

MICHIGAN ADOPTION RESOURCE EXCHANGE



Special Edition



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A spotlight on children waiting for permanent and loving families

Winter 2016

WELCOME TO THE Winter 2016 Recruitment Periodical, published by the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange. Over the next several pages, you will be introduced to some of the youth in Michigan who are waiting for their opportunity to have a loving, supportive and permanent family of their own through adoption.

The youth in the Winter 2016 periodical are representative of hundreds of other children in the Michigan foster care system who are waiting to become part of a loving family. To view these children and to learn more information about adoption, please visit our website at www.mare.org.

On the MARE website, you will find photos, narratives and video clips of waiting children, as well as a wealth of information about adoption, including links to adoption-related resources.

If you have been thinking about adoption, we invite you to consider bringing an older child or sibling group into your life. If you have questions about adoption or are ready to begin the adoption process, simply call one of the agencies listed in the back of this periodical. MARE is available to answer your adoption-related questions and we will do our best to get you headed in the right direction.

Save the Date: Saturday, April 16, 2016



Visitors to last year's Michigan Heart Gallery Grand Opening look over the photographic display.

Photo by Mike Lanzetta

Circus? Hah! Here's a show that's even better

Join us at the Michigan Heart Gallery Grand Opening

Excuse us, Ringling Brothers, but your Greatest Show on Earth pales in comparison to an event happening in April right here in Michigan.

It's the Michigan Heart Gallery Grand Opening, and it's marvelous, wondrous, fabulous and stupendous! Take that, Ringling Brothers.

The big event is scheduled for Saturday, April 16 at the Emagine Theatre in Royal Oak with doors opening at 10 a.m. The show features the unveiling of this year's Michigan Heart Gallery, a traveling photographic exhibit featuring photos of youth currently in the foster care system wait-

ing for their forever family.

The festivities also include food and refreshments and a red carpet where many waiting youth will walk and get their pictures taken by the paparazzi who frequent this great show. This year's Michigan Heart Gallery Grand Opening includes a special feature film that we're sure you'll love.

So, mark your calendars, and come join us for this truly remarkable event. And make sure to follow the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange on Facebook and Twitter for updates.



Who are the children who wait for adoption?

Adopting a “waiting child” from foster care is often referred to as special needs adoption. This term often makes people think of children with severe mental or physical impairments. In reality, special needs adoption means a child or children who may be difficult to place for adoption for a variety of reasons, including:

- Children school aged and above.
- Children with emotional, mental, learning or physical impairments.
- Children of minority heritage.
- Children who are part of a sibling group that must be placed together.

Many waiting children have had traumatic past experiences that may include physical, sexual or emotional abuse and/or severe neglect. Others may have been born drug or alcohol exposed.

Around 93% of children in Michigan’s foster care system are adopted by the child’s current foster family or a relative (someone with whom the child has an established relationship with). The remaining children available for adoption, like those in this periodical and the MARE website, have no identified family to adopt them. Recruitment of a suitable adoptive family is, therefore, necessary. Over 98% of the children available for adoption without an identified family are over the age of 5. Over 75% of those children are between the ages of 11 and 18.

Who can adopt a waiting child?

Many people may be surprised to learn that they do not have to be married in order to adopt a child from the foster care system. Potential adoptive parents do not have to own their own home or have a lot of money. They must have enough space in their home and adequate income to support a child. It is important to know that many children waiting for adoption are eligible to receive support subsidies to help adoptive families meet their needs.

How much does it cost to adopt a child from foster care?

The only cost you should incur for adopting a child from the Michigan foster care system is court filing fees. Some agencies may charge a fee for the Family Assessment (also known as a Home Study). However, once you adopt a child through Michigan’s foster care system, that fee is reimbursed to you. Families must be approved through the Adoptive Family Assessment process before a child can be placed

in their home for adoption. An Adoptive Family Assessment must be completed by a licensed adoption agency (which can be found in the back of this periodical and on the MARE website) and can take an average of six months to a year to complete. The Adoptive Family Assessment will include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Personal history
- Health statements
- Criminal background check
- Income statement
- Personal references

Once the Adoptive Family Assessment is complete, you may start submitting inquiries to MARE about children you may be interested in adopting. When you inquire about children through the MARE website, your information will be sent, by MARE, to the child’s adoption worker for consideration. Your worker will also be notified that you have inquired about a specific child or children.

