



# Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange



*Spring 2009*

**Welcome** to the Spring 2009 Recruitment Periodical, published quarterly by MARE - the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange. Over the next several pages, you will be introduced to some of the children in Michigan who are waiting for their chance to have a loving, supportive, and *permanent* family of their own through adoption.

The children in this periodical are representative of hundreds of other children in Michigan's foster care system who are waiting to become part of a loving family. To view these children and to learn more about adoption, visit our web site at: [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)

On the MARE web site you will find photos, descriptions, and video clips of waiting children, a wealth of information about adoption, and links to other adoption-related resources.

If you or someone you know has been thinking about adoption, we invite you to consider bringing an older child or children 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 this booklet. Or feel free to contact MARE and we will do our best to answer your questions and get you headed in the right direction.

Thank you for your interest in adoption!



**The 2009 Exhibit  
Is Now On Display!**

Check the  
Michigan Heart Gallery  
web site for exhibit  
dates and locations.

[www.miheart.org](http://www.miheart.org)

**Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange**

# Adoption: Where Do I Begin?

## *Who are the children who wait for adoption?*

Adopting a “waiting child” from the foster care system 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; and/or
- 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.

Over 90 percent of adoptions of children from the foster care system in Michigan are by the child’s current foster family or a relative - someone with whom the child has an established relationship. The remaining children available for adoption - like those you see in this book and on the MARE web site - have no identified family to adopt them; therefore, recruitment of an adoptive family is necessary. **Over 98 percent of the children available for adoption without an identified family are over the age of five; over 75 percent are between the ages of 11 - 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 wait-

ing 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 Michigan’s foster care system is the court filing fees. Some agencies *may* charge a fee for the Family Assessment; however, this fee should be returned to you once you adopt a child from the foster care system.

## *I’ve decided I want to adopt a waiting child. Now what do I do?*

The first step in any adoption is a Family Assessment, also known as a homestudy. Families must be approved through the Family Assessment process before a child can be placed in their home for adoption. A Family Assessment must be completed by a licensed adoption agency (*see listing of adoption agencies in the back of this booklet and on the MARE web site*) and can take an average of six months to complete. The Family Assessment will include the following components:

- Personal History
- Health Statements
- Criminal Background Check
- Income Statement
- Personal References

Once the Family Assessment is complete you may start inquiring about children you may be interested in adopting. When you inquire about children through the MARE web site, 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, visit our web site at [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org).



When asked to describe herself using three words, 15-year old **Allison** said that she is “pretty, smart, and fun!” She also says that she is “quiet most of the time,” makes friends easily, and is trustworthy. Some of Allison’s favorite activities are drawing, singing, and playing soccer. She also enjoys listening to rap and hip-hop music.

Allison is struggling to cope with being in foster care and naturally feels a strong loyalty to her birth family. She is working on learning effective coping skills and more appropriate ways of expressing her feelings. Like all children her age, Allison wants very much to be accepted by her peers and would benefit from guidance in developing a peer group that supports positive choices.

Allison needs a patient and experienced family who can

provide structure and specific guidelines in a firm, but loving manner. The family should also be sensitive to Allison’s past experiences and supportive of continuing therapeutic services that may include them as well. It would be in Allison’s best interests for her to maintain contact with her younger brothers in the future. Other children in the adoptive family would be fine, as long as there is consistent supervision and plenty of individual attention.

To inquire about Allison (C05904), phone a MARE intake worker at **(866) 312-8361**, or inquire through the MARE web site at: **[www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)**

**Bryce**, age 11, is a friendly and playful child who is fun to be around. He enjoys bike riding and swimming, and also likes playing board games and reading.

Bryce is in good physical health, but does have a hearing impairment that requires the use of hearing aids, which he wears willingly. He is currently in a residential treatment setting where he is learning to trust caregivers, working on identifying and expressing his feelings effectively, and learning to cope with frustrations and interact appropriately with peers. Bryce is a thoughtful and intelligent child who is a good student at school. He is well-liked by teachers and is placed in a classroom where he receives individualized attention. Bryce works efficiently and independently in the classroom and excels at Math.

Bryce needs a caring, and committed family who has experience with or knowledge of issues related to ADHD, and children who may exhibit acting out behaviors. A family

for Bryce should be willing and able to maintain a strong relationship with the school and other therapeutic service providers, and possibly visit Bryce at his current placement. It could also be beneficial (though not required) if the adopting family were licensed foster parents so that Bryce could possibly be placed in their home upon completion of his treatment program. It will also be important for Bryce to maintain a relationship with a sister who was adopted and lives in Illinois. It may be best if Bryce is the youngest or only child in his new family.



