

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 photolistsings and videos of children, visit our website at www.mare.org.



Involving your kids instead of telling can bring harmony to the household

As an adoptive parent and a MARE adoption navigator, Kelli Ostrosky knows quite a bit about childhood behavior.

Ostrosky constantly seeks information to help adoptive families and their children. Her recent journey for helpful information led her to a story entitled "Celebrate Calm" by Kirk Martin, a nationally known behavioral therapist who founded a website dedicated to helping children and their families.

His story appeared in the winter edition of our Family Newsletter, and you can see it at www.mare.org > Resources > Newsletters & Publications > Winter 2019 Family Newsletter. As a follow-up to that story, we asked Ostrosky to describe her parenting history and

her views about the Kirk Martin piece.

Tell us a bit about your parenting style

My perspective is to help my children be the best versions of themselves that they can be. I'm currently parenting a child who had a difficult past, and it can require creativity at times to make things work out well for the entire family. From my perspective, it's not just the child; it's the whole family and how to help us function the best that we can with the challenges we face.

See **Parenting** on page 3



Kelli Ostrosky on why she loves helping adoptive parents:

"I would want families to know that I've had some major challenges as a parent. If I can walk away from those experiences having helped someone else in the process, then it was even more worthwhile to me, personally and professionally."

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 or 734-528-2042.

Don't let spring leave you unsprung



STORY BY **BOBBI HINTON, MARE SUPPORT STAFF**

In a season of change and new growth such as spring, we often get carried away in all of the goings-on and lose focus of the things that are most important. MARE's Match Support program is here to help keep you grounded.

Offering family-centered services, which can include trainings and educational resources, as well as specialists who can listen to successes and struggles, answer questions and assist in general with bumps that may develop

throughout the adoption process, Match Support is here for you.

Don't get carried away.

Call MARE Match Support at 734-528-2020!

Contact Bobbi at bobbi_hinton@judsoncenter.org

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Parenting, continued from page 1

What drew you to Kirk Martin's story?

I heard him speak at a conference, and I found him to be extremely knowledgeable and very real. It was information that I could go home and really use. He focuses on the positives and ways to avoid power struggles. He suggests really getting on the same level with your child sometimes and talking to them as a partner, as a member of your household, sometimes as a friend and just leveling with them and not necessarily talking down to them or at them. Just talking with them and having them problem-solve with you. Involving them with the parenting instead of it just being one-sided.

Isn't there a risk of becoming too chummy?

I tell my kids that my job is not to be their best friend, but it is my job to understand them and how they're

feeling and where they're coming from and for us to work together to find solutions that work for everyone.

What do you hope families glean from Martin's message?

Going alongside the child. It's hard to do that sometimes because we weren't parented that way, so it's a whole different way of looking at things and involving them. Sometimes we don't know the answers and if we ask them, they will have a very valid idea or an answer that is really going to help the functioning of the whole household. So that's what I like about Kirk Martin, that he really involves the kids in problem solving.

Kelli Ostrosky can be reached at 734-528-2078 or kelli_ostrosky@judsoncenter.org.

Crystalee loves having fun

Having fun and spreading the joy are two important aspects of Crystalee's life.

"Crystalee loves to tell jokes," says her worker. "She enjoys going on outings into the community and likes to put on music videos and have a dance party."

She even has her own dance shoes. Crystalee also likes playing games and managing her hair. "She loves anything to do with hair; it's one of the first things she notices about someone," says Crystalee's worker.

This fun-loving girl enjoys giving hugs and showing her affection.

"Crystalee is a very happy girl who always has a smile on her face," her worker says.

Crystalee describes herself as caring, silly and helpful. In addition to dancing and listening to music, Crystalee says she likes playing basketball and tag with her friends.



Crystalee (C09658).



Keven (C08466).

For Keven, outdoors is the place to be

Keven is at home in the outdoors.

In fact, he loves hunting, fishing, bike riding and swimming.

"He likes participating in basketball and baseball," says Keven's worker.

When he's watching sports outside, Keven likes to pretend that he's a sports commentator. When the dinner bell rings, Keven likes to come running for his favorite meal, macaroni and cheese. If he could go anywhere in the world, Keven would choose Florida because it's warm.

Keven also has qualities that would make him a good addition to a forever family; namely, he is kind, bright and joyful. Keven is very charismatic and always brightens the room he is in.

When he's asked about the qualities he wants in a future forever family, Keven says he wants one who will take care him and love him.

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.

For more information regarding these events contact Jessica Thompson, MARE Recruitment Specialist: jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org