



Meet Tashiana C06141!

Tashiana is a loving child with a great spirit. Tashiana's laughter and smile can fill the hearts of individuals who work with her. She is an active and outgoing child who enjoys interacting with others. Tashiana says that she wants a family to want her and truly treat her like she is a part of their family. She would like to be adopted by a family who shares in and supports her interest in staying active. Church is a very important aspect of her life. She would like for her future parents to have her involved in as many activities as possible. She reports, "The most important thing I would like other people to know about me is that I like to sing and dance!"

Tashiana needs an experienced family who understands how past experiences can influence current behaviors. A caring and committed family who give her plenty of structure and positive individual attention would be best. The adoptive family must be willing to have an extended visitation period to help Tashiana transition into a new home. In addition, she would like to have a family that is involved with a church and that likes to spend time together.

To inquire about Tashiana, contact MARE at 800-589-6273 or visit www.mare.org



Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange

PO Box 980789
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

Phone: 800-589-6273
Email: mare@judsoncenter.org
Web: www.mare.org

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Families Across Michigan



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New MARE Website Offers Tools for Families

By: Kelli Ostrosky, Adoption Navigator

The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is proud to announce a brand new, user-friendly website! The new website will allow families to jump into the driver's seat of adoption, stay involved and organized all while having a better understanding of the adoption process.

For anyone who has seen the sweet faces on the MARE website and has submitted an inquiry to learn more, the process is not exactly cut and dry. From technical issues and record keeping lists to the "hurry up and wait" period, followed by the "what ever happened with that inquiry?" moment, it can be exhausting and downright hard. I must admit, having a lack of control and being "in the backseat" has never been my strongpoint.

While the behind the scenes processes haven't changed, the new website gives families greater control. One of the main changes will be the family dashboard. Later in the summer, families will be able to update their family information for their family profile, upload photos, and have real-time updates of their inquiries!

The inquiry process has been made easier for families as well. After a one-time registration, families can simply log in and select the children they want to inquire about and submit an inquiry – no more refilling out your data every time you inquire about a child!

Each registered family will also gain access to a private dashboard. This is where past inquiries will be listed, including any updates MARE has on the status of each inquiry.

Heidi Raubenolt, Program Manager at MARE explains: "It allows for inquiries to be made on specific children that will be sent directly to the child's assigned adoption worker and the family's assigned worker as well. This will allow for quicker response times from workers and the ability of the family to see the response from each worker in real time; eliminating the need for families to contact MARE to find out the status of their inquiry."

There is also an addition of a colored light system for "stages of holds." Heidi Raubenolt describes the changes: "Families will now be able to search the child photolistings and filter out children who have a match pending or whose workers are already inundated with homestudies." Since all of the photolisted youth are in various stages of meeting their forever families, this addition will guide families towards more productive inquiries.

Some of the new features are available now; others will be rolled out or improved in time. For example, the stages of holds colored light system will become more and more useful for families over time as the children's workers get accustomed to the new site and start keeping that status regularly updated.

We are excited at MARE about these new changes and look forward to the positive outcomes which will result. So buckle up, keep your eyes on the road, and let's enjoy navigating this new path together!



MARE 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

MSU Offers Free Trainings for Families

These workshops are designed for foster families, but adoptive and kinship families can benefit from them as well. Call 517-353-3060 for more information.

- “Understanding Your Child’s Mental Health Diagnosis.” Presented by Victoria A. Fitton, PhD, LMSW, Registered Play Therapist. October 17, 2013 from 6pm – 9pm. East Lansing.
- “Raising Children Who Have Experienced Trauma.” Presented by Kimberly Offutt, MSW, Adoptive Parent. November 17, 2013 from 6pm – 9 pm. Grand Rapids.
- “Raising Children with Attachment Issues.” Presented by Rosemary Jackson, LMSW. November 14, 2013 from 6pm – 9pm. Detroit.

Cover photo: Draven C08089
Photo by: Kate Neville

MARE Calendar of Events

Dates and event details are subject to change. Please check the MARE website and contact event organizers for updated information.

June 28, 2013

Ennis Center Community Health Fair
Ennis Center for Children, 20100 Greenfield, Detroit, MI 48235
12pm – 5pm

There is free admission to this event, which includes: child and adult health screenings, child and adult fitness activities, hotdogs, hamburgers, & snacks, vendors, food trucks, prizes, and more!

July 1, 2013

Washtenaw County Support Group for Adoptive and Foster Parents
Genesis of Ann Arbor
6:30pm – 8:30pm
Please contact Christine Moellering 734-644-1530

July 7, 2013

Traverse City Parent Connections Group
West Side Community Church
6pm – 8pm
Please RSVP to Kjirsten Boeve at either 231-590-8644 or kboeve@bethany.org

July 8, 2013

Muskegon Parent Group
DHS on Baker Street, Muskegon
Support group is from 5pm-6pm and training is from 6pm-7pm
RSVP to Mary Doctor at 231.726.1200 ext. 216 or by email at mdoctor@ccwestmi.org

July 20, 2013

Kalamazoo County Match Party
Kalamazoo
11am – 2pm
Check the MARE website for registration details.