For more information about adoption and to learn about Michigan’s waiting children, please visit our website at www.mare.org.



Michael C08907 *Photo by Hannah Dunne*



Michael’s likes

- Reading “Captain Underpants” books.
- Movies based on Marvel comics.

Michael’s crystal ball

- Shh. Wants to become a secret agent.
- Or a police officer.

Quotable:

“He enjoys the company, conversation and attention of adults,” says his worker.

Bradley’s likes:

- Participating in karate.
- Playing video games.
- Going shopping and swimming.
- Noshing on his favorite food, mashed potatoes.
- Playing outside, riding bikes.

Intangible assets:

- Imaginative, energetic, loving, playful, outgoing, very friendly and fearless.

Bradley’s crystal ball:

- “Eager for life and finding a forever family,” says his worker.
- Pictures himself being a dad and supporting his family by becoming a police officer.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Patient and able to meet all of his needs.
- Able to assist in developing proper coping skills while offering him unconditional love and a commitment to his well-being now and into adulthood.
- Capable of providing him with a consistent, highly structured environment with constant supervision and the one-on-one attention that Bradley thrives on.

Photo by
Matthew Coon



Did you know MARE wants your input?

Please take a few moments to fill out a Satisfaction Survey of MARE Services. You can do it by visiting www.mare.org > Resources > Satisfaction Survey. As the web page says, “this short questionnaire (will) help us enhance the quality of the MARE program and its services to families. All information is voluntary and confidential.”



Quotable:

“(I want) a family who will spend time with me and take care of me and accept me for who I am.”

Ciana’s likes:

- Plays volleyball and basketball and is very active in school.
- Playing video games.
- Going shopping, completing puzzles, riding her bike and having sleepovers with friends.

Creative interests:

- Loves to sing and reports that her favorite subject in school is choir.
- Likes doing crafts.

Ciana’s crystal ball:

- Rescuing animals and becoming a doctor.
- Hopes to travel to Hollywood to see celebrities such as singer and actress Selena Gomez.

Intangible assets:

- Has the interests of others at heart.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Two parents or a strong female parent.
- Able to give Ciana individual attention.
- Would do best as the only child but would do well with other children as long as Ciana gets the attention she needs to thrive.
- Capable of setting proper boundaries and providing close supervision.
- Willing to strongly advocate for the services to help Ciana function at her best.
- Good at establishing structure and routine along with guidance in a calm, consistent way.



*Photo by
Hannah Dunne*



Brittnie’s likes:

- Playing video games on the Xbox or her Nintendo DS.
- Being outdoors as well as going shopping.

Intangible assets:

- Has a unique sense of humor and describes herself as fun and outgoing.

Creative interests:

- Prides herself in her artwork and nurtures her creativity by listening to music and watching movies.

- Drawing, making crafts and writing poetry, especially about her late father.

Brittnie’s crystal ball:

- Wants to put her talents to work by becoming a graphic designer.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Prefers a mom and a dad but would do well with a single-female parent who has a strong support system.
- Experienced parents and able to provide a great deal of supervision.



Photo by
Christine Schafer

David's likes:

- Loves variety in his diet and includes pizzas, calzones, Bosco sticks and anything hot and spicy among his favorite foods.
- Loves to cook and can easily tell you step-by-step how to make his favorite meals.
- History because he enjoys learning about various wars.

Creative interests:

- Most proud of his ability to cook anything from scratch.
- Has a vivid imagination and can make up stories on the spot.

David's crystal ball:

- Wants to see Paris so he could enjoy its culture and, of course, its cuisine.
- Would like to be a business owner ... perhaps a restaurateur?

Quotable:

"The most important things I want people to know about me are that I'm outgoing and have a good imagination."

