



Family Newsletter



Teens living in foster care need families on their side

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Thousands of teens in foster care are looking for the love, support, and encouragement that families provide throughout their lives – not just until they turn 18

This year, more than 20,000 young people will leave foster care without a family. Many of them will not have anyone they can call for help, for advice, for a ride when their car breaks down.

It's disturbing, but probably not surprising, that outcomes for youth who age out of foster care are often poor. Studies show that they are at increased risk for homelessness, young parenthood, low educational attainment, high unemployment rates, and other adverse adult outcomes.

The good news is that it only takes one person to improve these odds for a young person. If you think that person might be you, read on!

Why should I adopt a teen? Are they really looking for a family?

As we all know, you never outgrow the need for a family. Everyone needs a sense of belonging.

Through adoption, older children are connected to a family that can provide a sense of stability, lasting connections, and guidance with important life tasks – including enrolling in higher education, finding stable housing, securing employment, and establishing healthy relationships.

Do teens have a say in their adoption? How do I know if a teen wants to be adopted?

Yes! Almost every state has a requirement that youth of a certain age provide consent to be adopted. The age varies by state. Fourteen is the most common consent age, but many states require youth as young as ten to consent to adoption.

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

Many parents have told us that adopting a teen has the added reward of knowing that not only did you choose them to be their child, they chose you to be their parents.

We really want to watch a child grow up and share important milestones with them – like their first steps.

You may not be there when they lose their first tooth or take the training wheels off their bike for the first time, but there are plenty

of firsts to experience with a teen – first date, learning to drive, first job interview.

And, while teens have a lot to learn from you, they'll teach you a lot too.

I'm not ready to commit. Are there other ways to help?

Yes! Spending time with a teen in your community – as a mentor, Big Brother or Big Sister, CASA volunteer, or tutor at your local library or community center – is

not only a great way to help a teen, it could help you decide whether fostering or adopting an older child is right for you.

There are many ways you can help, and at least one child will be glad you did:

www.adoptuskids.org/adoption-and-foster-care/overview/ways-to-help

For post-adoption help, visit www.mare.org/For-Families/Post-Adoption-Information

<https://adoptuskids.org/meet-the-children/children-in-foster-care/older-youth-need-families>

MARE offers great parental tips for free

The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange offers trainings for adoptive and foster care parents at least twice during the fiscal year, which runs Oct. 1-Sept. 30.

Many of the trainings – but not all – typically occur on Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., and they take place throughout the state. MARE's adoption navigator team organizes and hosts the trainings. Typical training days are in person, but navigators host virtual trainings as well.

To give you more information about these trainings, we sat down with MARE Adoption Navigator Supervisor Kimberly Wolowski to get her insights.

How are these trainings structured?

Typically, registration is 30 minutes

before the training starts, followed by the training for two hours before breaking for lunch, which we provide. The lunch hour is networking time for parents to interact with each other and to ask the trainer any additional questions. After lunch, we finish with the last hour of training. At the end of the training, parents receive a certificate that they can present to their agency for training credit hours.

What kinds of topics are covered?

Some of the training topics that we've covered include openness in adoption, building a support network, parenting teenagers, self-care, practical advice for raising children with attachment issues, parenting children with challenging behaviors and transracial adoption.



Can parents suggest topics for these events?

Yes. At the end of each training, parents fill out a survey, which asks if the training was helpful and if they have suggestions for future sessions and locations. We definitely have future trainings based on the suggestions of families.

What upcoming topics are planned?

On April 21, MARE has a Virtual Adoption 101 training planned that will be hosted by our adoption navigators 7-9 p.m.

Then on April 29, MARE hosts a Waiting Family Forum 2-4 p.m. in Bloomfield Township, which helps families navigate the exciting, confusing and frustrating – at times – adoption process. Families who are approved to adopt and those waiting for their home study to be approved are welcome to attend.



Look for details about registration for these events on Mare.org and our Facebook page.

For more information about adoptive and foster care parent trainings, visit the events section of mare.org and make sure to follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for announcements of upcoming events.

Creativity and kindness are two of his hallmarks

Noah isn't quite a Lego master builder, but he's on his way by making original designs.

In fact, Noah enjoys being creative, and he's very proud of his Legos creations. Noah also enjoys playing video games and doing puzzles.

Like a lot of young men, Noah likes riding bikes and scooters, and he loves Star Wars. One of Noah's favorite activities involves sweet treats. "I like to bake," he says, adding that his dream destination would be a bakery.

However, instead of cookies and doughnuts, Noah's favorite food is a turkey burger with salt. His favorite color is blue, and his favorite animal is the shark. When he's not thinking about sweet or savory treats, Noah likely is reading. He especially enjoys the Dog Man book series.

When he gets older, Noah wants to become a magician. A few of the most important things Noah wants others to know are, "I love to play and watch basketball, and I like to be kind."

He will fit in very well with a forever family. Noah says he hopes to have fun with them and go places together, and he wants his new family to build things with Legos with him. "Noah stated that his dream is to be adopted," adds one of his close adults.



Noah (C010260)

Kids' Corner



<https://www.artbarblog.com/yarn-wrapped-cardboard-letters/>



A crafty way to teach a skill!

At the art blog page listed below left, kids can learn how to make Yarn-Wrapped Cardboard Letters.

Why, you might ask? The teacher who describes the activity says it's a calming and creative way to engage youngsters in craft-making, and the letters they make can provide a lesson for the adult(s) helping them. The teacher adds that youngsters also can use the ability they acquire later on.

"The one thing I do like about crafts is that they often can teach a skill. In this case, the skill is wrapping yarn. Down the road, they can bring this skill into their art-making if they chose."

Best days include time with family and friends

A great day for Jeannie?

Rising and parting her curtains, the olive-green ones because that's her favorite color. She'll enjoy the usual breakfast, but perhaps dine on hot wings for lunch or dinner because that's Jeannie's favorite food.

On weekday mornings, Jeannie will go to school and then glow in the aura of art class, her favorite subject. She'll participate in some of the activities that she has done in the past such as cheerleading and dancing.

After school, Jeannie will play video games. On her dream day, she'll play her favorite card game, Skip Bo. Jeannie will use her creativity by drawing and making arts and crafts. She'll spend time with her friends and go shopping on the weekends for shoes. Jeannie will go to the movies and maybe enjoy a sleepover.

On a great day, Jeannie will visit a zoo so she can see her favorite critter, the sugar glider. Truth be told most days are great ones for Jeannie. One of the people close to her says Jeannie is one of the most brave, kind and caring girls she's ever met.

Any family would have a great day with Jeannie in the house, especially if, like her, they enjoy spending time together, playing games and going on vacation.



Jeannie (C09363)

Calendar

April 29

In-Person MARE Meet & Greet
Bloomfield
10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

May 20

In-Person MARE Meet & Greet
Gaylord
10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

June 24

In-Person MARE Meet & Greet
Holland
10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

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

Take note: If you want to attend an upcoming MARE Meet & Greet, ask your worker to contact jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org or call 734-528-2070.

Coming up

May is National Foster Care Month

As www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth states, "it's a time to acknowledge families and professionals who help children and youth in foster care find permanent homes." Look for more info as it nears at Mare.org.