



Family Newsletter



MARE Adoption Navigator Amber Tiemeyer's family. She now has a larger family after tracking down birth members. Check out her story!

Finding the missing puzzle piece in adoption

Amber Tiemeyer has seen adoption from three different angles – as an adopted child, as an adoptive parent and as a MARE adoption navigator serving other adoptive families.

Her story epitomizes the message to families of “open your heart to adoption” as well as the sacrifice, commitment and love that goes with it. We might as well add “gift” to the package of adoption descriptors because Amber mentioned several times during her interview for this story that she felt “blessed” after being adopted by her parents as an infant.

“My parents made sure to let me know that I was chosen,” she says. “In fact, we had a book – ‘Adopted and Loved Forever’ – that they would read to me all the time. Being ‘chosen’ seems a bit farfetched to me now, but they adopted me through an agency, D.A. Blodget, and I find it kind of cool that I work with them and others now.

“My family has always been great, very loving, tight-knit. But as an adopted person, you’re always looking for that missing piece; I remember going to the movies, to the mall or out to eat and constantly scanning for someone who has the same physical features as me.

“And I wondered, ‘Could they be my birth family or somehow related to me?’ Not because of anything my adoptive parents did because they were phenomenal and still are, but as an adoptee you’re always looking to fill that void.”

Amber adds that even older adoptees who already know their birth families long for that missing puzzle piece, and they aren’t betraying their adoptive families by seeking it. She encourages adoptive parents to make sure the situation is acceptable and safe and then to be supportive.

Fall 2022

In this issue:

Page 1 - Adoptee/adoptive parent/adoption navigator talks about search for birth family



Page 2 - Another great Heart Gallery Premiere!



Page 3 - Meet Matthew and Abigail, then flip to page 4 to meet Zachary pictured below



Page 4 - Calendar of events

Learn more about foster care adoption at www.mare.org.

"I know it can be threatening, but it doesn't have to be," she says. "Just because that child has a desire to get to know their birth family, it doesn't mean that the adoptive family lacks anything."

As Amber began seeking her own birth family 15 years ago, her parents experienced a bit of shock at first but later endorsed the idea. Her adoptive mom often spoke especially highly of the "ultimate sacrifice" that Amber's birth mother made – knowing she couldn't meet Amber's needs – which emboldened her to seek her birth family.

Amber had natural apprehensions about the birth family and how she'd be viewed or even accepted, yet she persevered. The connection she made proved to be life-changing.

"I finally found my birth family when I was 41 and discovered that my birth parents were deceased, but I was able to reconnect with other parts of my birth family," says Amber. "They welcomed me with open arms as if I grew up and had always been in their family. They wanted to build a relationship not only with me but with my husband and our children."

Now Amber has a loving aunt and cousins and one uncle who owns a farm and another who owns a restaurant. The reunited family often meets at the farm, restaurant or other places to enjoy each other's company.

They mark holidays, birthdays and other special occasions together with cookouts and campfires. Amber knows her

"happily-ever-after" story isn't the same for all adoptees, yet she still wants their adoptive families to take note when their adopted children seek birth-family connections.

And she has another message for both adoptees and their families.

"Adoption takes work; it's not all rainbows and unicorns," she says. "I know that firsthand. But I also feel like it can be such a beautiful thing to connect with birth families and such a beautiful thing to see adoption in a positive light."

"I know my story is not the same as everybody else's, but I would encourage adopted children to seek out their birth families and adoptive parents to allow it so their children can cultivate those relationships to find that missing piece of the puzzle."

Photos from another great Michigan Heart Gallery Premiere!



Clockwise from bottom right, Madicen (aka Madi); Emmanuel (aka Manny); MARE's Jen Brooks with her adopted son, Cameron; Cecilia (aka CeCe); MARE staff welcoming guests; Keaton, a star of the 2022 Heart Gallery video.