See my video clip on  
[www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)

To inquire about Bryce (C05436), phone a MARE intake worker at **(866) 312-8361**, or inquire through the MARE web site at: **[www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)**

**(866) 312-8361 • [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)**



**Devion**, age 14, is an outgoing and sociable teen who enjoys being the center of attention. He is very talented at drawing and loves to play basketball and video games. Devion is very loyal to his friends and can be polite and respectful toward adults. He says that his favorite foods are pizza, french fries, and candy!

Devion is working on accepting responsibility for his behaviors and respecting the property of others. He feels strong loyalty to his birth family and has tried to return to them on his own in the past. School has been challenging to Devion and although he is making some improvement he is also being evaluated for additional services.

Although Devion says he is not interested in adoption, he is open

to meeting new families if they are interested in him. The ideal family for Devion will have a great sense of humor and enjoy laughing and spending time together, and will also share Devion's love of basketball. Devion does best with a great deal of structure and routine and needs a family who is able to provide this, together with academic support, on a consistent basis. Devion needs to feel like he is a part of the family, but it will take time for him to establish that trust. If the adopting family has children, he should be placed in a home with children who are his age or older.

To inquire about Devion (C06006), phone a MARE intake worker at **(866) 312-8361**, or inquire through the MARE web site at: **[www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)**

**Ja’Naya**, age 10, is a bright and outgoing child who typically displays a sweet disposition. She loves to read and play video games, and also has an active imagination when playing with her Barbie dolls. Ja’Naya wants a family who enjoys going on trips, playing games, and spending time outdoors.

Ja’Naya does best in a highly structured environment with clear and consistent guidelines and expectations. She is not afraid to test limits and can sometimes be disrespectful of adult authority or the property of others; however, she is also capable of responding to firm but loving redirection. Ja’Naya is an intelligent and capable student and generally earns good grades. Extra tutoring in a few subject areas helps reinforce classroom instruction.



Ja’Naya needs a caring, committed, and experienced family who can provide the structure and support necessary to help her reach her full potential. A family for Ja’Naya should also be strong advocates for continued support services as necessary. Ja’Naya also needs to maintain contact with her sister in the future.

To inquire about Ja’Naya (C6014) phone a MARE intake worker at **(866) 312-8361**, or inquire through the MARE web site at: **www.mare.org**

**(866) 312-8361 • www.mare.org**



**Joshua**, age 10, is a happy and outgoing child who loves to play outside and be involved in organized sports. He also enjoys puzzles and helping with outdoor yard work. Joshua has developed a talent for art and enjoys drawing and painting.

Joshua has experienced a chaotic past which includes multiple moves. He understandably seeks to exercise control over situations and his environment which may be demonstrated by being bossy with peers or by hoarding food or other items. Joshua can be challenging toward teachers and often has difficulty controlling impulsive behaviors. He does best in a smaller classroom environment to help keep him focused on the task at hand.

Joshua needs an experienced family who is accepting of his past and understands how past experiences affect current behaviors and development. A family for Joshua should also be comfortable advocating for support services at school and in the community as necessary. Joshua's worker recommends that he should be the youngest or only child in the home, and that he is able to maintain contact with his brothers and current foster parent.

To inquire about Joshua (C05979) phone a MARE intake worker at **(866) 312-8361**, or inquire through the MARE web site at: **[www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)**

**Keandre**, age 12, is a talkative and outgoing child who loves to spend time playing outdoors with friends, going to movies, and playing video games. He can be creative and imaginative, and enjoys playing games with his foster family. Keandre can be firm and direct; however, he also has a good sense of humor and can be sensitive and insightful about his own feelings and the feelings of others. Playing sports is another passion for Keandre and he does best when he can compete against others.

Keandre needs encouragement to develop friendships and enjoy more successful peer interactions. He also copes with mild asthma; however, it does not appear to limit his activity level.

Keandre may also challenge adult authority, but does respond to appropriate redirection. He does well in school, and is proud of the good marks he got this past year. Keandre reports that his favorite subjects are Math and Social Studies.

Keandre needs a loving family who can provide a supportive environment and who will take an active interest in his development. A positive male role model would be a definite plus for this promising child. Keandre has also expressed a desire to be placed with a family of the same race.

