



# Professional Newsletter

## Take advantage of TV as a recruitment tool

There aren't any red carpets, sneak previews or airings on the big screen, but the films shot to highlight youth waiting for forever families draw legions of fans anyway.

After a "Grant Me Hope" segment airs on television, adoptive parents and those interested in learning more about the process often call the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange's inquiring about the youth featured that day. That's why it's important for workers to consider this valuable yet often overlooked recruitment tool.

By participating, workers help give waiting youth a voice and a chance to feel as though their message will be heard. It gives them hope that they might get what they need, a forever family. The video days are usually held at a fun and interactive place within the community in order to help capture the true picture of these youth and allow

their personalities to shine.

Attending the video days is not mandatory for workers, but it is strongly encouraged. Depending on the youth's cognitive level, we may want to interview the worker for additional information about the youth. In addition, if the worker is present, it may help ease any anxieties the youth may be experiencing and allow him or her to be more comfortable throughout the video shoot.

Once the segment is completed and gets edited, it's then scheduled to air on different news stations.

"Grant Me Hope" now features a video of a waiting foster child weekly on WZZM in Grand Rapids, WXYZ in Detroit and WWMT, which covers the Cadillac, Traverse City and Sault Ste. Marie viewing audience. These segments then re-air and often will be shared on social media.



### Fall 2021

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Let adoptive parents know that they can learn about foster care adoption at [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org).

By participating in this one video day, the youth will get widespread recruitment throughout Michigan. At the end of the segment, the TV stations encourage those interested to call MARE at 800-589-6273. When we field the phone calls, we record the caller's information. We will then send all inquiries we receive via spreadsheet to the child's worker for potential matches from those aired segments.

Between the partnership with MARE and "Grant Me Hope," we have completed youth video segments all over Michigan. Although we recognize that not every inquiry that comes in from these segments ends in adoption, spreading the word about adoption and the need for adoptive parents is one of the many benefits of registering your youth to participate in a "Grant Me Hope" segment.

Please take a moment to talk to the youth on your caseload about possibly participating in a "Grant Me Hope" video day that may be coming to a town near you!

*For more information and a registration form, please contact Gabrielle Werkheiser, MARE Youth Specialist, 734-528-2061 or email [gabrielle\\_werkheiser@judsoncenter.org](mailto:gabrielle_werkheiser@judsoncenter.org).*



## You won't want to miss the 2021 Heart Gallery video

Talk about a must-see film!

This year's Michigan Heart Gallery video is four stars and then some. The video is now available for viewing, and it's titled "Through Their Eyes," a tribute to the youth who appear on Mare.org.

As MARE Program Manager Michelle Parra puts it, "The driving force behind the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is the kids themselves. And that's what makes their stories so inspiring. Their stories are

in their words, through their eyes.

"For this year's Michigan Heart Gallery, we focused on the voices of Michigan youth. They have their own thoughts, their own ideas and their own dreams that really matter, and they are their own best advocates."

If you'd like to watch the 2021 Michigan Heart Gallery video, visit:  
[www.youtube.com/VideosbyMare](http://www.youtube.com/VideosbyMare)



## A bow to the ambassadors who hosted an awesome adoption awareness tour

COVID may have slowed us down with in-person events, but we put the pedal to the metal and got back up to speed by going on a summer road trip!

Thanks to our adoption ambassadors, MARE attended 29 events in just over two months.

We are so grateful for the passion, enthusiasm and assistance of our ambassadors.

Due to their effort and commitment, we were able to reach several counties we hadn't gone to before, met lots of potential families for MARE youth,

and spread the word about adoption across the state.

We'd like to express our sincere gratitude and thanks to the following ambassadors who attended events – and a couple who were actively trying to but got rained out in September!

### Ambassadors:

Tabitha Appledorn  
Ennis Center for Children

Sierra Bates  
MARE/Judson Center

Jacqueline Berka  
MARE/Judson Center

Stephanie Caston  
Orchards Children's Services

Clancy Condron  
Adoption Option Inc.

Erin Dwan  
MARE/Judson Center

Olivia Fink  
Judson Center

Lauren Hatcher  
Lutheran Adoption Service

Megan Hubarth  
Ennis Center for Children

Jennifer Kelley  
Eagle Village

Antionel Knox  
Bethany Christian Services

Aimee Loudon  
MARE/Judson Center

Sabrina Olson  
Judson Center

Amanda Pitcher  
Adoption Option Inc.

Shannon Porter  
Fostering Solutions

Loren Sanders  
Judson Center

Lori Schriver, Lutheran Adoption Service, pictured below at an event in Grand Rapids,





## Good service means great outcomes for kids in care

Diligent recruitment programs from across the country emphasize the impact of good customer service on recruitment.

Every interaction with prospective adoptive parents can affect the future of your waiting youth, whether it's engaging with visitors while working an information table at the Kinship Festival, returning the call of a prospective family who inquired after seeing a youth's MLive story or contacting a relative named in a previous foster care report.

To help workers hone their customer service skills when interacting with families, the National Resource Center for Diligent Recruitment offers the following tips:

- **Have a positive attitude.** Being warm and welcoming makes families want to learn more. The approval process involves a lot of effort on their part, so being positive and friendly helps them feel it's worth the work.

- **Avoid using jargon and acronyms.** Child welfare has its own version of alphabet soup from ICPC and MCI to DOC rate or FTM. When talking to families, use familiar, descriptive language and full names and titles when talking about the adoption process.

- **Follow up in a timely manner.** Best practice is to respond to families within 24 hours. Even if you do not have a large amount of time to spend, call to schedule an appointment with them. Also, if you don't have answers to all of their questions at that moment, let them know you are working to get the information they need.

Since people are at the heart of the work that you do, the way you treat those you encounter through the adoption process truly matters.

*For more tips and information about making the most of your role in recruitment efforts, visit [www.nrldr.org](http://www.nrldr.org).*

## Calendar

**December 11**  
**Virtual MARE**  
**Meet & Greet**  
10:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**January 15**  
**Virtual MARE**  
**Meet & Greet**  
10:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

**May 21, 2022**  
**In-Person MARE**  
**Meet & Greet**  
**Stevensville**  
Noon-4 p.m.

For more information, contact [jessica\\_thompson@judsoncenter.org](mailto:jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org) or call 734-528-2070.

**Take note:** Watch for notices of upcoming Meet & Greets on [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org) and on Facebook and Twitter.

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## MARE contact information

Michigan Adoption  
Resource Exchange  
3840 Packard Road,  
Suite 170  
Ann Arbor, MI 48108  
Toll Free: 800-589-6273  
TTY: 734-794-2984  
Fax: 734-528-1695  
[mare@judsoncenter.org](mailto:mare@judsoncenter.org)