

The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is a program of Judson Center 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 [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org).



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# Resource-building tips for parents

In their work with families, the adoption navigator team encourages families to expand their knowledge base and build a strong support system that are pivotal to long-term success. They've drafted some suggestions here.

**Adoption Navigator Kelli Ostrosky** shares a peek at her "adoption toolkit," which contains online resource building. "Exploring educational websites have helped me better understand behavioral challenges sometimes associated with disability combinations such as learning disability, attention deficit disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, sensory processing challenges and more. I've also found that the short family focused articles and free webinars fit well with a busy lifestyle and can be forwarded to school staff.

**Adoption Navigator Margaret White** finds in-person support groups to be an excellent resource. "When I first adopted my son, I didn't know any other families who had adopted from foster care and, frankly, I felt very alone in the struggles we faced. Fast forward nine years, and I now facilitate multiple in-person support groups for foster and adoptive

families. The sense of community is amazing! It's wonderful to see families who are struggling with tough issues be able to express themselves to others who truly understand, don't judge, and who share their experiences and offer emotional support. The Adoptive Family Support Network maintains a list of support groups available throughout the state. You can find that list of support groups here:" [afsn.org/services/foster-adoptive-and-kinship-support-groups-by-county/](http://afsn.org/services/foster-adoptive-and-kinship-support-groups-by-county/)

For **Adoption Navigator Judy McNaughton**, adoption-related books are a major component of her personal library. The following books have made their way into Judy's library, and she shares why each has been helpful: "Adoptive Parent, Intentional Parent" by Stacy Manning. "We must be intentional in our parenting in order to really know our children and help them in the way they deserve and need," says Judy. "The Connected Child" by Karyn Purvis. "We must be 'connected' with our children," Judy says. "Trying Differently Rather Than Harder: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders" by Diane Malbin. "We

See **Resources** on page 4



Left to right, Judy McNaughton, Dorene Jones, Mac Ballantine, Amber Tiemeyer, Margaret White, Kelli Ostrosky.

# YOUR SON HAS ASKED A CALCULUS QUESTION YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND AT ALL

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**Do you:**

- (A) Create a diversion.**
- (B) Look up the answer on your phone but pretend you knew it.**
- (C) Hire a tutor. For yourself.**

**When it comes to being a parent, there are no perfect answers – just being there is enough. So don't worry, you don't have to be perfect to be a perfect parent. There are thousands of teens in foster care who will love you just the same.**



**800.589.MARE**

**MARE.org**



# Save the date!



We're still working on the details, but the 2017 Michigan Heart Gallery will debut at the Emagine Theater in Royal Oak on Saturday, April 29. The event, which runs from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m., will feature a special video, luncheon and more. At last year's grand opening, Michael, left, and Marshall, far right, got a chance to meet 2015 Miss Michigan Emily Kieliszewski. In fact, Michael, who since then has been matched with a family, was one of the stars of the 2016 Michigan Heart Gallery video shown at the grand opening.

## Get support to help make the match last

Did you know that MARE has a Match Support Program?

Well into its second year, the Match Support Program is designed as a short-term (90-day) program to assist families with the transition of a new child into their home. In its first year, the program helped more than 50 families find the resources, trainings and listening ears they needed to help with their transition.

The program has even helped families



find medical providers and clothing banks and assisted in registering children for school. Match support has been an asset to families thus far, and one parent even said, "MARE Match was the best thing that ever happened with our adoption process!"

*If your family needs a little extra support during your adoption process, give MARE a call at 734-528-2020 or email [amanda\\_dunham@judsoncenter.org](mailto:amanda_dunham@judsoncenter.org).*

# Spotlight on Cody and Andrew



Get Avont, who goes by Cody, on the dance floor and he'll delight you with his moves. When he gets older, Cody wants to become a professional hip-hop dancer.

Cody loves everything related to music including dancing to it and listening to it. Or, as he puts it, "pretty much anything that's chill." If the dance gig doesn't work out, Cody wants to become a professional

DJ. He also wants to work with kids one day. Like other boys, Cody enjoys playing with Legos, toy cars and action figures. He also enjoys being outdoors and playing basketball. When Cody's hunger pangs hit, he prefers quelling them with sloppy joes. When he first meets people, Cody tends to be quiet, but once he gets to know them, he is very warm and inviting.

For more information about Cody, C07510, and Andrew, C06034, visit [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org) and go to For Families > View Waiting Children. Search for them by name.

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## Resources, continued from page 1

must do things differently with our adopted children," says Judy, "but differently doesn't mean that it has to be harder." Judy reflects on her studies by stating that "learning new techniques and methods is worth the effort."

When spare time allows her, you might find **Adoption Navigator Dorene Jones** tuned in to a good webinar. Dorene elaborates, "Children in or who have been in foster care most certainly have experienced trauma. It is difficult to understand how trauma affects the brain. You may wonder why your child is behaving the way he is. I did, too. More importantly, I wanted to help my child through the trauma. Because it's often difficult to take a class in person, I searched for free online classes. The best part is I can take the classes, when I had the time, which very often was when my foster child was in bed!"

Social media platforms and blogs have helped **Adoption Navigator Amber Tiemeyer** feel she isn't alone in her adoption journey. Amber elaborates, "I have been reading a blog that has been really

Andrew picks Florida as the one destination on Earth that he'd most like to visit. But forget about Mickey and killer whales and all those other attractions.

He just wants to see the frothy blue ocean and bury his toes in warm white sand on a seaside beach. Indeed, Andrew loves life's simple pleasures. For instance, he enjoys playing outside and likes swimming. In addition, he likes to play basketball.

When he's indoors, Andrew enjoys watching television and movies, especially the animated film "Wall-E." Like many boys, Andrew's favorite color is blue. At supper, Andrew would savor some pizza and afterwards he'd help clear the table and perhaps get ready to play his favorite game, "Sorry."



beneficial to me. It was suggested by my child's therapist, and it is a blog by a couple who have adopted several children. I love it because they are so real, sometimes brutally honest. I also love the AFSN group on Facebook ... It really helps to know that other people 'get it,' and we are not alone on this journey. That doesn't happen in my world all that often!"

For **Adoption Navigator Mac Ballantine**, FaceTime has a slightly different meaning. He has been quite involved in the state's Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Committee, which plans and carries out an annual, in-person conference for current and prospective foster and adoptive families and professionals. Mac enjoys in-person conferences and since a hotel stay is sometimes part of the travel, conferences can give families a bit of "R&R," respite and relaxation. The conferences also give families an opportunity to sit down at the "adoption table," so to speak, while enjoying a meal and getting informative training all in good company with other parents. To receive notice of events such as the conferences, sign up for agency e-blasts and check out the MARE calendar, [www.mare.org/Resources/Events-Calendar](http://www.mare.org/Resources/Events-Calendar).