# MICHIGAN ADOPION RESOURCE EXCHANCE







Fall 2015

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> A spotlight on children waiting for permanent & loving families

ELCOME TO THE Fall 2015 Recruitment Periodical, published by the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange. Over the next several pages, you will be introduced to some of the youth in Michigan who are waiting for their opportunity to have a loving, supportive and permanent family of their own through adoption.

The youth in the Fall 2015 periodical are representative of hundreds of other children in the Michigan foster care system who are waiting to become part of a loving family. To view these children and to learn more information about adoption, please visit our website at www.mare.org.

On the MARE website, you will find photos, narratives and video clips of waiting children, as well as a wealth of information about adoption, including links to adoption-related resources.

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If you have been thinking about adoption, we invite you to consider bringing an older child or sibling group into your life. If you have questions about adoption or are ready to begin the adoption process, simply call one of the agencies listed in the back of this periodical. MARE is available to answer your adoption-related questions and we will do our best to get you headed in the right direction.

# . . . . Match Support Program Helping families stay together

HE MICHIGAN ADOPTION **Resource Exchange** offers a couple of important programs designed to help adoptive families. The first is called the Waiting Family Forum, which are held periodically throughout the year. Join MARE's Adoption Navigators and learn exactly what happens to your inquiries after you submit them on the MARE website, find out what you can do to make the most of your wait time, learn ways to strengthen your inquiries, get tips on how to effectively advocate for your family, and meet other waiting families. Families who are approved to adopt and families who are in the process of completing their home study are all welcome to attend. For more information, contact MARE at 800-589-6273.

Another service is called the Match Support Program, which is a division of MARE that provides short term (90 day) interventions for families who are in the process of adopting a child matched from the MARE website. Match Support Specialists serve families throughout the state of Michigan and utilize a strength-based, family-centered plan to



guide families in finding helpful resources as well as helping them build their support system throughout the adoption process.

Match Support Program services are provided to families who have been matched with a child photolisted on the MARE website. A family can refer themselves for services or a family can be referred by their Adoption Worker, the child's adoption or foster care worker or an Adoption Navigator. To refer, go to the Match Support Program page on the MARE website to locate the referral form or contact the Match Support Program Supervisor, Tara Radina, by email or phone at Tara\_Radina@judsoncenter.org or 734-528-1721.

#### Who are the children who wait for adoption? Adopting a "waiting child" from foster care is often

Adopting a "waiting child" from foster care is often referred to as special needs adoption. This term often makes people think of children with severe mental or physical impairments. In reality, special needs adoption means a child or children who may be difficult to place for adoption for a variety of reasons, including:

• Children school aged and above.

• Children with emotional, mental, learning or physical impairments.

Children of minority heritage.

• Children who are part of a sibling group that must be placed together.

Many waiting children have had traumatic past experiences that may include physical, sexual or emotional abuse and/or severe neglect. Others may have been born drug or alcohol exposed.

Around 93% of children in Michigan's foster care system are adopted by the child's current foster family or a relative (someone with whom the child has an established relationship with). The remaining children available for adoption, like those in this periodical and the MARE website, have no identified family to adopt them. Recruitment of a suitable adoptive family is, therefore, necessary. Over 98% of the children available for adoption without an identified family are over the age of 5. Over 75% of those children are between the ages of 11 and 18.

#### Who can adopt a waiting child?

Many people may be surprised to learn that they do not have to be married in order to adopt a child from the foster care system. Potential adoptive parents do not have to own their own home or have a lot of money. They must have enough space in their home and adequate income to support a child. It is important to know that many children waiting for adoption are eligible to receive support subsidies to help adoptive families meet their needs.

#### How much does it cost to adopt a child from foster care?

The only cost you should incur for adopting a child from the Michigan foster care system is court filing fees. Some agencies may charge a fee for the Family Assessment (also known as a Home Study). However, once you adopt a child through Michigan's foster care system, that fee is reimbursed to you. Families must be approved through the Adoptive Family Assessment process before a child can be placed in their home for adoption. An Adoptive Family Assessment must be completed by a licensed adoption agency (which can be found in the back of this periodical and on the MARE website) and can take an average of six months to a year to complete. The Adoptive Family Assessment will include, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Personal history
- Health statements
- Criminal background check
- Income statement
- Personal references

Once the Adoptive Family Assessment is complete, you may start submitting inquiries to MARE about children you may be interested in adopting. When you inquire about children through the MARE website, your information will be sent, by MARE, to the child's adoption worker for consideration. Your worker will also be notified that you have inquired about a specific child or children.

For more information about adoption and to learn about Michigan's waiting children, please visit our website at www.mare.org



#### Ascenda C08789



#### Ascenda's likes:

- Drawing people, animals, flowers and trees.
- Doing arts and crafts.
- Playing with Barbie dolls and board games.

#### Intangible assets:

• Her many talents including writing, which she does in a journal.

#### Ascenda's crystal ball:

• Wants to participate in cheerleading, dance classes, volleyball and soccer.

## **Quotable:**

"I love to go shopping. My favorite store is called Buckle."

#### **Qualities of a forever family:**

• Ability to provide a highly structured home with experienced parents who set clear expectations and consequences.