Qualities of a forever family:

- Wants a forever family who likes to go hunting, be outdoors or go on dirt bikes and four wheelers.
- Needs an adoptive family with experienced, understanding and patient parents who can provide him with support, structure and supervision.
- Would do well with a family who will advocate for any support services for him.
- Would benefit from a transitional period into his new home.

Photo by
Hannah Dunne



Darnell's likes:

- Pointing out polar bears at the zoo.
- Playing with his neighbors and siblings.
- Being outside, especially riding his scooter and Power Wheels car.
- Satisfying his appetite with pizza, bacon and fruit and topping it off with ice cream.
- Very spiritual and enjoys attending church on Sundays.

Intangible assets:

- Very nurturing and cares deeply for his siblings.

Getting personable:

- Warm and inviting, and tries to make everyone feel comfortable.

Darnell's crystal ball:

- Wants to become a police officer.

Creative interests:

- Enjoys singing and music and loves when he and his foster mom sing along with the radio.
- Plays the drums.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Wants a forever family who likes to go to the movies, play games and go out to eat.
- Will benefit from an experienced family who understands his unique needs.
- Committed to maintaining his support services and seeking out additional services as he grows and develops.



Ceiana's likes:

- Participating in gymnastics.
- Doing her hair and her makeup.

Intangible assets:

- Has the interests of others at heart.

Creative interests:

- Shows interest in clothing and designing.

Ceiana's crystal ball:

- Dreams about where college will take her

in her career, perhaps to a job that pays well and a nice house to live in.

- Wants to help others by going to college to become a social worker.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Would do best with an experienced single-female parent or two parents who can provide the level of attention and support that she needs to thrive at home and in school.
- Able to help her cope with past trauma.
- Willing to advocate for continued services.

Photo by
Nichole Horvath



Lakenyei's likes:

- Dancing and listening to music.
- Participating in track and cheerleading.
- Getting her hair and nails done.
- Receiving one-on-one time.

Creative interests:

- Drawing and doing puzzles.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Loving, caring and dedicated.
- Active and supportive in helping Lakenyei manage her emotional and educa-

Quotable:

"I want a family who actually loves me for who I am and won't treat me like I'm any different than any of your other kids."

tional needs.

- Willing to continue and seek out any additional support services that are beneficial to Lakenyei's well-being.

A state-wide support for families

MARE's Match Support Program is a state-wide service for families who have been matched with a child from the MARE website and who are in the process of moving forward with an adoption. The Match Support

Program has Match Support Specialists who provide up to 90 days of services to families. For more information, visit www.mare.org > For Families > Match Support Program or call Program Supervisor Tara Radina at 734-528-1721.



Photos by
Christy Carpenter



Quotable:

"I will feel like I belong in a family when they take the time to take me to school every day!"

Charles's likes:

- Hint: "Chagga-chagga Choo-Choo."
- Playing board and video games.
- Rooting for the New England Patriots and Indianapolis Colts.
- Watching the PBS kids show "Wild Kratts" since he loves going to the zoo.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Wants a family who will love and support him and is interested in families who have children.
- A single-male parent or two-parent home.
- Says he wants a family who will take an active role in helping him graduate from high school so he can go on to college.
- Would do best with a strong male and female.

Photo by
Hannah Dunne



Quotable:

“He’s very smart, very, very smart. He loves school.”

“He’s just so friendly and so helpful. He’s really a mushy kind of kid. He loves affection. And he likes to help people. ”

- **Johnathan’s worker**

Johnathan’s likes:

- Counts “The Littlest Pet Shop” and his Nintendo DS among his favorite toys.
- Looking at books, playing computer games and watching television.
- Munching on pizza, hot dogs, macaroni and cheese and chicken nuggets.
- Playing outside.

Intangible assets:

- Has a quiet personality and tends to enjoy playing alone most of the time.

Qualities of a forever family:

- One or two parents who have experience with special needs children.
- Would do best with a single female who has a strong support network.
- Responds especially well to female caregivers and others who are sensitive to his needs and feelings.

Quotable:

"I am serious when it comes down to business."

Sedaja's likes:

- Coloring, braiding hair, listening to music and watching movies and television.
- Playing the board game "Apples to Apples."