July 24, 2013

Adoptive Parent Support Group
Judson Center, 12220 13 Mile Rd., Warren, MI 48088
6pm – 8pm
Contact Pam Ferguson at pamela_ferguson@judsoncenter.org or 810-732-8510

August 3, 2013

Macomb County Match Party
Sterling Heights
11am – 2pm
Check the MARE website for registration details.

August 9, 2013

Adopting Older Kids Support Group
Hands Across the Water, Ann Arbor
6:30pm – 8:30pm

August 20, 2013

Raising Healthy Families Support Group
St. Andres Episcopal Church, Grand Rapids
6pm – 8pm
To register email registration@afsn.org or call 616.458.7945

Dates and registration coming soon:

Bay County Match Party
Bay City
11am – 2pm
Check the MARE website for registration details.

Washtenaw County Match Party
Ann Arbor
11am – 2pm
Check the MARE website for registration details.

View a comprehensive list of events at www.mare.org



10 Things Adoptive Parents Should Know

By: Amberlynn Finet, former MARE Youth

Amberlynn was in the foster care system for 12 years and photolisted on the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange. She was adopted in 2011.

Everyone, at some point, has wished that they told their parents what they were thinking, or what they should know about them. For some reason, whether that is because they were scared to do so, were afraid of the consequences, or they thought of it and then forgot it until years or even decades later, we don't always tell parents these things. With children in the system, we go through something like this at some point, but because we feel like our thoughts and opinions don't matter, we keep these thoughts bottled inside, myself included. So, here are ten things that parents should know:

- 1) We're not as adaptive to change as you might think we are. The myth is "Well, since they moved around so much, maybe they will easily adapt to our home." This is not the case. It takes us a while to settle in, and we wish that parents would be patient.
- 2) We really like affection. Affection is one of the ways to help build relationships.
- 3) Coming to school activities really does matter. When you are there it says that you care what we do and that you support us.
- 4) Don't yell at us. Yelling will neither fix your issue nor will it help us out in any way. In fact, yelling will do nothing but scare us because of previous experiences.
- 5) Talk to us. Sometimes we know that we frustrate our parents. So, talk to us. Ask us what's going on or have a family meeting.
- 6) We like it when you include us in things. We understand when you get busy, but we would like to go with you to places, even if it's just down the road to the store.
- 7) Ask us how our day was. We might sometimes roll our eyes at it but it makes us feel good.
- 8) Don't be super nosy. While we don't mind telling you things, having to know every single thing we're doing can be really annoying, as well as make us feel like you don't trust us.
- 9) Teach us things. Especially for the older kids, people assume that we know how to do things just because we're older, but that's not the case at all, and it's important that we learn how to function out in the world.
- 10) Lastly, just know that we love you. Through grumpy days, happy days, emotional days, frustrating days, and everything in between, we love you with everything we have. It might take us awhile to build a trust with you, but we love you and someday we will show you just how much we do.

Photo courtesy of the Pereyda family

Summer Boredom Busters



Cook or bake something special! More ideas in the right sidebar.

By Kelli Ostrosky, Adoption Navigator

Whether you are a foster, kinship, adoptive or waiting family, we all share something in common: the need for time spent together to be fun, productive, and meaningful. As a past teacher and busy mom to 3, I have learned that the best thing we can give our kids is time. With summer vacations and busy weekends upon us, there has never been a better time to bond, learn from each other, and celebrate all things which make our families unique. While all types of families can benefit from these activities, the bold and brave families we serve at MARE stand to make huge strides during time well spent. Check out the sidebar for suggestions of summer activities to enjoy and to strengthen your family's attachment. Explore, create, learn, imagine and discover what being a family is all about!

Boredom Busters

- Create a one-of-a kind piece of art to celebrate your individuality.
- Attend a support group or playgroup with other families to challenge those social skills.
- Develop a summer reading check-off list. Include titles which hold significance to you or your family such as "A Home for Choco."
- Learn a new skill such as dance or sports and learn to trust and build emotional connections to others.
- Take on a service project such as pulling weeds in a schoolyard to improve responsibility.
- Plant a tree to celebrate your adoption milestones.
- Watch an adoption-themed movie such as *Dinosaur Train* or *Hotel for Dogs*. Recall events to reinforce what makes your family special.
- Create a new family bedtime ritual and tell your child "You are special because _____." Come up with a new reason every night and build up your child's self-esteem.
- Cook or bake something special for a sensory experience (Fresh squeezed lemonade or homemade ice cream, anyone?)
- Take part in a cultural activity to prepare for a cross cultural adoption or further expose your child to his or her culture.