

MICHIGAN ADOPTION RESOURCE EXCHANGE



***Inside:
Miles of smiles with
Brittney in the house,
Page 3.***

***Caleb dreams of a
Titanic excursion,
Page 5.***

***Jessica cooks
delicious breakfast
favorites, Page 10.***

Fall 2019

**A spotlight on children
waiting for permanent
and loving families**

Jacob's likes:

- Swinging.
- Singing his favorite jingles from advertisements and other favorite tunes.
- Going for car rides.
- Watching old game shows and children's educational programming.

Forever family qualities:

- Two experienced parents who can give him the supervision and one-on-one attention he requires.
- Fierce advocates for the services that will help him thrive.
- Structure and routine.



Jacob C09413

*Photo by
Heather Halligan*

Welcome to the Fall 2019 Recruitment Periodical, published by the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE). Over the next several pages, you will be introduced to some of the youth in Michigan who are waiting to have a loving, supportive and permanent family of their own through adoption. The youth featured here represent hundreds of other youth in Michigan's foster care system who are waiting to become part of a loving family through adoption. To learn more about these children and adoption, visit www.mare.org.

On the MARE website, you will find photos, narratives and video clips of youth waiting to be adopted, 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 youth 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 or contact an adoption navigator at 800-589-6273. MARE is available to answer your adoption-related questions, and we will do our best to get you headed in the right direction.

Mark your calendar for the 2020 Heart Gallery Grand Opening

The ball hasn't dropped on 2019, and you already have a great event to look forward to in 2020, the Michigan Heart Gallery Grand Opening.

This year's gala takes place April 25, 2020 at the Emagine Theater in Royal Oak.

Those are the only details we know for now, but rest assured, we'll give you the other information later via our website and social media.

Meanwhile, mark your calendar!



Who are the children who wait for adoption?

Adopting a child from foster care is often referred to as “special needs” adoption. Common traits of children waiting to be adopted from foster care include:

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

Many of these 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 percent of children in Michigan’s foster care system are adopted by their current foster family or a relative (someone with whom the child has an established relationship). The remaining children available for adoption, like those in this periodical and on the MARE website, don’t have an identified family to adopt them. Recruitment of a suitable adoptive family is, therefore, necessary.

Typically, more than 98 percent of the children available for adoption without an identified family are over the age of 5, and more than 75 percent of those children are between the ages of 11 and 18.

Who can adopt?

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 adoption assistance, which is intended to assist adoptive families in meeting the children’s needs.

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

The only costs you should incur from adopting a child from Michigan’s foster care system are court filing and birth certificate fees. Some agencies may charge a fee for the Adoptive 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.

What is the adoption process?

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 www.mare.org) and can take an average of six months to complete. The Adoptive Family Assessment includes, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Personal history.
- Health statements.
- Criminal background checks.
- Income statement.
- Personal references.

Once the Adoptive Family Assessment is complete and you’re approved for adoption, 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.

*Photo by
Lillian Scull*

Brittney C09580



Brittney’s likes:

- Singing and listening to music.
- Going shopping and going out to eat.

Intangible assets:

- Funny, enjoys laughing and making others laugh.

Forever family qualities:

- Experienced, patient parent or parents.
- Fierce advocates for needed services.

Le-Asia's likes:

- Coloring.
- Chocolate and chocolate cake.
- Hot pink and blue.
- Visiting the library.
- Singing and dancing.
- Writing in her journal.
- Watching movies.
- Getting her nails done.

Intangible assets:

- Pretty, colorful, outgoing, caring, loving, charming, sweet and intelligent.

Creative interests:

- Ballet.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Experienced single female parent or mom and dad.
- Strong advocates for the services that will help Le-Asia function at her best.
- Youngest child in a home so she gets one-on-one attention.
- Willing to let Le-Asia maintain contact with her siblings.


"I am interesting."

*Photo by
Stephanie Kieft*



Did you know?

MARE surpassed 7,000 likes on our Facebook page and we're approaching 8,000. After we boasted of our 7,000 achievement, we received affirmation, at least from one follower, that we're a good resource for adoption information. "You really are a big deal," the follower said. However, we're not such a big deal that we can't improve. If you have ideas or suggestions about how to better deliver information to you, let us know by calling 800-589-6273 or send us an email to mare@judsoncenter.org. We are open to all ideas, and thank you in advance!



"I'm funny, I'm creative, I'm athletic and I'm kind."

*Photo by
Melody Montgomery*

Caleb's likes:

- Studying history, one of his favorite subjects in school.
- Playing Pokemon and Yu-Gi-Oh with his friends.
- Attending church and taking long naps on the weekends.
- Munching on pizza, hot dogs and macaroni and cheese.
- Birds, especially parrots and cockatoos.
- Listening to rock 'n roll.

