

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

To learn about foster care adoption and view photolisting and videos of waiting children, visit our website at www.mare.org.



YAB is back and better with your help

Let your voice be heard and learn at the same time

MARE is proving that you can have your cake and eat it too. For that matter, pizza and cookies, too.

With the reintroduction of the Youth Advisory Board (YAB), youth get a chance to give and receive valuable information during regularly scheduled meetings. The YAB meetings will include food as well as an opportunity to win prizes, all while exchanging information on topics such as group activities, recruitment efforts, finding resources to help pay for college, special events, feedback for workers and more.

"We want to get your voice

on recruitment efforts, how you feel about adoption, ways to get workers to understand what you're going through," says MARE Youth Specialist Jennifer Brooks. "Let's say we wanted to talk about recruiting. We would bring that topic to the meeting and ask you, 'What are some appropriate ways or your suggestions on ways to approach it?' We would try to get your perspective on a given topic."

At the same time, the YAB meetings provide you an opportunity to suggest topics that

you want to learn more about.

"We'll also provide resources for those who come to the meetings," says Brooks. "We want to know if we can provide any more assistance. We want to bring a new topic each time, but we want to find out, 'What are the topics that you feel are important?'"

By gathering information from individuals who are or who have been in foster care, MARE can educate adoption workers and

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Youth had a big influence over the alterations made to the MARE Lifebook including a cover for younger kids and one for teens. With feedback from youth, MARE changed the name "Match Party" to "MARE Meet & Greet."

Send us your artwork!

If you are a youth and want to have your artwork or writing featured by MARE, have your worker contact Jennifer Brooks by calling 734-528-2061 or by emailing jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org.



Photos by Hannah Dunne, MARE Communications Specialist

Youth got a chance to apply their creative skills at a MARE Meet & Greet at the Ford Resource and Engagement Center in Detroit.

Fun 'n game at The Palace

It was such a hit the last time MARE and the Detroit Pistons are planning another Adoption Day



at The Palace of Auburn Hills. The event will take place on January 21, 2017. For more information, visit www.mare.org.

Word Search: Winter Words

W	K	I	X	H	B	U	G	M	S
Q	E	C	O	A	T	Y	W	V	N
R	P	U	J	T	I	S	L	E	D
F	Y	S	G	K	R	S	O	J	T
T	R	L	W	I	D	N	K	B	H
U	Z	O	P	H	C	O	C	O	A
H	X	M	Z	Y	G	W	N	X	P
W	I	N	T	E	R	F	O	V	X
E	C	K	O	P	N	S	I	A	K
F	D	G	L	S	B	Y	L	C	J
Y	M	I	T	T	E	N	W	U	E
J	V	Q	Z	N	P	E	F	H	Z

WINTER
COAT
SNOW
FROZEN
COCOA
ICE
MITTEN
HAT
SLED

Answers on the back page

The best words of wisdom often start with you

#JUSTASKUS BY LAURA RUTKOWSKI, MARE SUPERVISOR

There are many different languages in the world from English, to Spanish, to French or Chinese, but sometimes the language your adoption and foster care workers speak feels just as foreign.

It can be hard to feel completely safe and happy when you don't understand what is happening. If you're not sure what something means, it's OK to ask questions. In fact, it's a good thing to ask questions! Asking and answering questions helps you and your workers really understand what is best for you.

Your workers can use different words or explain what certain words mean, give you an



example, or ask you to tell them what you heard to make sure they understand. Your workers want to know what you think.

And it's OK if you don't always feel like talking. You can ask questions the next time you see him or

her, or even write your questions down. The most important thing to remember is your voice matters! Asking and answering questions helps your voice be heard, so whisper or shout, just get the words out!

Youth Advisory Board from page 1

officials about the concerns of youth waiting for a forever family.

However, MARE needs your help. Reintroducing this program means youth need to step forward and attend the meetings. In addition to the information, food and possible prizes at the meetings, Brooks outlined a few other reasons why youth will want to attend.

"Somebody at the meeting may have faced an issue that another hasn't," says Brooks. "They will want to make sure that somebody from their youth community is speaking up for them."

For now, YAB is starting in Wayne County with the goal of expanding to other regions in the state. Initially, the meetings will occur on a quarterly basis but could become monthly if the need arises.

For more information about YAB, contact contact Jennifer Brooks at 734-528-2061 or Jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org.

Facts About Youth Advisory Board

Participants: Anyone who is or has been in foster care.

Meetings: Starting in Wayne County but will expand to other regions.

How to attend: If you are in the foster care system, contact your worker. If you are a former foster care resident, contact Jennifer Brooks at 734-528-2061 or Jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org.

Mission Statement

Providing a safe space for youth with experience in foster care to connect, receive resources, and learn to take an active role in their permanency goal while helping to shape the adoption and recruitment process for all of Michigan's waiting youth.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS: Share your success story!

January 28, 2016

MARE Meet & Greet, Holland, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

For more information regarding this event please contact Jennifer Brooks, MARE Youth Specialist:
Jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org

Answer key

W	K	I	X	(H)	B	U	G	M	S
Q	E	(C)	(O)	(A)	(T)	Y	W	V	N
R	P	U	J	(L)	I	(S)	(L)	(E)	(D)
(F)	Y	S	G	K	R	(S)	O	J	T
T	R	L	W	I	D	N	K	B	H
U	Z	(O)	P	H	(C)	(O)	(C)	(O)	(A)
H	X	M	Z	Y	G	(W)	N	X	P
(W)	(I)	(N)	(T)	(E)	(R)	F	O	V	X
E	C	K	O	P	(N)	S	(L)	A	K
F	D	G	L	S	B	Y	L	C	J
Y	(M)	(I)	(T)	(T)	(E)	(N)	W	U	(D)
J	V	Q	Z	N	P	E	F	H	Z

Fostering Success Michigan is seeking student stories to be highlighted on their website! They are currently seeking students who are interested in being featured on our website.



We have all heard the statistics and know about the obstacles students face. This is an opportunity for students and professionals alike to read the success stories and learn about what supports helped youth succeed. The stories will be used as a way to highlight students and

their achievements. If you know of any youth or alumni of foster care between the ages of 18 and 24 who are currently enrolled in high school or college, Fostering Success Michigan would love to hear from them.

Contact Fostering Success Student Advisor Brandon Youngblood at fostering-info@wmich.edu to have the interview questions sent directly to your inbox. They look forward to featuring youth and alumni stories from across the state!

YOUTH RESOURCES



FosterClub - FosterClub is a national network for young people in foster care and young foster care alumni. The site includes blogs from current foster youth, success stories from youth who have come out of the foster system as well as celebrities who faced foster care. It also provides a listing by state of contact information for professionals and hotlines. (www.fosterclub.com 503-717-1552)



Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative - MYOI is a partnership between the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, the Oakland/Livingston Human Services Agency, and many other local community partners. MYOI's goal is to ensure that young people in foster care have successful outcomes in housing, education, employment, community engagement and health. (www.michigan.gov/fyit/0,1607,7-240-44524-162619--,00.html)



Foster Youth in Transition - An organization that is geared towards youth who are aging out of foster care. It's a comprehensive, youth-oriented site with information, advice, interactive features and a useful glossary of foster care terms. This is a website with information on a variety of issues important to current and former foster youth. The site provides links on how to develop supports, find services, get answers to important questions and just keep you posted on what's new. (www.michigan.gov/fyit)

For more information on getting involved with these organizations contact Jen Brooks at jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org or 734-528-2061.