared, "There is never a dull moment with Dylan!"

Dylan is coping with a great deal of unresolved anger about being separated from his birth family and a subsequent relative placement that did not work out. He may display aggressive behaviors and sometimes has difficulty respecting the property of others. In school, he is slightly behind his peers due to sporadic attendance in the past. When he feels motivated and has a positive attitude, however Dylan is very capable of success in the classroom!



Dylan needs a very patient family who can respond in a calm and appropriate manner to his outbursts. A family for Dylan should be able to provide constant supervision to ensure his safety. Dylan's adoptive family should be respectful of the relationship he has with his grandparent and support ongoing contact. Finally, he should be the youngest or only child in the home and the family must be supportive of ongoing therapeutic services. *To inquire about*

John, C06380, contact MARE at (800) 589-6273 or visit www.mare.org.