To inquire about Keandre (C05892) phone a MARE intake worker at **(866) 312-8361**, or inquire through the MARE web site at: **www.mare.org**



**(866) 312-8361 • www.mare.org**



**Otisa**, age 14, is a friendly and outgoing child who has a warm smile and who thrives on individual attention from others. She enjoys listening to hip-hop music and loves to go shopping at the mall. Otisa also enjoys being helpful with household chores and is often very helpful with younger children.

Otisa is coping with hurts and losses from her past, and the loyalty she naturally feels toward her birth family often makes it difficult for her to trust others and function in a family setting. She can be oppositional and verbally aggressive toward caregivers when frustrated

and often acts impulsively without considering consequences. Otisa also exhibits cognitive delays and needs individualized attention at school to help her understand the material that is presented.

Otisa needs an experienced, patient, and loving family who can provide a highly structured environment with plenty of attention and supervision.

To inquire about Otisa (C06063), phone a MARE intake worker at **(866) 312-8361**, or inquire through the MARE web site at: **[www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)**

**Quintazia**, age 11, describes herself as “a nice person who is cool and fun to be around.” She can be caring and loving toward others and makes friends easily. Quintazia likes to be active and play outside, and also enjoys playing video games and being on the computer. She also enjoys singing and dancing and may want to be a performer in the future.

Quintazia is the survivor of a chaotic past and many hurts and disappointments. She can become frustrated easily and needs patient but firm guidance in learning to express her feelings effectively. Quintazia can be impulsive and likes to test limits with caregivers and other adult authority. Although she is capable of making friends, she tends to be a follower and can be easily influenced by the actions of others. At school, Quintazia is bright and capable student; however, behavioral difficulties often interfere with greater success.

Quintazia would like to be in a family with two parents and few or no other children in the home. She prefers an active family who enjoys traveling and activities like going out to eat or to the movies. Quintazia needs a family who can make a firm commitment and provide a highly structured environment with clear guidelines and consistent supervision. It may also be in her interest to maintain some kind of contact with siblings in the future, if appropriate.

To inquire about Quintazia (C06227) phone a MARE intake worker at **(866) 312-8361**, or inquire through the MARE web site at: **www.mare.org**





12-year old **Victor** is typically a happy-go-lucky child with a positive and outgoing personality and a great sense of humor. He enjoys playing video games and loves to be active by riding his bike and playing basketball. Victor has also been on a track team in the past and thoroughly enjoyed this activity.

Victor continues to need a great deal of support in learning to express his feeling and frustrations appropriately. He can exhibit aggression toward younger children and property when frustrated, and does not seem to understand his physical strength. Victor is a bright

and capable student who enjoys learning new things in school. Though he may occasionally struggle with peer relationships, Victor also enjoys having a variety of friends.

Victor would do well with experienced parents in a family where there are no younger children. He needs a patient and loving family who can make a firm commitment and provide a structured and supportive environment. Victor also needs to maintain contact with two sisters in the future.

To inquire about Victor (C05733), phone a MARE intake worker at **(866) 312-8361**, or inquire through the MARE web site at: **[www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)**



**Jordan** (on the left in the red shirt) and **Jacob** (on the right in the blue shirt) are 14-year old fraternal twins who are friendly and outgoing and love to go fishing! Some of their other favorite activities include playing cards and board games. Jordan and Jacob are very attached and loyal to each other. They enjoy spending time together and will also stick up for each other if they feel one of them is being treated unfairly.

Jordan and Jacob are trying to cope with a great deal of unresolved hurt and anger as a result of past disappointments from previous caregivers. They are working on learning to identify their feelings and express them effectively. Jordan and Jacob are coping with the effects of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome that impacts auditory processing, tactile sensitivity, and sensory processing. They have also had surgery to correct a congenital foot and ankle problem and are currently using crutches as they learn to walk again. At school Jordan and Jacob receive additional educational services and do best in a small classroom environment with a structured management system. They respond well to consistent, clear expectations and consequences.

Jordan and Jacob need a patient, loving, and experienced family who can make an unconditional commitment. A family who can provide a consistent environment with clear guidelines and plenty of positive attention and reinforcement would be best. It will also be important for a family to be willing to participate in therapeutic and medical support services as necessary. Jordan and Jacob may do best with a two-parent family who is flexible and able to understand their individual needs. A family for these children should also support their cultural identity.

