

MICHIGAN ADOPTION RESOURCE EXCHANGE



Inside:

Young writer works on a series of novels, Page 3.

A teen who dreams of world peace, Page 7.

He has a 'super' wish to share with a family, Page 12.

Fall 2020

A spotlight on children waiting for permanent and loving families

Taivion's likes:

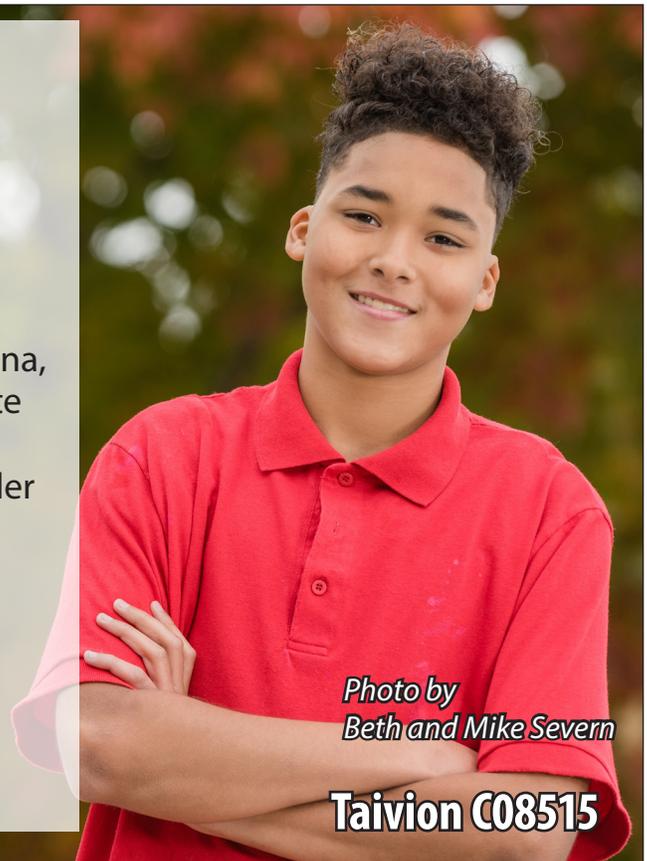
- Playing football and basketball, especially with friends
- Being outdoors, fishing, riding his bike
- Cheese pizza

Taivion's crystal ball:

- Traveling to Oakland, Calif., to visit Oracle Arena, home of the Golden State Warriors, his favorite sports team
- Becoming rich, owning a mansion with a butler and adopting enough kids to fill it

Qualities of a forever family:

- A single dad, two dads or a mom and dad
- Strong advocates for needed services
- Only or youngest child in the family
- Patient and supportive



*Photo by
Beth and Mike Severn*

Taivion C08515

Welcome to the Fall 2020 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.

MARE's new 20 in 2020 project celebrates 20 Michigan youth who want to share their stories with potential adoptive families in 2020. Every youth is featured on a new

extension of MARE's website to highlight and showcase their creativity, and we regularly publish new profiles throughout 2020. We hope you will check them out at <https://mare.indepthprofiles.org/profiles/> and on our social media and be inspired to help us find them the adoptive families they deserve!



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. Typically, more than 75 percent 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 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, 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.



Jennifer C09242

Jennifer’s likes:

- Writing and working on her series of novels titled “The Swavian Chronicles”
- Following the Michigan State Spartans
- Doing arts and crafts

Forever family qualities:

- A single mom or two parents
- Only or youngest child in the home

Check out Jennifer’s 20 in 2020 profile at <https://mare.indepthprofiles.org/profiles/>

Photo by
Focal Point Studio



**“Shantoria is a fun-loving girl.
She likes to be silly and is loving and caring.”**

Shantoria’s likes:

- Wearing dresses and getting her nails and makeup done
- Reading books
- Listening to K-pop
- Making others happy by telling jokes
- Going to the beach
- Watching anime

Shantoria’s crystal ball:

- Dreams of becoming a singer

Creative interests:

- Singing and dancing
- Coloring

Qualities of a forever family:

- A single mom who has a strong support network or a mom and dad
- Only or youngest child
- Willing to advocate for the services that will help Shantoria thrive

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.

Photo by
Ellen Dykstra



“Dakoda is a really caring individual. Despite his tough upbringing, he still finds a reason to smile.”

Dakoda’s likes:

- Nature and spending time with animals
- Cleaning the barn and doing yardwork
- Playing football, basketball and baseball
- Sleeping, relaxing and walking
- Going to the movies
- Macaroni and cheese

Dakoda’s crystal ball:

- Traveling to Africa “to help those who are less fortunate”

- A forever family who enjoys having fun together
- Becoming a veterinarian, animal caregiver or wildlife biologist

Qualities of a forever family:

- Two experienced parents
- Strong advocates for the services that will help Dakoda function at his best
- Patient and able to give Dakoda the one-on-one attention he needs



Check out Dakoda’s 20 in 2020 profile at <https://mare.indepthprofiles.org/profiles/>

*Photo by
Elle Ticula*



“Christopher is a happy, energetic, humorous, affectionate, outgoing, friendly and social young man.”

Christopher’s likes:

- Playing video games – especially the action-packed ones
- Going to laser tag facilities
- Watching cartoons
- Listening to music, particularly rap
- Watching movies (his favorite is “Black Panther”)
- Nachos and German chocolate cake
- Playing tennis

Christopher’s crystal ball:

- Wants to become a paramedic so he can help others
- A forever family who has dogs and is patient and nice

Qualities of a forever family:

- Two experienced parents
- Consistent supervision and guidance
- Strong advocates for the support services that would benefit Christopher

“Madysun is smart and wants to develop close relationships with adults.”



