



Photo by: Jennifer Brooks

Meet Miles C08193!

Miles is a very smart and loving little boy. He is kind to others and likes to be around people. Miles can be very theatrical and has an extensive vocabulary. He enjoys math, reading, swimming, eating junk food and listening to Yanni. On the weekend, Miles likes to relax on the couch and watch TV. He says his favorite animal is the cheetah and his favorite thing to do after school is eating snacks. When Miles grows up, he says he would like to become a fire fighter and a baseball player. He likes to help around the house and do his chores in exchange for a few pennies he can save. Miles noted that the best things about him are that he is smart and kind.

Miles says that being liked and cared for is what makes him most feel like he belongs in a family. Miles is in need of an adoptive family that will be very patient and provide him with unconditional love. He will need time and understanding within the family dynamic before he will let his guard down and show his true and sincere emotions. The family will need to be active advocates for his emotional and educational needs in the home and at school. The family must be open to an extended visitation period to help Miles transition into an adoptive home. It would be beneficial to Miles if he were the youngest child in the home.

To inquire about Miles, contact MARE at 800-589-6273 or visit www.mare.org



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Families Across Michigan



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Connecting With Kids

By: Maggie White, Adoption Navigator

Often, when waiting families come to MARE match parties, they're looking to have that perfect connection with a child. That Aha! moment that lets them know the child they're spending time with is exactly the right fit for their family.

Sometimes that instant connection happens – for both the family and the child. But other times, a connection needs time to grow.

When I was matched with my son in 2007, I hadn't met him yet. The match had been made purely through my meetings with his social worker and my review of his disclosure information. I sent him a scrapbook and talked to him on the phone once after being matched with him, and then I went to meet him. I fully expected to feel an instant rush of love for this boy that was to become my son. Instead, he was a stranger to me as I was to him – and that's exactly what it felt like.

I was devastated at my lack of emotion for this child. I was scared that I had made a horrible mistake and had committed myself to a child I had no connection to.

Then my social worker gave me some wise, though somewhat inelegant, advice. She said "Sometimes people don't attach to their biological infants right away. How can you expect to instantly attach to a big, dirty 10-year-old?"

She was right. Love just needed time to grow.

Keith and Sharon were a MARE Family Registry family who attended several match parties. Ultimately, they were matched with a child they inquired about after meeting him at a party. Sharon shared her feelings about connection and attachment with their son.

"At some (match parties) we were not drawn to any of the children. At some we were interested in one or two children, but I can't say that there was a connection. At the Imlay City match party my husband started a conversation with a child that looked angry and withdrawn. I saw a connection in the interaction and later, my husband expressed that he felt a connection. That is the child that now lives with us. We are working toward adoption. Some days we work as a family, but without warning, suddenly our son will pull away from us in an angry display. Attachment may take the rest of our lives."

Like Keith and Sharon, you may experience varying levels of connection with kids you meet at MARE match parties. You may have a lightning bolt-like connection, you may have a more subtle draw to a child, or you may not feel a great pull to a child at all.

At MARE, we recommend families who attend match parties spend a little time with each child – talking to them, getting to know them a little bit. Keep in mind that your connection may not be instant and look for more subtle clues that you should inquire about a child. We recommend that you give love time to grow.



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

To learn about foster care adoption and view photolistings and videos of waiting children, visit our website at www.mare.org

24th Annual Kinship Adoption Festival

MARE hopes to see you at the Kinship Adoption Festival at Wayne County Community College, Northwest Campus on Saturday, September 21st.

The Kinship Adoption Festival is designed to increase community awareness of children in the foster care system waiting to be adopted. The festival will feature workshops, activities for children, food, entertainment and display tables with various adoption agencies' information. This festival will also educate participants about the adoption of children with special needs, sibling groups, and teen adoption.

The Kinship Adoption Festival is open to the public at no cost!

Event Details:
Saturday, September 21st, 2013
11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Wayne County Community College, Northwest Campus
8200 W. Outer Drive
Detroit, MI 48219

Visit www.mare.org to register.

Cover photo: Devin (C08262), George (C08261) and Cameron (C08263). Photo by: Photo Boutique

MARE Calendar of Events

September 7, 2013
Bay County Match Party
11am – 2pm
Visit www.mare.org for registration details.

September 7, 2013
How to Bring Love and Laughter Back Into Your Home While Raising Challenging Foster Children
9am – 12pm
Orchards Children's Services, Southfield
Visit www.socialwork.msu.edu/ceu for more information and to register online.