To inquire about Jordan and Jacob (C06162 & C06163),  
phone a MARE intake worker at **(866) 312-8361**,  
or inquire through the MARE web site at: **www.mare.org**

**(866) 312-8361 • www.mare.org**

# 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, (800) 726-0093, [www.sootribe.org](http://www.sootribe.org)  
Catholic Charities of the U.P., Escanaba, (906) 786-7212, [www.dioceseofmarquette.org](http://www.dioceseofmarquette.org)  
Catholic Charities of the U.P., Marquette, (906) 227-9121, [www.dioceseofmarquette.org](http://www.dioceseofmarquette.org)  
Child & Family Services of the U.P., Marquette, (906) 228-4025, [www.cfsup.org](http://www.cfsup.org)  
Lutheran Social Service of Wisconsin & Upper MI, Marquette, (906) 226-2160, [www.lsswis.org](http://www.lsswis.org)  
Michigan Indian Child Welfare Agency (MICWA), Sault Ste. Marie, (800) 562-4957, [www.micwa.org](http://www.micwa.org)  
Northern MI Adoption Program (NMAP) Northern Area - Escanaba, (906) 789-7299

## NORTHERN & CENTRAL LOWER MICHIGAN

Adoption Option Inc. - Midland, (989) 839-0534  
Bethany Christian Services - Fremont, (231) 924-3390, [www.bethany.org/fremont\\_mi](http://www.bethany.org/fremont_mi)  
Bethany Christian Services - Traverse City, (231) 995-0870, [www.bethany.org/traversecity\\_mi](http://www.bethany.org/traversecity_mi)  
Catholic Family Services - Saginaw, Bay City, Midland, (989) 892-2504  
Catholic Human Services - Alpena, (989) 356-6385  
Child and Family Services of Northeast MI - Alpena, (989) 356-4567, [www.cfsnemi.org](http://www.cfsnemi.org)  
Child and Family Services of Northwest MI - Traverse City, (231) 946-8795, [www.cfsnwmi.org](http://www.cfsnwmi.org)  
Eagle Village, Hersey, (231) 832-7270, [www.eaglevillage.org](http://www.eaglevillage.org)  
Ionia/Montcalm DHS, Stanton, (989) 831-8432  
Lutheran Adoption Service - Bay City, (989) 686-3170, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
Lutheran Adoption Service - Clare, (989) 386-2101, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
Midland/Isabella DHS, Midland, (989) 835-3836  
Mecosta/Oceana/Osceola/Lake/Mason/Newaygo DHS, Big Rapids, (231) 796-4334  
Saginaw/Shiawassee DHS, Saginaw, (989) 758-1859  
Northern MI Adoption Program (NMAP) Northern Area - Traverse City, (231) 922-5377  
Tuscola/Huron County DHS, Caro, (989) 673-9132

## TRI COUNTY AREA (WAYNE, OAKLAND & MACOMB)

Adoption Options Worldwide - West Bloomfield, (248) 855-2813, [www.adoptionoptionsworldwide.com](http://www.adoptionoptionsworldwide.com)  
Bethany Christian Services - Madison Heights, (248) 414-4080, [www.bethany.org/madisonheights](http://www.bethany.org/madisonheights)  
Catholic Social Services of Wayne County, Detroit, (313) 883-7681, [www.csswayne.org](http://www.csswayne.org)  
The Children's Center of Wayne County, Detroit, (313) 262-0952, [www.thechildrenscenter.com](http://www.thechildrenscenter.com)  
Christ Child House, Detroit, (313) 584-6077, [www.christchildhouse.org](http://www.christchildhouse.org)  
Ennis Center for Children, Detroit, (313) 342-2699, [www.enniscenter.org](http://www.enniscenter.org)  
Evergreen Children's Services, Detroit, (313) 862-1000, [www.evergreenserv.org](http://www.evergreenserv.org)  
Forever Families, Novi, (248) 344-9606, [www.forever-families.org](http://www.forever-families.org)  
Homes for Black Children, Detroit, (313) 961-4777, [www.homesforblackchildren.org](http://www.homesforblackchildren.org)  
Judson Center, Redford, (313) 794-5653, [www.judsoncenter.org](http://www.judsoncenter.org)  
Lutheran Adoption Service, Southfield, (248) 423-2770, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
Macomb County DHS, Clinton Twp., (586) 469-6769  
Methodist Children's Home, Detroit, (313) 531-6191, [www.themethodistchildrenshome.com](http://www.themethodistchildrenshome.com)  
Oakland County DHS, Pontiac, (248) 975-5299  
Oakland Family Services, Pontiac, (248) 858-7766, [www.oaklandfamilyservices.org](http://www.oaklandfamilyservices.org)  
Orchards Children's Services, Southfield, (248) 593-2177, [www.orchards.org](http://www.orchards.org)  
Spaulding for Children, Southfield, (248) 443-0300, [www.spaulding.org](http://www.spaulding.org)  
Spectrum Human Services, Southfield, (248) 552-8020, [www.spectrumhuman.org](http://www.spectrumhuman.org)

