

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



Steps workers can take to recruit adoptive families of color

During any given period, the number of children of color photolisted on Mare.org tends to tilt toward more than 50 percent of the total youth on the website.

This statistic points to the need to recruit more families of color for adoption. While we welcome families who choose to adopt outside of their race, we also recognize that it is important for some kids to be placed with families that mirror their racial identities.

Adoption workers can help by recruiting families of color. They will find a valuable resource in Monique Jackson, adoption supervisor at Child Safe Michigan. Jackson has served many roles in child welfare, and is currently participating in the Minority Professional Leadership Development Program with Adopt US Kids. In this Q&A she explains barriers to recruiting families of color and how adoption teams can help.



Monique Jackson of Child Safe Michigan.

Why is it so hard to recruit adoptive families of color?

There is a historical mistrust of the system for families of color. There is a general lack of distrust for government officials. It is important to be mindful of how preconceived notions come into

play when families are looking to adopt. Without this awareness, families may feel dismissed or under supported, which the worker may perceive as resistance or disinterest without proper insight or education.

How can workers ease these worries?

It's important to build a relationship first. Take some time to talk with your family to get to know them. Whether that is asking
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Frequently Asked Questions



Home > For Families > New to Adoption > FAQs

Where do you start your adoption journey? Right here!

Our FAQ page provides valuable information

The Frequently Asked Question page on Mare.org offers plenty of resources for families on your caseload.

There are links and answers to questions such as Do I have to be married to adopt or be a foster parent? What kinds of children are waiting for adoption. Do I have to own my own home? Do I need to make a lot of money? Why are so many children available for adoption from foster care older? Are there any younger children available for adoption? Can I adopt just one child in a sibling group?

One of the best resources is a link to another page, Adoptive Parenting Articles, where your families will

find helpful information about parenting adoptive teens and parenting children who've experienced abuse or neglect.

It never hurts for parents to gain knowledge about adoption from several resources, so guide them to Mare.org > For Families > Frequently Asked Questions.

While they're in the For Families section, they can browse the View Waiting Children page to see the youth photolisted on our website or they can click on the Family Registry section and learn how to enhance their search for an adopted child.

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about their goals or what their favorite song is at the moment, taking the time to be present with the family can be a small yet impactful step to develop trust.

How can recruitment methods be improved?

For some workers, there is a lack of education regarding historical matters that have greatly impacted families of color in America. Agencies need to

educate and train their employees.

What steps could help recruitment?

Seek out different communities and populations for recruiting instead of assuming families of color will come to you. Look for local events and other ways to engage in the target population's culture. Focus on building rapport and trust within a community. Reach out to minority-owned businesses and request an

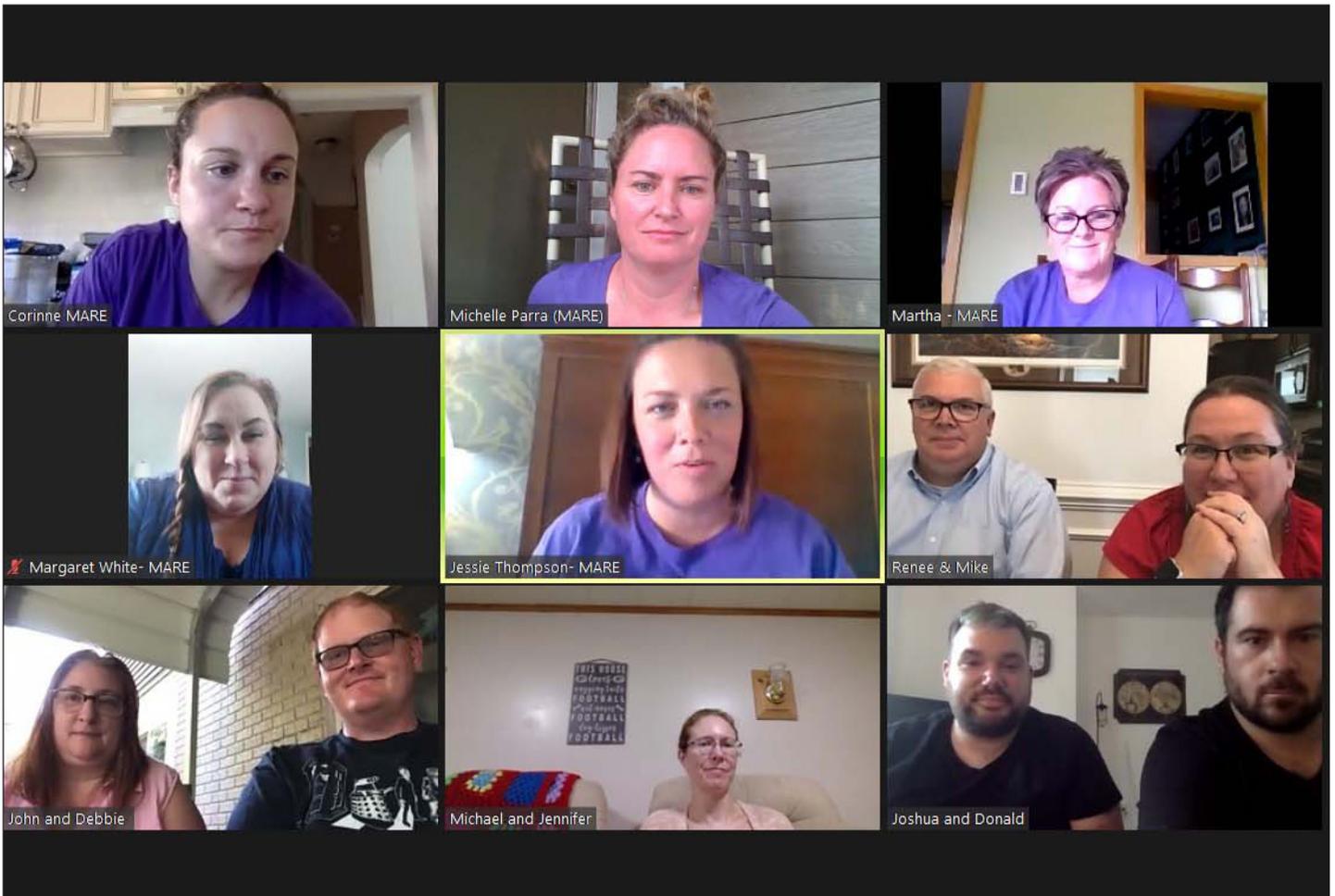
opportunity to present to their clientele.