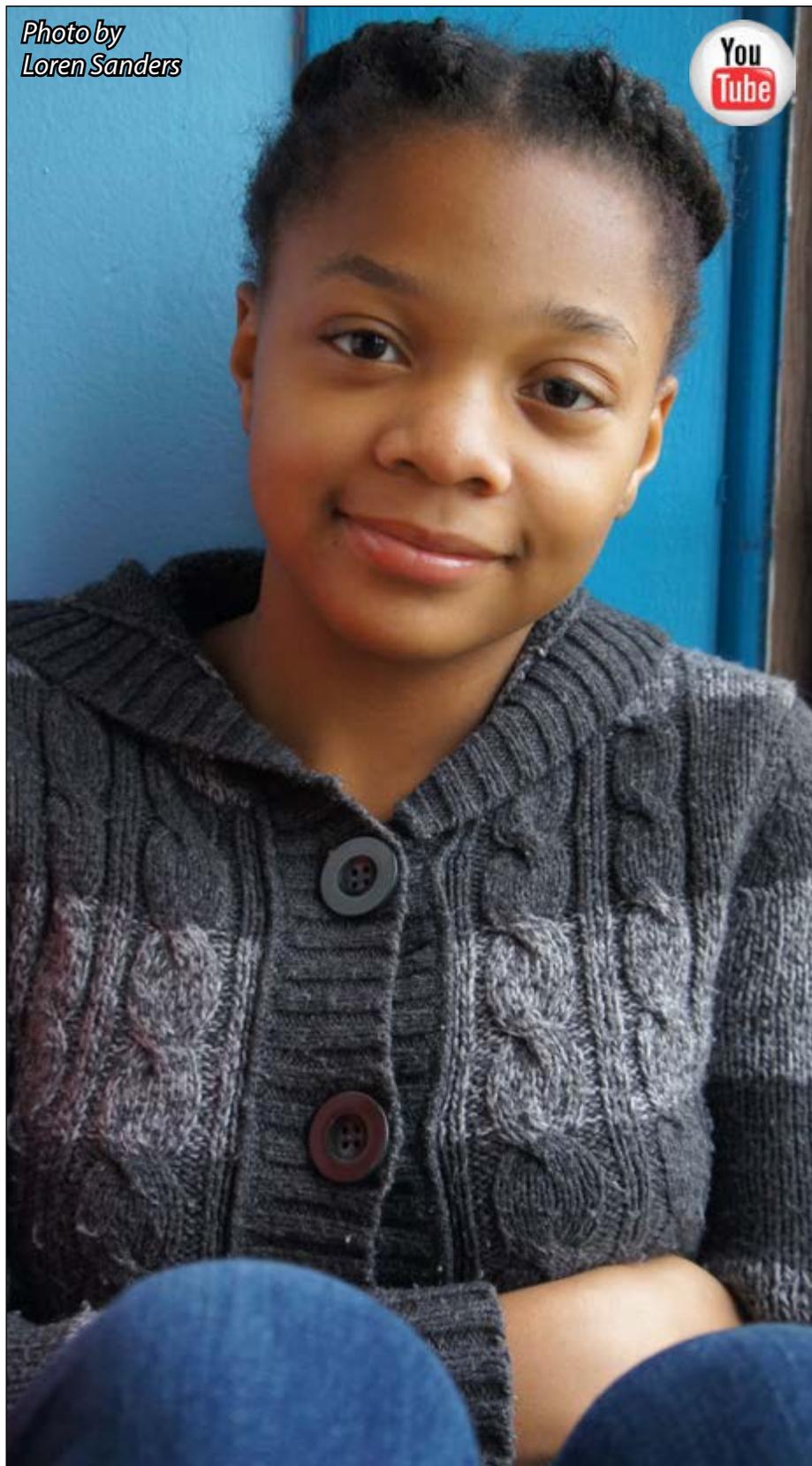
Sedaja's crystal ball:

- Wants to become a president, nurse, judge or lawyer.
- Or get her degree and become a therapist since she really cares about others.
- Wants to visit California to take in its scenic beauty and Paris to visit her grandmother.
- Hopes to have a family welcoming her from her journeys so she can, in her words, "spend time with them, every bit of the second."