September 10, 2013
Discipline workshop
6pm – 8pm
Spectrum Child and Family Services, Southfield
This interactive workshop will discuss appropriate and effective discipline techniques to promote positive outcomes for children. Please call Pam Jaymes at (248) 423-2368 to RSVP.

September 14, 2013
Northern Michigan Match Party
12pm – 3pm
Visit www.mare.org for registration details.

September 19, 2013
Nurturing the Wholehearted Parent: Preventing Burnout
6pm – 9pm
MSU Department of Radiology, Radiology Building, Auditorium, East Lansing
Visit www.socialwork.msu.edu/ceu for more information and to register online.

September 25, 2013
Adoptive Parent Support Group
6pm – 8pm
Judson Center, Warren
To RSVP, please contact Pam Ferguson at pamela_ferguson@judsoncenter.org, or 810-732-8510 ext. 23507

September 28, 2013
Upper Peninsula Match Party
12pm – 3pm
Visit www.mare.org for registration details.

October 5, 2013
Courageous Parenting: Helping Children Heal from Sexual Abuse
Bethany Christian Services, Madison Heights
9am – 12pm
Visit www.socialwork.msu.edu/ceu for more information and to register online.

October 11, 2013
Adopting Older Kids Support Group
6:30pm – 8:30pm
Hands Across the Water, Ann Arbor
Call 734-477-0135 for more information.

October 15, 2013
Petoskey Parent Connections Group
6:30pm – 8:30pm
Independence Village of Petoskey, Petoskey
Please RSVP to Kijrsten Boeve at either 231-590-8644 or kboeve@bethany.org.

November 7, 2013
Raising Children Who Have Experienced Trauma
6pm – 9pm
Bethany Christian Services, Grand Rapids
This training is free to attend. Please register online at: www.socialwork.msu.edu/ceu

November 14, 2013
Families on the Move Support Group
5pm – 8pm
Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Detroit
Call Veda at (313) 532-0012 or Trena at (313) 835-3636 for further information.

November 28, 2013
Foster Care and Kinship Care Givers Support Group
6:30pm – 8:30pm
Macomb County DHS, Clinton Township

View a comprehensive list of events at www.mare.org



Smile! Family Slideshows Can Strengthen Inquiries

By: Kelli Ostrosky,
Adoption Navigator

The Adoption Navigator team is fortunate to be able to work with so many dedicated families, who are eager to expand their families through adoption. During the search for a child or sibling group, it is not uncommon for families to find themselves wanting to become more involved in the matching process. We do encourage a high level of self-advocacy when adopting is high on a family's list of personal goals.

If you are currently waiting to become matched with a child, creating your own family slideshow is a great way to draw positive attention to your family.

If you are currently working with an Adoption Navigator, your slideshow can be forwarded to a child's caseworker when a potential match exists. For children over the age of 14, the child's voice is especially important and is taken into account when choosing a family. Whether you are considering a younger child or a teenager, the slideshows can help as the children's workers move closer towards making a decision on which family should adopt.

The program most often used by families is Smilebox. To begin creating a family slideshow, visit www.smilebox.com, a user friendly program with a free download. Your personal slideshow can be

emailed directly to your Adoption Navigator for sharing purposes.

Please see the sidebar on the right for some tips on making the most out of your family's slideshow.

For more information on the matching process and more ideas on how you can advocate for yourself while waiting, speak to your adoption navigator or call the adoption navigator hotline at 1-800-589-MARE.

Calling All Photographers!



Heart Galleries nationwide include a collaboration of many people, many of whom are volunteers. Not the least of which are the countless professional photographers across the country who volunteer their time and talent to capture the true spirit of these special children, providing them with a chance for a better life.

Last year, MARE worked with over 50 volunteer photographers to photograph our waiting youth. We need photographers in all areas of the state - even up north and the UP! Are you interested in joining this cause? Helping find forever families for our waiting youth?

Please visit www.miheart.org to register as a volunteer photographer for the 2014 Michigan Heart Gallery.

Photo: Deantwan C08216. Photo by: Danielle Allison

Important "Do's" of Family Slideshows

Want to create a family slideshow as described in the article to the left? Make sure to follow these guidelines for a slideshow that really captures your family's strengths.

DO include captions, such as:

- Why adoption is important to your family.
- Activities or family traditions your family looks forward to sharing with a child.

DO include:

- Your first name(s) or your last name in the beginning and end of the slideshow to help your names "stick." "The _____ family." is a popular choice.

DO include photos of:

- Immediate members of your household.
- Your family enjoying favorite activities.
- Perks of your home environment, such as bedroom photos, play areas and outdoor / other recreational spaces.
- Limited photos of family pets.
- Your family's culture or culturally diverse city or town.