

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

# **KNOCKING ADOPTION OUTTA THE PARK**

## **Navigators, caseworkers are your designated hitters**

WRITTEN BY **TIM GARVIN, ADOPTIVE PARENT**

**A**doption as a journey for our family began as an ending. What I mean is we accepted our inability to have biological children. We thought children were simply not in our life equation. We were prompted, "no"; we were emotionally and spiritually evoked into the realization that there was an unmet need to nurture. Our church began a support ministry for foster and adoptive families. On a Mother's Day Sunday, we heard of the need for foster and adoptive families, and the following evening, a delightful and caring case-worker from Bethany Christian Services was in our home doing a three-hour orientation. Our time investment from "realization to finalization" took three years to the day. It was quite an adventure!

The MARE staff has literally been base coaches for our adoptive "home run." MARE.org served as the home plate, the central location for information and photographs of the children who need a forever home. The Navigator program and MARE Navigator Mac Ballantine have been insightful, calming, and reassuring even during very stressful and unnerving events. Having someone who has been "through it" already makes you feel like someone is on your side.

Having a good caseworker was also paramount in our success. When our caseworker Sarah identified our children for us, she immediately suggested we review their MARE profiles. What's amazing is that we had "combed" through profiles frequently, but somehow went right past our future children! Once the possibilities were narrowed, Mac helped us sift through the impairment levels to fully grasp what we might face.



Nicole Garvin has a strong bond with the Garvins' adopted daughter.

“MARE staff has literally been base coaches for our adoptive home run.”

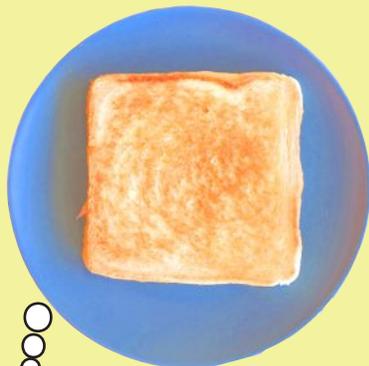
See **Navigators**, on page 2



MICHIGAN  
**ADOPTION  
RESOURCE**  
EXCHANGE

800-589-6273  
www.mare.org

Jesse, C07797



# Meet Jesse: TV's next celebrity chef?

**B**eware, Bobby Flay. There's a new emerging chef on the horizon, and his name is Jesse! This kid cooks his own tasty grilled cheese sandwich and is proud of the fact that he can make his own snacks. When he's not in the kitchen, you might see Jesse pumping gas, mowing grass or mastering math. Yes, he takes pride in knowing his multiplication tables as well as helping others. And if you want to make Jesse really happy, show him a movie, just as long as it's not a scary one. Jesse shows off his creative skills by drawing and his athletic prowess by swimming, biking, and rollerblading and by playing basketball and soccer. He also likes listening to music and watching cartoons.

In addition, Jesse says that he is a good helper and enjoys spending time with his current foster family. His foster parent says Jesse likes feeling needed. The foster parent also reports that a family should teach Jesse about appropriate interactions with pets since he has little experience with them.

## Recipe

### Ingredients:

- 9-year-old boy
- 2 cups of love
- 1 gallon of fun
- 1 great smile
- Dash of excitement
- Sprinkle of energy
- \* Mix ingredients together and place gently into a loving home.
- \* Let rise into a forever family!

**Step on up! Perhaps you're the forever family that Jesse craves. Call the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange, 800-589-6273.**

### Navigators, continued from page 1

We met our kids because Sarah understood our particular strengths and weaknesses, and Mac helped clear the fog of fear and confusion.

It may have seemed like a great idea to just find the kids, pack their bags and bring them home, but the four-month transition process helped immensely. We began with just day visits of a couple hours, and then had them for weekends for three solid months before they finally "came home" in June 2013. This process allowed us time to bond, work through behaviors, build trust and kept us on a defined path. While it seems frustrating to give up control to others, it also relieved us of planning worries. Listening to our Navigator meant taking his advice at times and not overthinking or trying to control too much.

My wife and I had 20 years of "childless" marriage. Adoption for us has been fulfillment of our wish to serve God and to share our blessings. While three years may seem long to us, I know that my children have waited their entire lives to get here! We look forward to the challenges of "parenting 101" in exchange for those moments we stare into their innocent eyes and strive to make them feel safe and loved.

