

The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is a program of Judson Center and is funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. To learn about foster care adoption and view photolisting and videos, visit our website at [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org).



# How to write a rock star registration

STORY BY **MARGARET WHITE, MARE SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISOR**

A strong MARE profile leads to a greater number of inquiries and can help you target the type of family you are seeking.

But what goes in is what comes out. Often MARE receives photolist registrations with the bare minimum – the required information, a snapshot that doesn't clearly show the youth and scant information about the youth's strengths and needs.

For the best recruitment results, follow these tips for writing a rock star registration:

## Eye-catching photo

Clear, head and shoulder shots work best. While professional photos are nice, a good photo from a cell phone can do the trick. Use portrait mode, if available, to get the best quality. Try to capture the youth looking natural and comfortable. Make sure the youth has neat hair and clean clothing. Sometimes youth are anxious about the idea of posing for a profile photo. Try engaging youth in something they enjoy – basketball, board games, etc. – then snap a photo of the youth when they are more relaxed. The

goal is to have a clear photo that shows the youth's face and gives a glimpse of his or her personality.

## Complete youth entry

At bare minimum, you need to select a youth's functioning level for physical, emotional, cognitive/developmental and learning/educational needs. But a thorough description of the youth's needs including diagnostic information will help with recruitment. Even if the information isn't appropriate for a narrative, include all that you know. The MARE adoption

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MICHIGAN ADOPTION RESOURCE EXCHANGE

FOR FAMILIES FOR PROFESSIONALS FOR YOUTH RESOURCES CONTACT US CHILD ADMINISTRATION USER

Worker Dashboard  
**Worker Forms**  
Family Directory  
What is a MARE Meet & Greet?

2019 Michigan...  
This traveling ph...  
features children in the foster care system who are awaiting adoption. If you want to book it or any portion of it, contact MARE Recruitment Specialist Jessica Thompson at 734-528-2070 or [jessica\\_thompson@judsoncenter.org](mailto:jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org).  
[Learn more](#)

MICHIGAN HEART 2019 GALLERY

To get the forms you need to register a youth for photolisting, go to [mare.org](http://mare.org) > For Professionals > Worker Forms.

# Her passion becomes her livelihood

## Meet MARE's new adoption navigator

A trip to the Michigan Heart Gallery Grand Opening launched Aimee Louden on a path toward foster care and adoption and eventually to MARE, as its newest adoption navigator.

She says that visit three years ago opened her eyes about foster care and adoption. "It made me realize how many kids there really are in need of families," she says.

After some soul-searching, Louden and her husband decided to do something about it and became licensed foster and adoptive parents. Now this mother of four wants to expand her family through foster care adoption, and she looks forward to helping other families with their adoption journeys.

### **What's your professional background?**

Before joining MARE, I worked at the Christian Family Centre in Adrian as the catering and rental event coordinator. I coordinated all of our events there such as birthday parties and meetings of local groups. Before that, I worked in an attorney's office and then became a stay-at-home mom for nine years.

### **What draws you to child welfare?**

We have four biological children, and my husband and I decided that if we wanted to add to our family we would adopt. Our children helped us make that decision. They came to us after seeing one of the MARE prayer cards and told us that they wanted



*Aimee Louden finds satisfaction in her new job.*

us to look into foster care and adoption, so we started with foster care and moved on to adoption from there. We're in the process of adopting two children from foster care right now.

### **What interested you in becoming an adoption navigator?**

I felt like this was so much a part of my life already. It's something that I'm very passionate about. Because of our decision to adopt, we're at a total of six kids, and we're still thinking about adding more family. However, we're kind of tapped out space-wise right now, so I thought that if I can't bring kids into my own home at least I

can find other homes for them.

### **What satisfies you most about your job?**

I like to help adoptive families, and I'm very passionate about finding homes for kids, especially older ones. Teenagers bring something to a family that younger kids can't. They are so smart and knowledgeable, and it's rewarding to see them find their path and help them along the way. It's just really cool to see them bounce back and just figure out who they really are.

*You can reach Aimee Louden at [aimee\\_louden@judsoncenter.org](mailto:aimee_louden@judsoncenter.org) or 734-528-2042.*



# HOPE MEANS

If you want a copy of the 2019 Michigan Heart Gallery video, contact Corinne Toussaint at [corinne\\_toussaint@judsoncenter.org](mailto:corinne_toussaint@judsoncenter.org) or call 734-794-2916.

