

# MICHIGAN ADOPTION RESOURCE EXCHANGE



*Inside:  
The remarkable  
bond and  
incredible  
resolve of  
siblings  
waiting  
for forever  
families.  
Pages 6-11.*

*Spring 2017*

A spotlight on children  
waiting for permanent  
and loving families



**"I love Harry Potter!"**

**Amanda's likes:**

- Doing crafts and making jewelry.
- Chocolate-raspberry cheesecake.
- Spending time at the park.

**Amanda's crystal ball:**

- Wants to become a fashion designer.

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- Two parents with a good understanding of parenting children who have experienced difficult pasts.
- Able to provide love and encouragement to help her achieve her goals.
- Strong advocates for the services that will help Amanda thrive.



**Amanda C08231**



*Photo by  
Christine Schafer*

Welcome to the Spring 2017 Recruitment Periodical, published by the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange. Over the next several pages, you will be introduced to some of the youth in Michigan who are waiting for their opportunity to have a loving, supportive and permanent family of their own through adoption. The youth featured here represent hundreds of other children in the Michigan foster care system who are waiting to become part of a loving family. To view these children and to learn more about adoption, visit [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org).

On the MARE website, you will find photos, narratives and video clips of waiting children, as well as a wealth of information about adoption, including links to adoption-related resources.

If you have been thinking about adoption, we invite you to consider bringing an older child or sibling group into your life. If you have questions about adoption or are ready to begin the adoption process, simply call one of the agencies listed in the back of this periodical or contact an adoption navigator at 800-589-6273. MARE is available to answer your adoption-related questions, and we will do our best to get you headed in the right direction.



The 2017 Michigan Heart Gallery will travel throughout the state to help raise awareness of children who continue to wait for their forever families. Visit [www.miheart.org](http://www.miheart.org) for upcoming exhibit locations and events or contact the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange at 800-589-6273.

## Who are the children who wait for adoption?

Adopting a child from foster care is often referred to as special needs adoption. This term often makes people think of children with severe mental or physical impairments. In reality, special needs adoption means:

- Children school aged and above.
- Children with emotional, mental, learning or physical impairments.
- Children of minority heritage.
- Children who are part of a sibling group who must be placed together.

Many of these children have had traumatic past experiences that may include physical, sexual or emotional abuse and/or severe neglect. Others may have been born drug or alcohol exposed.

Around 93 percent of children in Michigan's foster care system are adopted by the child's current foster family or a relative (someone with whom the child has an established relationship). The remaining children available for adoption, like those in this periodical and on the MARE website, have no identified family to adopt them. Recruitment of a suitable adoptive family is, therefore, necessary.

More than 98 percent of the children available for adoption without an identified family are over the age of 5. More than 75 percent of those children are between the ages of 11 and 18.

## Who can adopt a waiting child?

Many people may be surprised to learn that they do not have to be married in order to adopt a child from the foster care system. Potential adoptive parents do not have to own their own home or have a lot of money. They must have enough space in their home and adequate income to support a child. It is important to know that many children waiting for adoption are eligible to receive adoption assistance to help adoptive families meet their needs.

## How much does it cost to adopt a child from foster care?

The only cost you should incur from adopting a child from the Michigan foster care system is court filing and birth certificate fees. Some agencies may charge a fee for the Family Assessment (also known as a Home Study). However, once you adopt a child through Michigan's foster care system, that fee is reimbursed to you.

## What is the adoption process?

Families must be approved through the Adoptive Family Assessment process before a child can be placed in their home for adoption. An Adoptive Family Assessment must be completed by a licensed adoption agency (which can be found in the back of this periodical and on [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)) and can take an average of six months to a year to complete. The Adoptive Family Assessment will include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Personal history.
- Health statements.
- Criminal background check.
- Income statement.
- Personal references.

Once the Adoptive Family Assessment is complete, you may start submitting inquiries to MARE about children you may be interested in adopting. When you inquire about children through the MARE website, your information will be sent by MARE to the child's adoption worker for consideration. Your worker will also be notified that you have inquired about a specific child or children.

Learn more about adoption and Michigan's waiting children at [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org).



**You Tube**

**Nolan**  
**C08093**

<p><b>Nolan's likes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The TV show "Dragon Ball Z."</li> <li>• Pizza!</li> <li>• The Detroit Red Wings.</li> <li>• Riding bikes.</li> <li>• Playing soccer and basketball.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Qualities of a forever family:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Patient, devoted consistent, structured.</li> <li>• Able to provide one-on-one attention.</li> </ul>
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**"She is a leader  
with her peers.  
She helps out  
with the younger kids."**

**Jazlyn's worker**

**Jazlyn's likes:**

- Pitching in around the house.
- Reading, cooking and doing her hair.
- Participating in volleyball and basketball.