**A transition period helped Tim Garvin bond and build trust with the Garvins' adopted son.**



# A PASSION FOR HELPING FAMILIES

## Experience gives MARE Navigator insight into adoption's challenges

**K**elli joined the Adoption Navigator team after working as a Head Start teacher for 10 years. She has been a Navigator for MARE for almost two years and has enjoyed meeting and interacting with the youth, families, and being a part of successful matches!

She is a previous foster parent who began the licensing process at the age of 25. With her husband's full support, their two sons, an infant and a toddler, were brought into their family in 2007.

In 2010, they became a family of five with the addition of a third "gift," their 48-hour-old daughter. Three adoptions

later, their children are now ages 3, 6 and 7.

Kelli's collective experiences with foster care, competing party adoptions, and struggles with infertility have made her truly passionate about helping families pursue their adoption dreams.

In her spare time, Kelli enjoys spending sunny days at the lake, attending her sons' baseball games, her daughter's ballet recitals, and networking with other families who have experienced the joys and challenges of adoption.

Kelli simply cannot imagine her life without her children in it and looks forward to what the future brings.



MARE Adoption Navigator Kelli with her adopted 3-year-old daughter.

## 25 Years of Family Celebrations

Remembering Our Past, Celebrating Our Future

## Kinship Adoption Festival

1 p.m. to 5 p.m., Sunday, September 28, 2014

Belle Isle, Detroit

Talk with adoption workers, attend informational workshops, participate in children's activities, and meet some of the Detroit area's waiting children.

For more information, contact the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange at 800-589-MARE, [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)

Michael, 15, by Photo Boutique  
C08222



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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### August 8, 2014

#### A-OK Support Group

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Hands Across the Water, 781 Avis Drive, Suite 200, Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Hands Across the Water is offering a support group for parents who have adopted an older child through foster care, internationally, or domestically. Come and share experiences, ask questions and gather advice at this monthly group. Call 734-477-0135 to preregister.

### August 11, 2014

#### SNAP (Special Needs Adoptive Parents) Orientation

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

D.A. Blodgett – St. John's, 805 Leonard St. N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 4950

This orientation is free to attend, and no RSVP is required.

### August 14, 2014

#### Adoptive Family Support Meeting and Adopted Youth Club

6 – 8 p.m.

**Details:** Come have dinner with other families who have adopted. After dinner we'll split into two separate discussion groups. Please RSVP to Tracy Kapusansky at (734) 545-3831 or [tracy\\_kapusansky@judsoncenter.org](mailto:tracy_kapusansky@judsoncenter.org)

**Adoptive Family Support Meeting:** Share your challenges, ideas, and support and in exchange...BE SUPPORTED by others!

**Adopted Youth Club:** An opportunity to meet other adopted individuals, participate in fun activities (art, creative writing, and games), share your story, provide support, learn ways to handle life's ups and downs, and make new friends.

### August 14, 2014 7:00-9:00pm

#### Parents Helping Parents Support Group, for Foster/Adoptive Parents

7 – 9 p.m.

Lapeer Community Church, 80 N. Lake Pleasant Rd., Attica, MI 48412

Free childcare is provided, but you must RSVP in advance. To RSVP, please call Kim Hall at (810) 664-4743

### August 16, 2014

#### SNAP Training, sessions 1-4

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

D.A. Blodgett - St. John's, 805 Leonard St. N.E., Grand Rapids, MI 4950

This training is free to attend, and no RSVP is required.

### September 9, 2014

#### Adoptive Family Support Meeting and Adopted Youth Club

6 – 8 p.m.

Judson Center, 3840 Packard Rd., Suite 170, Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Come have dinner with other families who have adopted. After dinner we'll split into two separate discussion groups. Please RSVP to Tracy Kapusansky at 734-545-3831 or [tracy\\_kapusansky@judsoncenter.org](mailto:tracy_kapusansky@judsoncenter.org)

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### September 12, 2014

#### A-OK Support Group

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Hands Across the Water, 781 Avis Drive, Suite 200, Ann Arbor, MI 48108

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### September 28, 2014

#### Kinship Adoption Festival

11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Belle Isle, Detroit

Talk with adoption workers, attend informational workshops, participate in children's activities, and meet some of the Detroit area's waiting children.

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