Creative interests:

- Drawing.

Caleb's crystal ball:

- Wants to visit a museum to learn more about Titanic.
- Becoming a guitar player, singer or a drummer.
- Watching movies and going to concerts with his future forever family.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Prior parenting experience.
- The only child in his new forever family.
- Able to make sure that he receives the services that will help him function at his best.

*Photo by
Deborah Hoag*



Rachel's likes:

- Hugs.
- Socializing with others.
- Chicken sandwiches from McDonald's.
- Playing board games.
- Swimming and riding her bike.
- Listening to music.
- Being around horses, dogs and cats.

Intangible assets:

- Very personable.
- Does well academically.

Rachel's crystal ball:

- Wants to become a veterinarian.

Creative interests:

- Making cards and pictures for the people she cares about.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Two female parents or a mom and dad.
- Only child in her future forever family.
- Able to make sure Rachel receives the services that will help her.

"Rachel is a very silly, social and happy girl."

"Rachel is very creative and artistic."

"I want a family who respects their child and cares for them with all their heart."

*Photo by
Beth and Mike
Severn*

Nehemiah's likes:

- Dressing up with a shirt and tie or vest.
- Playing basketball and is good at it.
- Reading and getting comic books as presents.
- Playing with remote control cars.

Intangible assets:

- Good at thinking of positive things to say about others.
- A good sense of humor and likes making others laugh.

Nehemiah's crystal ball:

- Wants to be a basketball player or pastor.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Experienced parents.
- Children who are older than he is.
- Fierce advocates for the services that will help Nehemiah thrive.
- Willing to let Nehemiah maintain the appropriate relationships that are important to him.

**"I'm looking forward to a family who cares about me
and takes good care of me."**



*Photo by
Allie Siarto*



Cal's likes:

- Interacting with others.
- Helping around the house.
- Reading.
- Playing video games.
- Riding bikes.
- Playing basketball.
- Munching on pizza.

Cal's crystal ball:

- Dreams of having a pet dog, hamster and cat.
- Hopes to go to the pet store with his future forever family.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Two experienced and patient parents who are able to provide structure and support.
- Advocates for the services he needs.
- Youngest child in his new forever family.

Intangible assets:

- Friendly, kind and polite.

To assist you through the adoption process, MARE adoption navigators host quarterly Waiting Family Forums. Join us and learn exactly what happens to your inquiries after you submit them; find out what you can do to make the most of your wait time; learn ways to strengthen your inquiries; get tips on how to effectively advocate for your family; and meet other waiting families. Families who are approved to adopt and those completing their home study are all welcome to attend. Look for future forums in the events section of mare.org or follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

“I like to write stories. I write about sharks.”

“When people think of me, I want them to think that I’m a sweet, caring, loving person.”

Brittany’s likes:

- Swimming.
- Playing video games.
- Playing the Castle card game.
- Listening to country music.
- Shopping for shoes and clothes.
- Spending time with her friends.
- Doing well in school.

Intangible assets:

- A bit comical and playful.
- A smart, loving and caring young lady.

Brittany’s crystal ball:

- Looks forward to having a forever family who is kind and caring and wants her to be a part of their family.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Open to any family structure as long as they’re nice.
- Oldest child in her new family.
- Pets preferred.



"I'm shy at first, but when I get to know you, I open up."

*Photo by
Loren Sanders*

Jessica's likes:

- Sharing a laugh with others.
- Watching TV and participating in Bible school on weekends.
- Playing soccer.
- Cooking (bacon and eggs are her specialty).
- A Beyoncé and Justin Bieber fan.

Creative interests:

- Dancing, singing and coloring.

Jessica's crystal ball:

- Wants to become a police officer.
- Dreams of a forever family who's nice.

Qualities of a forever family:

- One or two parents with prior experience.
- Preferably the only child.
- Willing to advocate for the services that will help Jessica.

Mikale's likes:

- Studying history, one of his favorite subjects in school.
- Riding his bike and going fishing.
- Going to the park.
- Homemade macaroni and cheese.
- Studying science in school to learn about animals.

Intangible assets:

- Takes pride in his creativity and loves making arts and crafts.
- An accomplished video game player.

Creative interests:

- Drawing and calligraphy.

Mikale's crystal ball:

- Plans to work in technology or become an inventor.
- Wants to travel to Washington, D.C., to take in the sights.
- Hopes to have a bearded dragon as a pet.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Patient and understanding.
- Two experienced and patient parents who can give him one-on-one attention.
- Only or youngest child.
- Strong advocates for the services that will help Mikale function at his best.