**Creative interests:**

- Doing arts and crafts such as knitting and crocheting.
- Dancing and listening to music. Her favorite musical genres are hip hop, R&B and pop.

**Jazlyn's crystal ball:**

- Wants to become a doctor or a cosmetologist.
- Envisions a "loving, caring family" who likes doing activities together.

**"Adults who know  
Jazlyn describe her  
as helpful, bubbly  
and caring."**

**Jazlyn's worker**

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- A mom and dad or a single-female parent.
- Would do best as the only child.
- Able to provide the supervision and the one-on-one attention she needs.
- Knowledge of the impact of trauma on a child's behavior and development.

**Did you know?**

You can find adoption information packets online at [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org). Go to For Families > New to Adoption and click on the link "Download MARE Adoption Information Packets here!" Your choices will include a quick start guide and a satisfaction survey. You'll also find information about how to follow up once you submit an adoption inquiry on [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org).



*Photo by  
Derek Cookson*



### **Kenneth's likes:**

- Laughing at jokes and dressing silly.
- Going to the movies, skating, bike riding and swimming on the weekends.
- Celebrating Easter and Christmas so he can spend time with others and eat well.
- Jokes that his favorite food is "food."
- Playing video and board games.
- Studying math in school.
- Playing basketball and going to the park.
- Holy substitution! Instead of Batman and Robin, Kenneth likes watching Spider-Man movies.

### **Kenneth's crystal ball:**

- Wants to be a lawyer when he gets older.

### **Qualities of a forever family:**

- Two experienced parents who can give him the one-on-one attention he needs to be successful.
- Would do best as the only child, but he gets along well with other children.
- Knowledge of the needs of children who have experienced difficult pasts.
- Willing to offer assistance and support with daily activities and able to provide constant supervision.
- Strong advocates for the services that will help Kenneth function at his best.

**"I want to be a superstar  
basketball player."**



**“It is important to Myiana to be placed  
along with her brother Markell.”**

### **Myiana’s worker**



#### **Intangible assets:**

- Gets along well with peers at school and receives excellent reports from her teachers.
- Friendly, outgoing and positive.
- Natural-born charm and charisma.
- Makes friends easily because of her

upbeat, confident personality.

#### **Myiana’s likes:**

- Spending time with her friends.
- Going shopping.
- Watching funny movies with others.
- Cheerleading.





"I'm going to be famous  
when I grow up."

### Markell's likes:

- Playing football, golf, checkers and bingo.
- Riding his bike and playing freeze tag.
- The color red but prefers his Power Rangers come in black, white and gold.

### Markell's crystal ball:

- Getting married.
- Owning a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and a house.
- Traveling to Hawaii, but he'll steer clear of the lava flows because "I'm scared of volcanos."

### Intangible assets:

- Outgoing, friendly and confident.



### Qualities of a forever family:

- Willing to adopt Myiana and Markell together.
- All types of families.
- Able to provide loving and patient home with appropriate boundaries.
- Strong advocates for the services that the children need to function at their best at home and in school.

"Markell wants to be a foster  
care worker when he grows up."

### Markell's worker



"I am a good kid, and my brother is a good kid too."

"I like sports and want my family to watch sports with me."

### Kenyon's likes:

- Eating pizza, pineapple and pancakes with butter and syrup.
- Playing football and doing chores.
- Playing with his Batman voice-changer mask.
- Dogs, cats and horses.
- Playing video games on the Wii.
- Pink and red are his favorite colors.
- Being a big brother to Matthew.

### Kenyon's crystal ball:

- Dreams of going to Disneyland one day because "it looks like a fun place for me and my brother."
- Wants a forever family who enjoys playing outside, having fun and going on outings "like movies and sports."





### **Matthew's likes:**

- Playing games outdoors.
- Eating pizza and chicken nuggets.
- Playing checkers and sharing laughter with Kenyon.
- Celebrating Christmas by putting up a tree and telling Santa what he wants.

### **Matthew's crystal ball:**

- Wants to be Santa Claus, which seems fitting since he bears a resemblance to the jolly old elf.
- Looks forward to sitting down at the dinner table with his future forever family and perhaps eating pizza and chicken nuggets.