Matthew, C010200

Matthew puts the pedal to the metal for fun

Want to get Matthew all revved up?

Take him to the land of Lamborghini, which is his dream destination. Or, as Matthew puts it, "any place where a lot of Lamborghini cars are available."

Once he gets there, he'll find a dealership and ask to drive one of Italy's hottest rides. For his future, Matthew says he wishes for "a decent car and enough money so I can take care of my family." And he'll take a side order of wishes for fame and a nice house.

In reality, Matthew is a down-to-earth young man who loves playing organized sports such as football, basketball and soccer. He enjoys playing catch and basketball with his friends, and he likes riding his bike.

On the weekends, Matthew loves listening to music and getting up early to watch TV. When the hunger pangs ping, Matthew likes nothing better than chicken alfredo, burgers from McDonald's or the entire menu at Taco Bell, his favorite restaurant.

Matthew dreams of becoming a professional football or basketball player when he gets older. But number one on his wish list is a forever family who is active and loves the outdoors.

Paris is calling Abigail and she answers 'oui'!

It's hard to tell if Abigail is more athletic or artistic since both traits seem to dominate her personality equally.

In the past, Abigail has participated in soccer, basketball, volleyball and softball, which she wants to continue. On the artistic side, Abigail enjoys drawing and painting, and when she's not listening to music, she takes an interest in producing it.

Then there's journaling, which is one of Abigail's favorite weekend activities. This talented young lady takes an interest in medicine and says she hopes to become a surgeon.

Abigail also hopes to visit Paris, which is her dream destination. "I want to go to cafes and shops there," she says.

Abigail says shopping is her favorite thing to do with her friends. Her list of favorite things also includes teal and white for color, corgi for animal and Crazy Eights for game.

Abigail loves Hot Cheetos, and her favorite holidays are Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's, Valentine's Day and Easter, which she likes celebrating with family.

One of the things she looks forward to doing with her future forever family is traveling.



Abigail, C010383



Zachary, C010332

Real or imagined, Zachary loves trips

He doesn't have a dream destination just yet, but Zachary loves going on trips.

It's his favorite weekend activity. Even if it's just a short trip to a restaurant.

When it comes to his favorite food, Zachary is quite a blended young man; he says he loves Italian and Chinese food the most. Although he doesn't enjoy all vegetables, Zachary has his favorites, including carrots.

He says he likes all animals and all household pets. Even though Zachary enjoys taking a road trip, don't expect this aspiring athlete to trip over his own feet. "Zachary is not currently participating on any sports teams, but he does enjoy playing basketball and sports in general," says one of his close adults. "He would like to play on teams."

Zachary also enjoys playing board and video games and spending time outdoors with his friends, whether it's going on walks or just sitting on the porch talking. He likes taking trips with his imagination, too, and says reading is his favorite thing about school.

Zachary does well at school, works hard and takes pride in how well he does with his schoolwork.

Despite his active and busy lifestyle, Zachary does admit that he enjoys taking time to sleep in occasionally. And it's likely that he dreams most about trips with his future forever family. But most importantly, Zachary just wants to spend time together with them.

Adds one of his close adults, "Zachary wants to be with a family who is nice and in a home where he feels loved and accepted."

MARE's adoption navigators are experienced adoptive parents who offer guidance and personal knowledge to potential adoptive families. They have years of parenting experience, resource and service-finding skills, and knowledge of foster

care, infant and older, and domestic and international adoption procedures. To contact a MARE adoption navigator, call us at 800-589-6273 or scan the QR code at right and fill out a form to have an adoption navigator contact you.

Calendar

November 12
In-Person MARE
Meet & Greet
Midland

10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

For more information, contact jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org or call 734-528-2070.

Take note: Watch for notices of upcoming Meet & Greets on www.mare.org and on Facebook and Twitter.

November is National Adoption Month

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter as we recognize outstanding adoptive families and feature youth who await their forever families.

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

