



Family Newsletter



Top row, Kim Ross, Jessica Franks, Judy McNaughton, Kelli Ostrosky;
bottom row, Kim Wolowski (navigator supervisor), Amber Tiemeyer, Aimee Louden, Kimberly Grover

Families should take advantage of MARE’s Adoption Navigator Program

MARE’s Adoption Navigator Program just celebrated its 10-year anniversary, and it’s been a remarkable decade.

“We’ve heard through our surveys that families have been very happy with the services they receive from the navigators,” says Kimberly Wolowski, who’s served as the program’s supervisor since 2016. “It’s a needed program, and families seem to appreciate the navigators helping them with the adoption process.”

To mark the anniversary and to inform adoptive families about the program, we asked Wolowski to describe who adoption navigators are, what they do and how families can take advantage of the program’s services.

Who are the adoption navigators?

The team consists of seven adoption navigators who are all adoptive families themselves. Because navigators have adopted, families relate to them and rely on them to assist in finding services and resources during the adoption process. As their job title suggests, navigators guide families through the adoption process, which often begins with finding an agency.

What else do navigators do to help families?

Families who sign up for the program are assigned a navigator. After helping locate an agency, navigators make

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Fun fact

The southernmost point of the United States isn’t along the Gulf of Mexico or the Hawaiian Islands. It’s American Samoa, and even though it’s located in the Pacific Ocean, it’s actually closer to New Zealand than Hawaii.

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



sure families go through orientation and sign up for the training that they'll need during the adoption process. Families quickly learn that they can reach out to their navigator with any questions they have. That often includes the home study, which navigators have been through; they can answer any questions about it and help alleviate any concerns along the way.

What other things should families know?

Navigators can help adoption-approved families develop their family profile

including a photo and narrative that they display on MARE's Family Directory, which is a password-protected page on our website. The directory lets workers search for families who could be a match for the youth on their caseload. Using the information on the directory, navigators check regularly to see if their families are potential matches for the youth on Mare.org.

Any other ways navigators help?

Yes. Navigators are very resourceful at finding families the services and information

they need while on their way to adoption. That could mean books, webinars or even navigator-sponsored training for adoptive families. They can assist families with inquiries about youth, and they can help them get ready for Meet & Greets, which are scheduled events that give them an opportunity to meet and interact with adoptive youth. Our navigator team is always responsive. Navigators give families an additional person to turn to for information throughout the adoption process.

Contact Kimberly Wolowski at 734-528-2077 or Kimberly_wolowski@judsoncenter.org

Who and what is MARE?

The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) is a statewide information and referral service for families interested in adopting children from foster care, and for adoption workers looking for homes for these children. The MARE website features waiting children in Michigan and is used by workers as well as families.

MARE is not a placement service – we do not provide care for waiting children and do not complete family home studies or foster care licenses. Instead, MARE refers prospective parents to agencies and answers questions they might have about adoption and

children photolisted on Mare.org

MARE also provides support to families who are matched with a youth on the website to help with the transition period.

Families new to MARE should become registered users of the website. You can follow the guidelines and learn more about adoption from foster care at www.mare.org/Resources/About-MARE or call 800-589-6273.

If you want a quick resource about adoption, visit www.mare.org/For-Families/New-to-Adoption/FAQs

Art, sports, reading make Kandlyn's day



Kandlyn (C010161)

One of Kandlyn's favorite activities combines her love of games and sports.

It's called Jackpot Football, and Kandlyn especially enjoys playing it with her friends. Kandlyn loves football and basketball and wants to attend sporting events with her future forever family.

She also enjoys coloring and making artwork. Kandlyn must enjoy watching "Vampire Dairies" since her dream destination is Hollywood, where she wants to meet famous people from that television show.

Kandlyn loves playing outside, and in quieter times, she enjoys reading. When she gets older, Kandlyn wants to become a police officer.

If she had three wishes, Kandlyn would want lots of money so she can buy things for her sisters. She'd also want to be adopted.

Once she finds her forever family, Kandlyn wants to watch movies and spend time with them "hanging out."

Cal can make a family happy and proud

Cal has the skills and interests to become a great contributor to a forever family.

He loves interacting with others, enjoys life's simple pleasures and likes helping around the house. Cal might even become a family protector since he wants to become a police officer.

Cal loves sports and enjoys playing basketball.

"He loves getting to play games on his Xbox," says one of his close adult acquaintances. "He loves getting to go to church." One of Cal's favorite things involves food. "He likes eating good food, and he is known to tell you if it isn't good."

Cal loves the color red like the kind on a shiny hot rod. And don't ask him to settle the feline and canine debate because he likes cats and dogs.

If Cal could travel anywhere, he'd go to Paris because he wants to learn French. When he's asked to describe himself, Cal says he's helpful and funny and enjoys telling jokes.

Once he finds his forever family, Cal hopes to just spend time with them.



Cal (C09585)



Stariana (C010262)

Families will flip for Stariana

It's pretty certain that a forever family will fall head over heels for Stariana, especially given the most important things she wants others to know about her.

"I'm smart, funny and I'm good at doing cartwheels and the splits." If that doesn't make families flip for her, then Stariana's personality and interests should do the trick.

"Stariana is open and friendly," says one of her close adults. "For fun, Stariana enjoys drawing and listening to music." She also enjoys shopping, reading and spending time with friends at the park.

Even though she likes spending time with others, Stariana enjoys time to herself and makes sure to get some satisfying slumber after school and on weekends. She won't sleep during celebrations of her favorite holidays – Christmas, Halloween and Valentine's Day – which she enjoys by spending time with loved ones, friends and family.

One of the most important things Stariana wants to do with a new family involves spending time together, and she hopes they'll go shopping, watch movies and listen to music.

Did you know?

MARE has a page that lists upcoming foster care and adoption events occurring across the state. If you visit Mare.org/Resources/Events-Calendar, you'll find orientations, support group meetings and more.

Calendar

February 17

Virtual MARE

Meet & Greet

10:45 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

May 21

In-Person MARE

Meet & Greet

Stevensville

10 a.m.-3 p.m.

June 18

In-Person MARE

Meet & Greet

Holland

Time TBA

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 Twitter.

MARE contact information

Michigan Adoption
Resource Exchange
3840 Packard Road,
Suite 170

Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Toll Free: 800-589-6273

TTY: 734-794-2984

Fax: 734-528-1695

mare@judsoncenter.org