### **Qualities of a forever family:**

- Willing to adopt Kenyon and Matthew together.
- A two-parent home with a significant support system.
- Very patient and supportive of Kenyon and Matthew as they learn to manage their emotions and build new and trusting relationships.
- Able to provide Kenyon and Matthew with a structured home, constant supervision and one-on-one attention.
- Willing to advocate for the services that will help them thrive at home and in school.

**"Kenyon makes me laugh."**

**"He plays football with me."**

*Photos by  
Jennifer Brooks*



**"I treat people the way they want to be treated."**

**Jerome's likes:**

- Playing sports such as basketball, tennis and baseball.
- Munching on nachos.
- Playing with animals.
- Eating "chili cheese dogs with chili cheese fries."

**Intangible assets:**

- Takes a tenacious approach to his studies.
- Honest and intelligent.
- A great sense of humor.

**Jerome's crystal ball:**

- Being part of a family who's honest and upfront with him by laying out their expectations.



**"Jerome does excellent in school and is in advanced classes."**

**Jerome's worker**





"It is fun to eat her creations for dinner, and cleanup is always just as fun."

### Jessica's worker

#### Jessica's likes:

- Cooking. She's made shrimp and "red velvet cupcakes," among other dishes.
- Participating in sports such as basketball, volleyball, football and track and field.
- Reading and going to the movies on weekends.

#### Intangible assets:

- A very sweet and loving girl.
- Great sense of humor.

#### Jessica's crystal ball:

- Wants to become a chef.
- Wants to fly on a jet, play in the WNBA and, of course, open her own restaurant.



"The best things I like about Jessica is that she's kind, she's caring, she's funny, she's willing to play and she's tough."

"What I like best about Jerome is he's very kind and considerate, and he's always there for me."



#### Qualities of a forever family:

- Willing to adopt Jerome and Jessica together.
- Knowledge of the impact of trauma on a child's behavior and development.
- Strong advocates for the services that will help Jerome and Jessica thrive at home and in school.
- Active participants in their sports interests.
- Patient and able to set clear expectations.

Check out the MARE YouTube Channel to see videos of several of the children and teens featured in the Spring 2017 Periodical.



"I like science because it's educational and you get to do experiments."

### **Jacob's likes:**

- Playing guitar, drawing and listening to music.
- Joking around and laughing with others.
- Hold the phone! Jacob actually enjoys cleaning.
- Cooking, particularly french toast, pancakes, bacon, sausage and eggs for breakfast.
- Eating chicken alfredo with carrot cake for dessert.

### **Intangible assets:**

- Has a knack of figuring out and fixing any type of electronic device.

### **Creative interests:**

- Playing guitar, drawing and listening to music.

### **Qualities of a forever family:**

- Two experienced parents who are able to give Jacob one-on-one attention.
- Knowledge of the impact of trauma on a child's behavior and development.
- Willing to support Jacob and advocate for any services that would address his needs.

"Jacob cares about others and immediately wants to share whatever he has with others."

### **Jacob's worker**

Photo by  
Carrie Coscarelli





*Photo by  
Aly Darin  
Photography*

**"I would like a family who  
allows me to go to church."**

**Makayla's likes:**

- Munching on ramen noodles and fried chicken.
- Playing games such as "Clue."
- Participating in soccer and basketball.

**Makayla's crystal ball:**

- Imagines a career as a lawyer. Or a dancer, photographer, baker and soccer player.
- Traveling to Africa to watch her favorite animal, the cheetah, soak in the sun or pounce on its prey.
- Visiting her dream destination, Florida, so she can bask in the warmth.
- Wishes for an iPhone and a forever family so they can chat whenever they're not together.

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- A mom and dad or a female parent with a strong support network.
- Knowledge of the impact of trauma on a child's development and behavior.
- Strong advocates for the services that will benefit Makayla at home and in school.
- Patient as Makayla transitions into her new home.
- Would do best as the only or oldest child.

**"Makayla is a joy to be around  
and with patience, love and  
consistency she would do well."**

**Makayla's worker**





## Adoption Agencies in Michigan

The following is a list of adoption agencies whose primary focus is facilitating the adoption of children from the foster care system. Many of these agencies may also provide foster care services. This agency list is organized by regions of the state. Please contact an agency in your area if you are interested in beginning the adoption process.

