

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](http://www.mare.org).



It didn't take a New Year's resolution to get us to improve Meet & Greets

# You talked; we listened

At a recent Youth Advisory Board meeting, several suggestions were made to improve Meet & Greets – events where you can interact with prospective adoptive parents.

MARE Youth Recruitment Specialist Jessica Thompson understands that you don't want to do the same activities and you certainly don't want to sit and play games. You want to have fun, so we've tweaked Meet & Greets a bit, as Jessica explains.

## What new venues have you tried?

We've recently partnered with zoos, trampoline parks, bowling alleys and art studios. There has even been one at an apple orchard.

## Are there any new Meet & Greet activities?

When we're having them at these places, we can use the facility as the new activity. We're still partnering with churches throughout the state, so when we're there, we try to have a craft or other activity that you can focus on. We're trying to stay away from the "minute-to-win-it" type games because we know it gets repetitive for you. When we have other activities, we're focusing more on having the parents move around rather than you.



A recent Meet & Greet was held at an arts studio.

## Can I suggest activities and venues for Meet & Greets?

Yes. Let one of your workers or a foster parent know and have them contact me. If it's practical for us to do, I would be interested. I'm always open to new ideas, and I want to make sure you have a fun time.

## How can I attend a Meet & Greet?

Talk to a worker or foster parent who can let me know. I can then make sure that you have a spot at an upcoming Meet & Greet. Hope



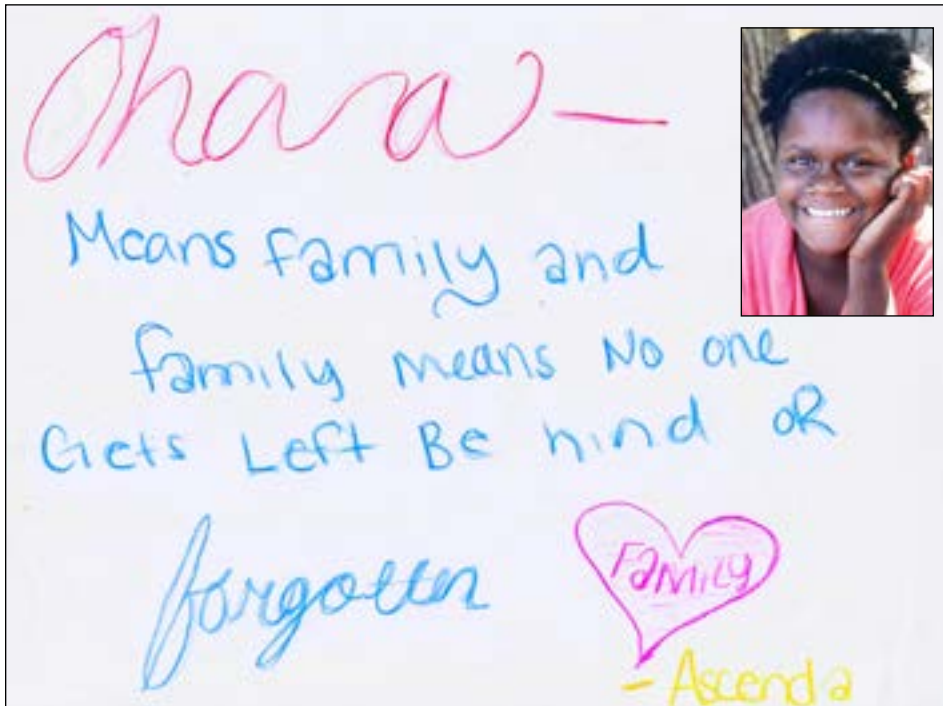
to see you soon!

[Jessica\\_thompson@judsoncenter.org](mailto:Jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org), 734-528-2070.

# See your work – and your name – in print!

Have your worker send us your artwork, story or poem and we'll feature it in an upcoming issue of the Youth Newsletter.

Submissions should be sent to [jennifer\\_brooks@judsoncenter.org](mailto:jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org). For questions, your worker can call Jennifer at 734-528-2061.



Clever,  
creative  
Ascenda



## Gifted, sensational Shamariona



# Youth staying in residential facilities offer suggestions

## Youth Advisory Board aims for a better living experience

A recent Youth Advisory Board (YAB) brainstorming session produced suggestions for the youth who live in residential facilities as well as the staff who work in them.

“One of the suggestions is to give youth a stuffed animal on their first day to make them feel comfortable,” said Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange Youth Specialist Jennifer Brooks. “They also felt it would be helpful for youth to have a tip sheet when they first arrive. They want to know what to expect.”

Brooks said those suggestions and a few others (see below) will become part of training sessions for staff at residential facilities.