*Photo by
Jessica Thompson*

Madysun’s likes:

- Listening to music
- Playing video games
- Playing Monopoly and other board games
- Watching movies
- Drinking tea and eating sub sandwiches and Chinese food
- A good nap after school and sleeping in on weekends

Madysun’s wonderful wish:

- World peace and the ability to go back in time

Qualities of a forever family:

- Patient, supportive and understanding
- A single female parent or two parents
- Open to letting Madysun maintain appropriate relationships

“I have always wanted to go to France. It just intrigues me.”

Photo by
Steven VanDeSteene



“I would like to be adopted because I want a nice, kind family of my own.”

Darnell’s likes:

- Being outside
- Skating and bowling
- Playing board games, especially Monopoly
- Showing off his musical skills by singing and playing drums
- Munching on spaghetti and fried chicken
- His spirituality

Darnell’s crystal ball:

- Becoming part of a forever family who likes playing sports and going to baseball and football games together

- Hopes to go to Cedar Point because “they have roller coasters!”

Qualities of a forever family:

- Fierce advocates for the services that will help him function at his best
- Open to letting Darnell maintain his relationship with his brother
- A single dad or a mom and dad
- Willing to let Darnell take quiet time when he needs it

Connecting children with forever families

The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is a statewide information and referral service for families interested in adopting children from foster care, and for adoption workers looking for homes for these children. The MARE website provides a listing of waiting children in Michigan and of Michigan families interested in adopting children with special needs.



"I like most any kind of food except biscuits and gravy. It's the nastiest thing on earth!"

"When I turn 19, I'm thinking about working for Hope for Paws (an animal rescue agency)."

Charley's likes:

- Being active and outdoors
- Lasagna and Moose Tracks ice cream
- Playing volleyball and cheerleading
- Horses, arctic foxes, wolves, Siberian huskies, snow leopards and Persian cats for their "smooshed face," intelligence and pleasant personality
- Spending time with friends while going shopping and watching movies

Intangible assets:

- Bright, bubbly, energetic, funny, outgoing.

Charley's crystal ball:

- Dreams of a family who likes to travel and be active outdoors
- Family board game night

Qualities of a forever family:

- Two experienced parents
- Able to make sure Charley receives the services she needs to function at her best
- Enjoys talking, traveling and having fun together



Check out Charley's 20 in 2020 profile at <https://mare.indepthprofiles.org/profiles/>

"Sandra is a very fun,
outgoing and sweet girl."



Photo by
Olivia Kippe

Sandra's likes:

- Playing with Barbies
- Being outside, where she enjoys playing tag
- Playing Monopoly as well as playing with "any girl toys" with her friends
- Going shopping and getting her hair done

Sandra's crystal ball:

- Celebrating holidays with a forever family

Creative interests:

- Doing arts and crafts
- Singing and dancing

Qualities of a forever family:

- Able to make sure she receives the services that will help her thrive
- The only or youngest child
- Willing to let Sandra maintain her sibling relationships

Photo by
Christine Schafer



**“When I grow up, I want
to be in the Marines.”**

Red Arrow’s likes:

- Kayaking and biking
- Playing football and kickball
- Fueling up with burgers, pizza and fries
- Spending time outdoors
- Playing with K’Nex
- Riding bikes

Intangible assets:

- Great sense of humor
- Looks out for the best interests of others

Red Arrow’s crystal ball:

- Going to powwows with a future forever family

Qualities of a forever family:

- Able to make sure that he receives the services he needs
- Two experienced parents
- Only or youngest child

**“Red Arrow is kind and often
volunteers to help others.”**

Photo by
Corinne Toussaint

**"I like playing with dogs and toys,
and I like Legos and looking at comic books."**

I'zayah's likes:

- Backyard adventures
- Playing soccer and water games in the summer
- Romping in the snow in winter
- Munching on pizza and ice cream with a side of Oreos

I'zayah's crystal ball:

- Wants to be a doctor or police officer

I'zayah's super wish:

- To have every superhero power along with the ability to turn into a dragon so he can fly to Disneyland with a new family

Qualities of a forever family:

- Two experienced parents
- Fierce advocates for the services that will help I'zayah excel
- Youngest child in his new family

Photo by
Jessica Strachen



“I am a happy and loving child.”

Imani’s likes:

- Playing with Barbie dolls
- Doing her makeup
- Going out to eat
- Going to the movies

Imani’s crystal ball:

- Wants to cheerlead for sports teams
- Would enjoy traveling to Disney World to see the movie and TV characters there
- Becoming a ballerina
- A nice family who likes to have fun

Qualities of a forever family:

- Open to letting Imani maintain her sibling relationships
- Strong advocates
- Youngest child
- A mom and dad who can provide structure and one-on-one attention

“I am proud of the progress I’m making in school.”

Make sure to check out the MARE YouTube Channel to see videos of several of the children featured in the Fall 2020 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.catholiccharitiesjllhc.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.opendooradoptionsservices.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.fcsourcesource.org
 Family & Children's Services, Inc., Battle Creek, 269-965-3247, www.fcsourcesource.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



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ADOPTION
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HOMES
FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

800.589.6273
www.mare.org



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