### Upper Peninsula

Catholic Social Services of the U.P., Escanaba, 906-786-7212, [www.cssup.org](http://www.cssup.org)  
Catholic Social Services of the U.P., Iron Mountain, 906-774-3323, [www.cssup.org](http://www.cssup.org)  
Catholic Social Services of the U.P., Marquette, 906-227-9119, [www.cssup.org](http://www.cssup.org)  
Child & Family Services of the U.P., Marquette, 906-228-4050, [www.cfsup.org](http://www.cfsup.org)  
Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin & Upper MI, Marquette, 877-994-8344, [www.lsswis.org](http://www.lsswis.org)  
Sault Tribe Binogii Placement Agency, Sault Ste. Marie, 906-632-5250, [www.saulttribe.com](http://www.saulttribe.com)  
Teaching Family Homes of Upper Michigan, Marquette, 906-249-5437, [www.teachingfamilyhomes.org](http://www.teachingfamilyhomes.org)  
Upper Peninsula Family Solutions, Marquette, 906-273-1095, [www.upfs.org](http://www.upfs.org)  
U.P. Kids, Houghton, 906-487-9832, [www.upkids.com](http://www.upkids.com)

### Northern & Central Lower Michigan

Adoption Option Inc., Midland, 989-839-0534, [www.adoptionoptioninc.org](http://www.adoptionoptioninc.org)  
Bethany Christian Services, Fremont, 231-924-3390, [www.bethany.org/fremont](http://www.bethany.org/fremont)  
Bethany Christian Services, Traverse City, 231-995-0870, [www.bethany.org/traversecity](http://www.bethany.org/traversecity)  
Catholic Family Services of the Diocese of Saginaw, Bay City, 989-797-6638, [www.cfssite.org](http://www.cfssite.org)  
Child & Family Services of Northeast MI, Alpena, 989-356-4567, [www.cfsnemi.org](http://www.cfsnemi.org)  
Child & Family Services of Northwest MI, Traverse City, 231-946-8975, [www.cfsnwmi.org](http://www.cfsnwmi.org)  
Eagle Village, Hersey, 231-832-2234, [www.eaglevillage.org](http://www.eaglevillage.org)  
Lutheran Adoption Service, Bay City, 989-686-3170, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
Lutheran Adoption Service, Clare, 989-386-2101, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
New Light Child & Family Institute, Millington, 989-871-6695, [www.newlightonline.net](http://www.newlightonline.net)

### Tri-County Area (Wayne, Oakland & Macomb Counties)

Bethany Christian Services, Madison Heights, 248-414-4080, [www.bethany.org/madisonheights](http://www.bethany.org/madisonheights)  
Catholic Charities of S.E. Michigan, 855-882-2736, [www.ccsem.org](http://www.ccsem.org)  
Community Social Services of Wayne County, Detroit, 313-883-2100, [www.csswayne.org](http://www.csswayne.org)  
Child Safe Michigan, Royal Oak, 248-353-0921, [www.childsafemichigan.org/](http://www.childsafemichigan.org/)  
The Children's Center of Wayne County, Detroit, 313-831-5535, [www.thechildrenscenter.com](http://www.thechildrenscenter.com)  
Ennis Center for Children, Detroit, 313-342-2699, [www.enniscenter.org](http://www.enniscenter.org)  
Ennis Center for Children, Pontiac, 248-334-2715, [www.enniscenter.org](http://www.enniscenter.org)  
Family & Community Services, Inc., Utica, 586-726-2988, [www.facadopt.org](http://www.facadopt.org)  
Forever Families, Livonia, 734-762-0909, [www.forever-families.org](http://www.forever-families.org)  
Homes for Black Children, Detroit, 313-961-4777  
Judson Center, Redford, 313-794-5653, [www.judsoncenter.org](http://www.judsoncenter.org)  
Lutheran Adoption Service, Troy, 248-423-2770, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
Methodist Children's Home, Redford, 313-531-4060, [www.mchsmi.org](http://www.mchsmi.org)  
Oakland Family Services, Pontiac, 248-858-7766, [www.oaklandfamilyservices.org](http://www.oaklandfamilyservices.org)  
Orchards Children's Services, Southfield, 248-258-0440, [www.orchards.org](http://www.orchards.org)  
Spaulding for Children, Southfield, 248-443-0300, [www.spaulding.org](http://www.spaulding.org)  
Spectrum Human Services, Southfield, 248-552-8020, [www.spectrumhuman.org](http://www.spectrumhuman.org)  
Vista Maria, Dearborn Heights, 313-271-3050, [www.vistamaria.org](http://www.vistamaria.org)  
Wolverine Human Services, Taylor, 888-625-8669, [www.wolverinehs.org](http://www.wolverinehs.org)