St. Francis Family Center/Catholic Social Services of Oakland, [Southfield](#), (248) 552-0750, [www.cssoc.org](#)  
Wayne County DHS, Detroit, (313) 396-KIDS

### **SOUTHERN CENTRAL MICHIGAN**

Adoption Specialists, Inc., [Lapeer](#), (810) 660-7590, [www.adoption-specialists.org](#)  
Alternatives for Children & Families, [Flint](#), (810) 250-3800, [www.acfinc.org](#)  
Bethany Christian Services, East Lansing, (517) 336-0191, [www.bethany.org/eastlansing](#)  
Catholic Charities of Shiawasee & Genesee, [Flint](#), (810) 232-9950, [www.catholiccharitiessg.org](#)  
Catholic Social Service of Washtenaw, [Ann Arbor](#), (734) 971-9781  
Child and Family Services - Capital Area, [Lansing](#), (517) 882-4000, [www.childandfamily.org](#)  
Clinton/Gratiot DHS, [St. Johns](#), (989) 224-5543  
Ennis Center, [Flint](#), (810) 233-4031, [www.enniscenter.org](#)  
Family Counseling and Children Services of Lenawee, [Adrian](#), (517) 265-5352, [www.fccservices.org](#)  
Family Service & Children's Aid of [Jackson](#), (517) 787-7920, [www.strong-families.org](#)  
Genesee County DHS, [Flint](#), (810) 760-4980  
Hands Across the Water, [Ann Arbor](#), (734) 477-0135, [www.hatw.org](#)  
Ingham County DHS, [Lansing](#), (517) 887-9688  
Jackson County DHS, [Jackson](#), (517) 780-7653  
Lutheran Adoption Service - [Ann Arbor](#), (734) 971-1944, [www.lasadoption.org](#)  
Lutheran Adoption Service - [Lansing](#), (517) 886-1380, [www.lasadoption.org](#)  
Michigan Indian Child Welfare Agency - [Lansing](#), (517) 393-3256, [www.micwa.org](#)  
St. Clair/Lapeer/Sanilac DHS, [Port Huron](#), (810) 966-2132  
St. Vincent Catholic Charities, [Lansing](#), (517) 323-4734, [www.stvcc.org](#)  
Washtenaw/Livingston County DHS, [Ypsilanti](#), (734) 481-2034

### **SOUTH WEST MICHIGAN**

Allegan County DHS, [Allegan](#), (269) 673-7775  
Berrien County DHS, [Benton Harbor](#), (269) 934-2062  
Bethany Christian Services - [Grand Rapids](#), (616) 224-7479, [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](#)  
Branch/Hillsdale/Lenawee/Monroe DHS, [Coldwater](#), (517) 264-6447  
Calhoun County DHS, [Battle Creek](#), (269) 966-1341  
Catholic Charities West MI - [Grand Rapids](#), (616) 356-6225, [www.cssgr.org](#)  
Catholic Charities West MI - [Muskegon](#), (231) 726-4735, [www.csswestmi.org](#)  
D. A. Blodgett Services, [Grand Rapids](#), (616) 774-0199, [www.dablodgett.org](#)  
Family Adoption Consultants, [Kalamazoo](#), (269) 343-3316, [www.facadopt.org](#)  
Family & Children's Services, Inc., [Kalamazoo](#), (269) 344-0202, [www.fcsource.org](#)  
Greater Hopes, Inc., [Grand Rapids](#), (616) 365-3166, [www.greaterhopes.org](#)  
Kalamazoo County DHS, [Kalamazoo](#), (269) 337-5070  
Kent County DHS, [Grand Rapids](#), (616) 247-6295  
Lutheran Adoption Service - [Grand Rapids](#), (616) 281-4706, [www.lasadoption.org](#)  
Lutheran Adoption Service - [Kalamazoo](#), (269) 345-5776, [www.lasadoption.org](#)  
Michigan Indian Child Welfare Agency - [Grand Rapids](#), (616) 454-9221, [www.micwa.org](#)  
Muskegon County DHS, [Muskegon](#), (231) 733-3652  
Ottawa County DHS, [Holland](#), (616) 394-7229  
Pathways, [Holland](#), (616) 396-2301, [www.pathwaysmi.org](#)  
St. Joseph County DHS, [Centreville](#), (269) 467-1286  
Van Buren County DHS, [Hartford](#), (269) 621-2922



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[www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)



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