**"The only wish I have is to find a family.
I want to live a normal life and
have them care about me."**



*Photo by
Ellen Dykstra*

“With a forever family, I would love to go swimming and camping.”



Molly talks about singing and dancing, above, then breaks into some moves, below. Make sure to check out her video at [more.org](https://www.more.org) > For Families > View Waiting Children.

Molly's likes:

- Spending time with others.
- Playing games outside.
- Going on walks.
- Cheerleading.
- Swimming.

Intangible assets:

- Sweet, outgoing and resilient.

Creative interests:

- Singing and dancing.

Molly's crystal ball:

- Wants to work in a hospital so she can help others.
- Also wants to work for MARE. 😊

Qualities of a forever family:

- A mom and dad who can give her the attention and supervision she thrives on.
- Patient parents committed to making sure she receives the services she needs.
- The only child in her new forever family.



Deavontae's likes:

- Eating pizza and sweet treats.
- Football and basketball.
- Following the Seattle Seahawks and the Detroit Lions.
- Studying math, his favorite subject in school.
- Reading sports books.

Intangible assets:

- Takes pride in his accomplishments and his demeanor as well as his grades in school.

Deavontae's crystal ball:

- Looks forward to spending time with a forever family doing fun things such as traveling and watching and playing sports.

Qualities of a forever family:

- A mom and dad or two female parents.
- Active outdoors with him.
- Able to make sure he gets the services he needs.
- Wants a family with pets.

"I'm smart, I'm athletic, I'm caring and I'm capable of a lot of good things."



Photo by
Elizabeth Walker

Make sure to check out the MARE YouTube Channel to see videos of several of the children featured in the Fall 2019 Periodical.

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

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. For an interactive map of statewide licensed agencies, visit: <http://www.mare.org/For-Families/New-to-Adoption/Find-a-Licensed-Agency>

Upper Peninsula

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
Sault Tribe Binogii Placement Agency, Sault Ste. Marie, 906-632-5250, www.saulttribe.com
Upper Peninsula Family Solutions, Marquette, 906-273-1095, www.upfs.org
U.P. Kids, Houghton, 906-487-9832, www.upkids.com

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
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
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 Institute, Millington, 989-871-6695, www.newlightonline.net

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

Bethany Christian Services, Madison Heights, 248-414-4080, www.bethany.org/madisonheights
Catholic Charities of S.E. Michigan, 855-882-2736, www.ccsem.org
Community 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 & Community Services, Inc., Utica, 586-726-2988, www.facadopt.org
Forever Families, Livonia, 734-762-0909, www.forever-families.org
Homes for Black Children, Detroit, 313-961-4777
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, 248-443-0300, www.spaulding.org
Spectrum Human Services, Southfield, 248-552-8020, www.spectrumhuman.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 and Foster Care Specialists, Inc., Lapeer, 810-660-7590, www.adoption-specialists.org
 Bethany Christian Services, East Lansing, 517-336-0191, www.bethany.org/eastlansing
 Catholic Charities of Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale counties, Adrian, 517-263-2191, www.catholiccharitiesjlhc.org
 Catholic Charities of Shiawassee & Genesee, Flint, 810-232-9950, 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 Service & Children's Aid, Jackson, 517-787-7920, www.strong-families.org
 Fostering Futures, Ann Arbor, 734-481-8999, www.fostering-futures.com
 Fostering Solutions, Adrian, 517-263-0020, www.fosteringsolutions.org
 Growing Hope Through Love, Howell, 517-798-4020
 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
 Open Door Adoption Services, Jackson, 517-936-7713, www.opendooradoptionservices.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.dabsj.org
 Family & Children's Services, Inc., Kalamazoo, 269-344-0202, www.fcssource.org
 Family & Children's Services, Inc., Battle Creek, 269-965-3247, www.fcssource.org
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Grand Rapids, 616-356-1934, www.lasadoption.org
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Kalamazoo, 269-345-5776, www.lasadoption.org
 Arbor Circle, Holland, 616-396-2301, www.pathwaysmi.org
 Youth Guidance Foster Care & Adoption Center, Battle Creek, 269-969-9181, www.citylinc.org



MARE 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, adopted a number of children, and have knowledge of foster care, infant and older, and domestic and 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 and voluntary service.

Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange
3840 Packard Rd., Suite 170
Ann Arbor, MI 48108



The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is a program of Judson Center and is funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Follow the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange on Social Media:



@MichiganAdoptionResourceExchange



@VideosbyMARE



@MAREinMichigan



@MAREAdoption