Qualities of a forever family:

- Single female or two female parents.
- Willing to seek out the services that she needs to thrive.
- Prefers a family who has a dog.

Photo by
Loren Sanders



Make sure to check out the MARE YouTube Channel to see videos of several of the children featured in the Winter 2016 Periodical.

Adoption Agencies in Michigan

The following is a list of adoption agencies whose primary focus is facilitating the adoption of children from the foster care system. Many of these agencies may also provide foster care services. This agency list is organized by regions of the state. Please contact an agency in your area if you are interested in beginning the adoption process.

Upper Peninsula

Anishnabek Community & Family Services, Sault Ste. Marie, 906.632.5250, www.saulttribe.com
Catholic Social Services of the U.P., Escanaba, 906.786.7212, www.cssup.org
Catholic Social Services of the U.P., Iron Mountain, 906.774.3323, www.cssup.org
Catholic Social Services of the U.P., Marquette, 906.227.9119, www.cssup.org
Child & Family Services of the U.P., Marquette, 906.228.4050, www.cfsup.org
U.P. Kids, Houghton, 906.487.9832, www.upkids.com
Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin & Upper MI, Marquette, 877.994.8344, www.lsswis.org
Teaching Family Homes of Upper Michigan, Marquette, 906.249.5437, www.teachingfamilyhomes.org
Upper Peninsula Family Solutions, Marquette, 906.273.1095, www.upfs.org

Northern & Central Lower Michigan

Adoption Option Inc., Midland, 989.839.0534, www.adoptionoptioninc.org
Bethany Christian Services, Fremont, 231.924.3390, www.bethany.org/fremont
Bethany Christian Services, Traverse City, 231.995.0870, www.bethany.org/traversecity
Catholic Family Services of the Diocese of Saginaw, Bay City, 989.892.2504, www.cfssite.org
Child & Family Services of Northeast MI, Alpena, 989.356.4567, www.cfsnemi.org
Child & Family Services of Northwest MI, Traverse City, 231.946.8975, www.cfsnwmi.org
Eagle Village, Hersey, 231.832.2234, www.eaglevillage.org
Heaven Sent Adoption, Charlevoix, 231.237.9880, www.heavensentadopt.com
Lutheran Adoption Service, Bay City, 989.686.3170, www.lasadoption.org
Lutheran Adoption Service, Clare, 989.386.2101, www.lasadoption.org
New Light Child & Family Consultants, Millington, 989.871.6695, www.newlightonline.net

Tri-County Area (Wayne, Oakland & Macomb Counties)

Adoption Options Worldwide, West Bloomfield, 248.855.2813, www.adoptionoptionsworldwide.com
Bethany Christian Services, Madison Heights, 248.414.4080, www.bethany.org/madisonheights
Catholic Social Services of Wayne County, Detroit, 313.883.2100, www.csswayne.org
Child Safe Michigan, Royal Oak, 248.353.0921, www.childsafemichigan.org/
The Children's Center of Wayne County, Detroit, 313.831.5535, www.thechildrenscenter.com
Ennis Center for Children, Detroit, 313.342.2699, www.enniscenter.org
Ennis Center for Children, Pontiac, 248.334.2715, www.enniscenter.org
Family Adoption Consultants, Utica, 586.726.2988, www.facadopt.org
Forever Families, Novi, 248.344.9606, www.noviforeverfamilies.net
Homes for Black Children, Detroit, 313.961.4777, www.homes4blackchildren.org
Judson Center, Redford, 313.794.5653, www.judsoncenter.org
Lutheran Adoption Service, Troy, 248.423.2770, www.lasadoption.org
Methodist Children's Home, Redford, 313.531.4060, www.mchsmi.org
Oakland Family Services, Pontiac, 248.858.7766, www.oaklandfamilyservices.org
Orchards Children's Services, Southfield, 248.258.0440, www.orchards.org
Spaulding for Children, Southfield, 248.443.7080, www.spaulding.org
Spectrum Human Services, Southfield, 248.552.8020, www.spectrumhuman.org
St. Francis Family Center/CSS of Oakland County, Southfield, 248.552.0750, www.cssoc.org
Vista Maria, Dearborn Heights, 313.271.3050, www.vistamaria.org
Wolverine Human Services, Taylor, 888.625.8669, www.wolverinehs.org

