



Family Newsletter

Spring 2024

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Jordan (C09998) was one of the youth having a good time at a recent Meet & Greet.

Have fun and get to know adoptive youth at MARE Meet & Greets

STORY BY **KIMBERLY GROVER, MARE ADOPTION NAVIGATOR**

If you're an adoptive parent, you might have heard about the MARE Meet & Greets, and if you haven't heard, well, here are reasons for you to join the festivities.

These events are aimed at providing youth who await adoption a fun day of activities while also giving adoptive families and youth the chance to meet and get to know each other. Although attendance will vary based on location, the events are small enough and structured to maximize interaction between youth and adults.

Each event follows the same basic structure. Adoptive parents as well as

youth will arrive, sign in and attend separate orientations to answer questions and outline what to expect during the event. MARE staff will review the conduct guidelines, provide some tips for interactions between youth and adoptive parents and describe how the event will be organized.

After the orientation, the Meet & Greet generally starts off with an ice-breaker activity so youth and families can introduce themselves. Many Meet & Greets then go on to activities involving playing games while providing opportunities for youth



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On the horizon

September 21 2024 Michigan Heart Gallery Premiere

Emagine Theaters
Royal Oak

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

The event will feature a movie, luncheon and more.

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



Aspen (C010647), above, and Cal (C09585), right, joined the festivities recently at the MARE Meet & Greet at the Sloan Museum of Discovery in Flint.



Facts About MARE Meet & Greets

MARE's in-person Meet & Greets are held throughout the state at various churches and community centers.

They are typically held on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and lunch will be provided.

Virtual Meet & Greets often occur during hours such as weekday evenings that are more convenient for many youth and families.

and families to interact and get to know each other.

The events also can include activities such as making arts and crafts, engaging with animals at a petting farm or meeting up at a bowling alley, baseball game, zoo or museum.

After an active morning, lunch is served, which provides additional, more casual time to interact. Afternoons generally consist of more opportunities for youth and families to interact before the event wraps up with a debriefing, which includes separate sessions for youth and adults.

MARE staff then answers any questions before having participants complete a survey that lets us know about any possible mutual connections between youth and families. Typically, 20-25 youth and 6-10 families attend the in-person Meet & Greets.

The virtual Meet & Greets are very similar to the in-person events. They are often a bit shorter since we don't serve virtual lunch, but youth and families still have the opportunity to meet face-to-face via Zoom and interact through a designated activity

or game.

These virtual opportunities allow the inclusion of youth and prospective adoptive parents who might otherwise not be able to attend in-person events. Typically, 10-15 youth and six or so families attend the virtual events.

Whether it's in-person or virtual, registration for Meet & Greets is posted on Mare.org with notifications of upcoming events also mentioned on MARE's Facebook page. For a list of upcoming dates, contact MARE at 800-589-6273 or see the calendar on page 4.



Carlos (C010650) and Cris (C010649)

Meet sensational sibs Carlos and Cris

By the time the equinox of September rolls around, Cris is looking forward to what's to come. Carlos is, too, because he loves being with family during Christmastime.

These brothers share a love of science, movies, video games and libraries.

About Carlos

Carlos (aka Juan Carlos) has fun by having a ball.

"He really likes being active and playing sports, and he has a competitive spirit," says one of his close adults. "He loves to play basketball and any other competitive sports and has fun in those types of activities."

Carlos also loves to do hands-on projects and finds pride in the completion of those types of projects and activities. Other

activities Carlos enjoys include skating, going to the mall, going to the library and going to the movies.

You can bet Carlos dresses well for those latter two activities because he likes looking his best. Shopping for clothes is one of his favorite activities, and if he could travel anywhere, Carlos would visit Las Vegas and New York because he likes big cities and shopping.

Despite the fun he has, there's something missing in Carlos' life. "Carlos wants nothing more than to have a family and feel like he belongs and is loved," one of his close adults explains. "Carlos hopes that his adoptive family would like a lot of sports, and that they enjoy playing and attending sporting events. He also hopes the family would enjoy board games. Carlos wants to be able to be involved in sports as well."

About Cris

Cris loves swimming in a pond, pool or lake, going bike riding in his neighborhood and kicking the soccer ball around on his favorite pitch.

Some of Cris' other favorite pursuits are playing with remote control cars, building things with Legos, playing video games and going to the movies. He likes ice skating and holiday activities.

Regardless of the time of year, Cris loves interacting with animals, and his favorite critters are cats and dogs.

"Cris reports that he likes 'going out places' and hopes that his adoptive family would be open to this, including going to movies and parks," says one of Cris' close adults. "He would also like a family who enjoys video games." Most of all, Cris says he wants to "feel their love and support."



Recyclables provide fodder for feeders for feathered friends

WAIT! Don't let the recycle truck take the treasure you have in your bin! If it's a container and if you can modify it a bit you can provide a smorgasbord for the birds and squirrels in your yard.

There's an endless number of ways to provide seed, suet, nuts, fruits and butters for our feathered and furred friends. A simple online search will yield a wealth of ideas.

Below are a few links to get you started.

If you're worried about attracting unwanted critters to your yard, try making a bird bath and providing nesting materials instead. These can be just as enticing! A hike and a scavenger hunt can be a fun way to find these natural materials.

Regardless of which project you pick, consider the skills of the youth you'll be supervising and choose the right project for them. Spring is in the air and so are the migrating birds. See how many you can attract!



<https://earth911.com/home-garden/7-diy-recycled-bird-feeders/>



<https://www.audubon.org/news/how-make-diy-bird-feeder-recycled-materials>



<https://www.todaysparent.com/family/crafts/craft-bird-feeder/>

Calendar

April 27

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

May 18

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

June 22

MARE In-Person 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: Watch for notices of upcoming Meet & Greets on www.mare.org and on Facebook and Instagram.

MARE contact information

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