To reserve the 2019 Michigan Heart Gallery or any portion of it, contact Jessica Thompson at [Jessica\\_thompson@judsoncenter.org](mailto:Jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org) or call 734-528-2070.

## *Put the Heart Gallery video to use*

### **It's a great tool for adoption and foster care workers**

The 2019 Michigan Heart Gallery video is a great resource for adoption and foster care workers.

It delivers a message of hope that can resonate with youth as well as foster and adoptive parents. The video features comments from youth, parents and professionals and can be used in your presentations.

Here are some highlights:

"We believe there is a family for every child, forever families. That is our hope."

– **Michelle Parra, MARE program manager**

"All I want is a family who loves me. I don't care how they are. They could be weird, funny, different. I just want somebody who cares about me and loves me."

– **Hailey (C09645)**

"When I think of hope, I think of happiness."

– **Keyaira (C08924)**

"Hope is like a little spark or just a light in your heart that you know things are going to work out."

– **Angela, adoptive parent**

"Hope to me means, like, faith. My hope is that I find a good family."

– **Bryauna (C09507)**

"For children, don't give up. Realize how special you are and the gifts that you can bring to a family. And for families, open your homes, open your hearts. This is a lifetime commitment for sure, but it also brings a lifetime of joy."

– **Jennifer, adoptive parent**

"Hope is knowing that you keep moving forward; there's another day. To never give up. You might make mistakes, but you learn from them so that you can be the best parent. I've probably learned more from my kids than they've learned from me."

– **Jessica Franks, adoptive parent  
and MARE Match Support staff member**

"Hope is a feeling that I will have a family and friends and that my family would love me no matter what I am."

– **Jaiwan (C09622)**

## Lean on us



Martha  
Kaczala



Margaret  
White

Have a registration and you don't know how to proceed? We understand unusual situations come up. Contact Margaret or Martha and we'll help you figure it out!

### **MARE Social Work**

#### **Supervisor Margaret White**

margaret\_white@judsoncenter.org

#### **Adoption Worker Liaison**

#### **Martha Kaczala**

martha\_kaczala@judsoncenter.org

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navigator team sees this information, and it can help them target the best families to suggest as a possible match for the youth.

## **Strength-based narrative information**

The "What I Want Others to Know" and "What Others Say" forms are great sources of strength-based information for the narrative. But when asked these questions, youth have a tendency to answer with one word: pizza for favorite food, red for favorite color, etc. To get the best information, try turning the questionnaire into a conversation with the youth. When told pizza is their favorite food, ask what toppings are their favorite or if they believe in using pineapple on pizza. When told their favorite color is red, ask if it's because they love the Red Wings or because they like spending time on the beach and getting some sun in the summer. You can gather a lot of fun personal information when you extend the questions

in this way. The more information you provide, the stronger the MARE narrative will be.

## **Recruitment plan**

The Child Specific Recruitment Plan is your chance to show what you've done so far and future recruitment plans. Be sure to utilize the notes area in the family requirements and barriers sections. The more information we have here, the more we can target recruitment for the youth.

We recognize that you may not have all of the information you need when you register the youth for photolisting. Make plans to visit with the youth and gather as much information as possible.

Don't be afraid to call the referring agency to gather details, if the referral packet wasn't very complete. Therapists and foster parents are also great sources of information for a thorough registration.

With a little effort you can create a rock star registration and rock out recruitment!

# Calendar of Events

**June 8**

**MARE Meet & Greet**, Utica

11 a.m.-2 p.m.

**June 22**

**MARE Meet & Greet**, Kalamazoo

11 a.m.-2 p.m.

**July 13**

**MARE Meet & Greet**, Royal Oak

11 a.m.-2 p.m.

**August 7**

**Annual Adoption and Family Fun**

**Day**, Veteran's Memorial Park, St. Clair Shores. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram for more details to come.

**August 9**

**MARE Meet & Greet**, Mount Pleasant

11 a.m.-2 p.m.

*For more information regarding these events contact Jessica Thompson, MARE Recruitment Specialist: [jessica\\_thompson@judsoncenter.org](mailto:jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org)*

## **MARE contact info**

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