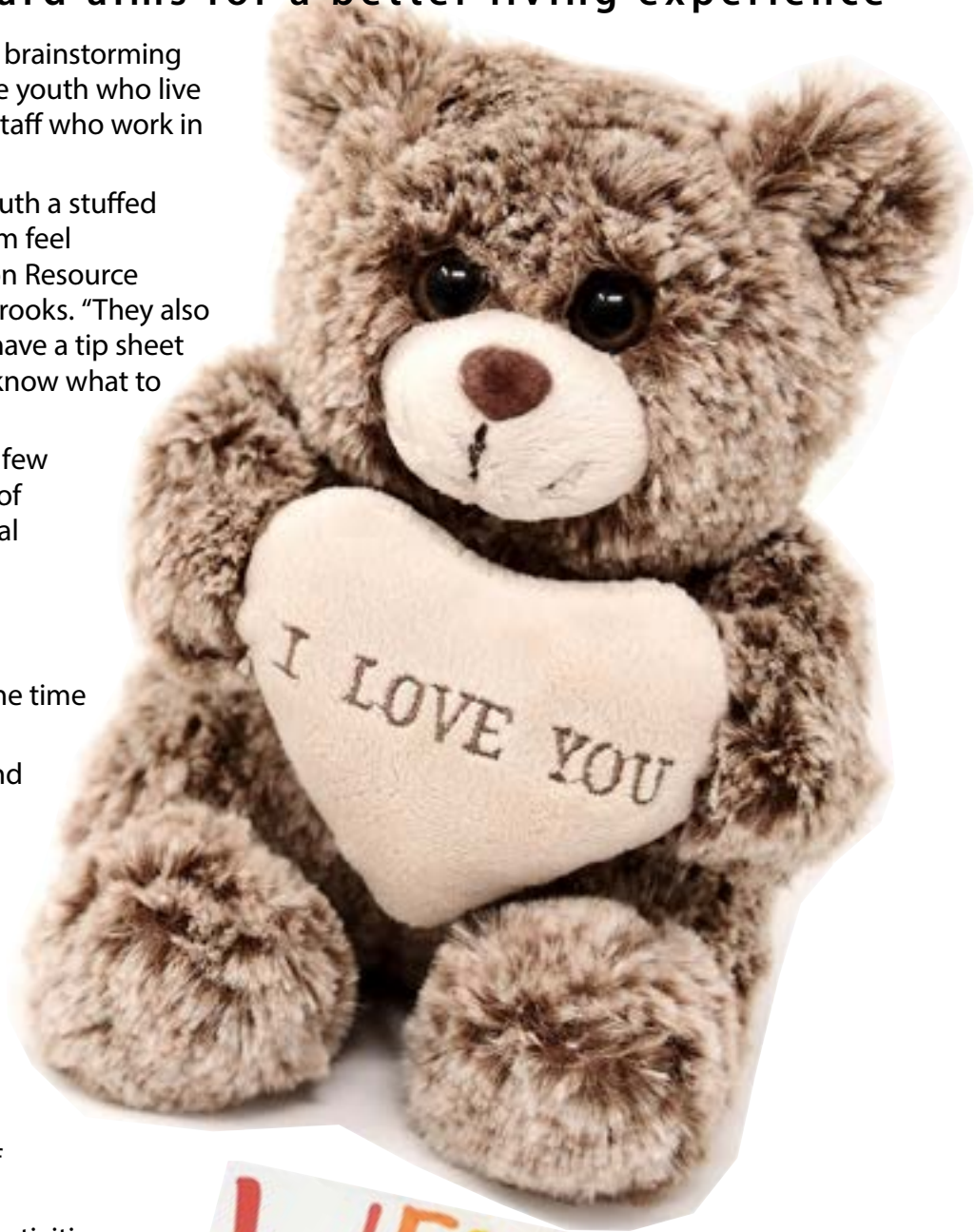
Other YAB suggestions included:

- Forming welcome groups.
- Having staff spend more one-on-one time with youth.
- Giving youth who are upset time and space to calm down.
- Handing out a map of the facility.
- Developing a support system for youth.

At the suggestion of a staff member, youth brainstormed about the qualities they want in people who are hired to work at residential facilities. Those qualities included:

- Patience, flexibility and tolerance of youth.
- Active and willing to participate in activities with youth.
- Fair, dedicated and trustworthy.
- Positive communication.

*YAB meetings are held quarterly throughout the state. For more information about YAB, contact Jennifer Brooks at 734-528-2061 or [Jennifer\\_brooks@judsoncenter.org](mailto:Jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org).*



# Share your success story!

Fostering Success Michigan is asking for students who are interested in being featured on its website.

This is an opportunity for students and professionals alike to read the success stories and learn about supports that helped you and others succeed. The stories will be used as a way to highlight students and their achievements. If you know of any youth or alumni of foster care between the ages of 18 and 24 who are currently enrolled in high school or college, Fostering Success Michigan would love to

hear from them.

Contact Fostering Success Student Advisor Bri Simmons at [fostering-info@wmich.edu](mailto:fostering-info@wmich.edu) to have the interview questions sent directly to your inbox.

*Fostering Success Michigan is a statewide initiative that aims to increase awareness, access and success in higher education and post-college careers for youth and alumni of foster care ([fosteringsuccessmichigan.com](http://fosteringsuccessmichigan.com)).*

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## YOUTH RESOURCES

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**FosterClub** - FosterClub is a national network for young people in foster care and young foster care alumni. The site includes blogs from current foster youth, success stories from youth who were in the foster system as well as celebrities who experienced foster care. It also provides a listing by state of contact information for professionals and hotlines.  
([www.fosterclub.com](http://www.fosterclub.com) 503-717-1552)



**Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative** - MYOI is a partnership between the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, the Oakland/Livingston Human Services Agency and many other local community partners. MYOI's goal is to ensure that young people in foster care have successful outcomes in housing, education, employment, community engagement and health.  
([michigan.gov/FYIT](http://michigan.gov/FYIT) > MYOI)



**Foster Youth in Transition** - MDHHS website geared towards older youth who are experiencing foster care. It's a comprehensive, youth-oriented site with advice, interactive features, a useful glossary of foster care terms, and information on a variety of issues important to current and former foster youth. The site provides links on how to develop supports, find services, get answers to important questions and just keep you posted on what's new.  
([www.michigan.gov/fyit](http://www.michigan.gov/fyit))

For more information on getting involved with these organizations, contact Jen Brooks at [jennifer\\_brooks@judsoncenter.org](mailto:jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org) or 734-528-2061.