What can be done to make these discussions easier?

Race and cultural issues be can be a very intimidating topic. To create more comfort about the topic, workers can roleplay and practice how to address these issues to ease the worries of potential adoptive families of color. Again, be mindful of how distrust doesn't necessarily equate to disinterest in adoption.

Learn more about the Minority Professional Leadership Development Program:

<https://professionals.adoptuskids.org/minority-professional-leadership-development-program/>



MARE's virtual Meet & Greets are a huge hit

Families like what they see in MARE's new virtual Meet & Greets.

"Families are saying they enjoy interacting with the kids that way and feel like they actually get to meet all the kids during the virtual Meet & Greets," says MARE Recruitment Specialist Jessica Thompson. "The kids have liked doing it virtually as well."

"I just attended the M&G this past weekend and I noticed the same thing," says MARE Adoption Navigator Supervisor Kimberly Wolowski. "Families had the chance to meet all the kids, and I felt like the kids were more relaxed and talkative too. The only downside is that some families and kids had a few

technical and internet issues, but that is to be expected."

MARE hosted these events in person before the pandemic, but since the outbreak, MARE has been working on bringing these events to you virtually. Our plan is to host at least two virtual Meet & Greets per month.

We are really excited to still be able to bring youth and families together during this time.

If you have youth or families on your caseload who're interested, contact Jessica Thompson at Jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org or call her at 734-528-2070.



It is our hope that many matches will be made in an effort to find our youth who live in foster care their forever families.

Project lets youth help plan and produce their own profiles

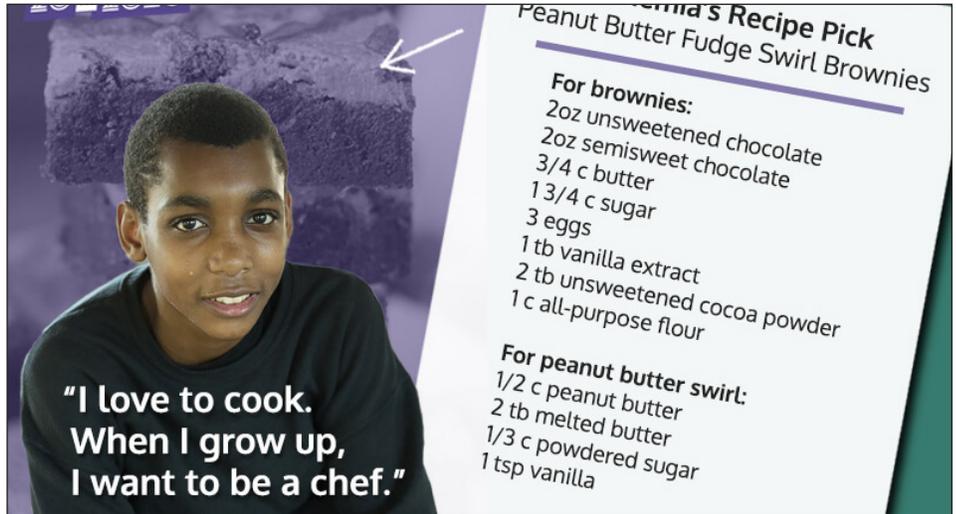
MARE has started a project called 20 in 2020, which celebrates 20 Michigan youth in foster care who are sharing their stories with potential adoptive families in 2020.

Youth decide what they want to share and then get to work creating an In-Depth Profile. They are in the driver's seat from start to finish, so their profiles best represent who they are.

Youth create and share through their In-Depth Profiles with the hope that families like you are inspired to step forward and adopt.

Youth in foster care deserve the opportunity to speak directly to potential adoptive families. In-Depth Profiles exist so their voices are heard.

You can view In-Depth Profiles at Mare.indepthprofiles.org.



In their In-Depth Profiles, Nehemiah (C09329) talks about cooking and basketball while Jennifer (C09242) reveals plans for a series of novels.

Announcements

Covid-19 has not impacted MARE adoption navigators' ability to speak to, provide information to and otherwise service families interested in adoption. They are working remotely, and the hotline and navigators' direct lines remain available as well. Please continue to keep in contact with your navigator. If you prefer to pause your efforts at this time, you

should communicate this via phone or email. If you are interested in working with an adoption navigator, contact Kim Wolowski, adoption navigator supervisor, at Kimberly_wolowski@judsoncenter.org.



Courts, families, workers and others celebrated National

Adoption Month in November.

MARE had its annual 30 Wishes in 30 Days program that celebrated 30 Exceptional Adoptive Families.

To see the families featured you can visit MARE's Facebook and Twitter pages to see the featured or you can visit www.mare.org/MI-Adoption-Day/emodule/931/egallery/21

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