Southern Central Michigan

Adoption Specialists, Inc., Lapeer, 810.660.7590, www.adoption-specialists.org
 Alternatives for Children & families, Burton, 810.250.3800, www.acfinc.org
 Bethany Christian Services, East Lansing, 517.336.0191, www.bethany.org/eastlansing
 Catholic Charities of Lenawee County, Adrian, 517.263.2191, www.catholiccharitiesjlhc.org
 Catholic Charities of Shiawassee & Genesee, Flint, 810.232.3418, www.catholiccharitiesflint.org
 Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw, Ann Arbor, 734.971.9781, www.csswashtenaw.org
 Child & Family Charities – Capital Area, Lansing, 517.882.4000, www.childandfamily.org
 Ennis Center for Children, Flint, 810.233.4031, www.enniscenter.org
 Ennis Center for Children, Port Huron, 810.990.1424, www.enniscenter.org
 Family Counseling & Children Services of Lenawee, Adrian, 517.265.5352, www.fccsoflenawee.org
 Family Service & Children's Aid, Jackson, 517.787.7920, www.strong-families.org
 Fostering Futures, Ann Arbor, 734.481.8999, www.fostering-futures.com
 Hands Across the Water, Ann Arbor, 734.477.0135, www.hatw.org
 Livingston County Catholic Charities, Howell, 517.545.5944, www.livingstoncatholiccharities.org
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Ann Arbor, 734.971.1944, www.lasadoption.org
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Jackson, 517.789.6444, www.lasadoption.org
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Lansing, 517.886.1380, www.lasadoption.org
 St. Vincent Catholic Charities, Lansing, 517.323.4734, www.stvcc.org

Southwest Michigan

Bethany Christian Services, Grand Rapids, 616.224.7550, www.bethany.org/grandrapids
 Bethany Christian Services, Holland, 616.396.0623, www.bethany.org/holland
 Bethany Christian Services, Kalamazoo, 269.372.8800, www.bethany.org/kalamazoo
 Bethany Christian Services, Muskegon, 231.733.1618, www.bethany.org/muskegon
 Catholic Charities–West MI, Grand Rapids, 616.456.1443, www.ccwestmi.org
 Catholic Charities–West MI, Muskegon, 231.726.4735, www.ccwestmi.org
 D.A. Blodgett Services, Grand Rapids, 616.451.2021, www.dablodgett.org
 Family Adoption Consultants, Kalamazoo, 269.343.3316, www.facadopt.org
 Family & Children's Services, Inc., Kalamazoo, 269.344.0202, www.fcsources.org
 Family & Children's Services, Inc., Battle Creek, 269.965.3247, www.fcsources.org
 Greater Hopes Family Services, Grand Rapids, 616.451.0245, www.greaterhopes.org
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Grand Rapids, 616.356.1934, www.lasadoption.org
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Kalamazoo, 269.345.5776, www.lasadoption.org
 Pathways, Holland, 616.396.2301, www.pathwaysmi.org
 Youth Guidance Foster Care & Adoption Center, Battle Creek, 269.969.9181, www.cityilinc.org

Please visit www.mare.org for a complete listing of agencies who license families for foster care, in addition to adoption homestudies, including your local County Department of Health and Human Services office.



The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is proud to offer the Adoption Navigator Program. Adoption Navigators are experienced adoptive parents who offer guidance and personal knowledge to potential adoptive families. The Adoption Navigators have many years of parenting experience, have adopted a number of children, and have knowledge of foster care, infant & older, and domestic & international adoption procedures.

Families who contact MARE for initial adoption information will be given the option to work with a Navigator to help guide them through the process. Having an Adoption Navigator is a free & voluntary service.

Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange
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HOMES
FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

800.589.6273
www.mare.org



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