## Southern Central Michigan

Adoption and Foster Care Specialists, Inc., Lapeer, 810-660-7590, [www.adoption-specialists.org](http://www.adoption-specialists.org)  
 Bethany Christian Services, East Lansing, 517-336-0191, [www.bethany.org/eastlansing](http://www.bethany.org/eastlansing)  
 Catholic Charities of Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale counties, Adrian, 517-263-2191, [www.catholiccharitiesjlhc.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesjlhc.org)  
 Catholic Charities of Shiawassee & Genesee, Flint, 810-232-9950, [www.catholiccharitiesflint.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesflint.org)  
 Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw, Ann Arbor, 734-971-9781, [www.csswashtenaw.org](http://www.csswashtenaw.org)  
 Child & Family Charities – Capital Area, Lansing, 517-882-4000, [www.childandfamily.org](http://www.childandfamily.org)  
 Ennis Center for Children, Flint, 810-233-4031, [www.enniscenter.org](http://www.enniscenter.org)  
 Ennis Center for Children, Port Huron, 810-990-1424, [www.enniscenter.org](http://www.enniscenter.org)  
 Family Service & Children's Aid, Jackson, 517-787-7920, [www.strong-families.org](http://www.strong-families.org)  
 Fostering Futures, Ann Arbor, 734-481-8999, [www.fostering-futures.com](http://www.fostering-futures.com)  
 Fostering Solutions, Adrian, 517-263-0020, [www.fosteringsolutions.org](http://www.fosteringsolutions.org)  
 Growing Hope Through Love, Howell, 517-798-4020  
 Hands Across the Water, Ann Arbor, 734-477-0135, [www.hatw.org](http://www.hatw.org)  
 Livingston County Catholic Charities, Howell, 517-545-5944, [www.livingstoncatholiccharities.org](http://www.livingstoncatholiccharities.org)  
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Ann Arbor, 734-971-1944, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Jackson, 517-789-6444, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Lansing, 517-886-1380, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
 Open Door Adoption Services, Jackson, 517-936-7713, [www.opendooradoptionservices.org](http://www.opendooradoptionservices.org)  
 St. Vincent Catholic Charities, Lansing, 517-323-4734, [www.stvcc.org](http://www.stvcc.org)

## Southwest Michigan

Bethany Christian Services, Grand Rapids, 616-224-7550, [www.bethany.org/grandrapids](http://www.bethany.org/grandrapids)  
 Bethany Christian Services, Holland, 616-396-0623, [www.bethany.org/holland](http://www.bethany.org/holland)  
 Bethany Christian Services, Kalamazoo, 269-372-8800, [www.bethany.org/kalamazoo](http://www.bethany.org/kalamazoo)  
 Bethany Christian Services, Muskegon, 231-733-1618, [www.bethany.org/muskegon](http://www.bethany.org/muskegon)  
 Catholic Charities–West MI, Grand Rapids, 616-456-1443, [www.ccwestmi.org](http://www.ccwestmi.org)  
 Catholic Charities–West MI, Muskegon, 231-726-4735, [www.ccwestmi.org](http://www.ccwestmi.org)  
 D.A. Blodgett Services, Grand Rapids, 616-451-2021, [www.dabsj.org](http://www.dabsj.org)  
 Family & Children's Services, Inc., Kalamazoo, 269-344-0202, [www.fcssource.org](http://www.fcssource.org)  
 Family & Children's Services, Inc., Battle Creek, 269-965-3247, [www.fcssource.org](http://www.fcssource.org)  
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Grand Rapids, 616-356-1934, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Kalamazoo, 269-345-5776, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
 Pathways, Holland, 616-396-2301, [www.pathwaysmi.org](http://www.pathwaysmi.org)  
 Youth Guidance Foster Care & Adoption Center, Battle Creek, 269-969-9181, [www.citylinc.org](http://www.citylinc.org)

**Visit [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org) for a complete listing of agencies who license families for foster care, in addition to adoption homestudies, including your Michigan Department of Health and Human Services county office.**



MARE is proud to offer the Adoption Navigator Program. Adoption navigators are experienced adoptive parents who offer guidance and personal knowledge to potential adoptive families. The adoption navigators have many years of parenting experience, adopted a number of children, and have knowledge of foster care, infant and older, and domestic and international adoption procedures.

Families who contact MARE for initial adoption information will be given the option to work with a Navigator to help guide them through the process. Having an Adoption Navigator is a free and voluntary service.



**Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange**  
**3840 Packard Rd., Suite 170**  
**Ann Arbor, MI 48108**



The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is a program of Judson Center and is funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

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