- Patient and flexible
- Staunch advocates for the services that will help Ascenda thrive at home, and in school.

#### Did you know?

Here are a few things that you might not know about www.mare.org.

 The Advanced Search button on the View Waiting Children link lets you sort your search for available children by gender, age, race and impairment levels.
 Under the Find a Licensed Agency link, you can look for resources for foster care and special needs adoptions as well as infant and international adoptions. There's even a resource link for getting pregnancy counseling services.

3. On the Events Calendar, you can find training sessions held throughout Michigan, everything from orientations to adoptive parent support group meetings.

#### Eugene C08064



#### **Eugene's likes:**

• Being outside going for walks and riding his bike.

• Camping and fishing and going on outings.

#### **Creative interests:**

• Listening to country and rap.

#### Eugene's crystal ball:

• Wants to become a teacher, police officer or fire fighter.

#### Intangible assets:

• Quiet, affectionate and soft-spoken young man.

## **Quotable:**

"I love grandparents. I get along well with grandparents."

#### Qualities of a forever family:

- Two parents to give him one-on-one attention and constant supervision.
- Few if any children.
- Ability to facilitate structured and supervised activities with peers.
- Willing to be patient as Eugene develops trust and transitions into his new home.
- Commitment to meeting Eugene's needs.

#### Abbi Lynn C07047



#### Abbi's likes:

• The outdoors, which she lists as something she particularly enjoys when spending time with friends.

#### Intangible assets:

• Can't wait for the next exciting thing in her life.

• A down-to-earth side such as when celebrating her favorite holiday, Thanksgiving, which Abbi likes to do by eating pecan pie and spending time relaxing.

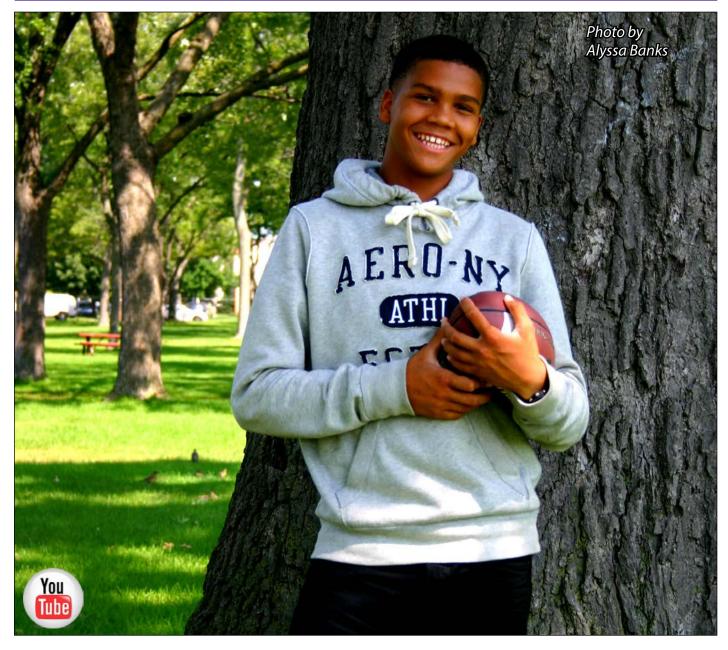
## **Quotable:**

"I have a good sense of humor, love music and dancing and just want to find a forever family."

#### Qualities of a forever family:

• Committed to her, willing to give her the positive one-on-one attention that she thrives on.

• Wants to feel secure and supported.



#### Aaron's likes:

• Riding bikes and doing outdoor activities such as camping.

• Relaxing on the weekend and hanging out with his friends.

• Playing sports, with his favorites being football and basketball.

#### Aaron's crystal ball:

• Wants to be a mechanical engineer.

#### Among his strongest desires:

Having superpowers and having his family

"together on one special day."

#### Intangible assets:

• A playful and fun young man who's very helpful and polite.

#### Qualities of a forever family:

• Loving, patient and understanding and able to provide structure and consistency.

- Would benefit from being the youngest child in the home.
- Advocates for the services that help him develop effective coping skills and positive ways to manage his emotions.

#### Keven C08466



#### Keven's likes:

- Hunting, fishing, bike riding and swimming.
  Watching movies and professional wrestling on television
- The movie "Twilight."

#### **Creative interests:**

• Listens to Lil Wayne along with some country tunes.

#### Intangible assets:

- Kind, bright and joyful.
- Very charismatic and always brightens the room he is in.

## **Quotable:**

"I want to play games with (my future forever family) and eat dinner with them."

#### Qualities of a forever family:

• Has a yard to play in and likes to hunt and fish.

• Parents who demonstrate patience and understanding and have a structured home environment to help Keven continue to learn boundaries and new social skills.

#### Autumn C07620

## **Quotable:**

"I have a grandmother, and she travels the world. I look up to her ... because she helps people, and I want to help people just like she helps people." "

#### **Autumn's likes:**

Listening to music, doing arts and crafts, riding bikes and going to the movies.
Bowling, skating and playing cards and video games.
Pizza for food and pink for color.

#### Intangible assets:

• Outgoing and social girl who keeps herself planted in the present.

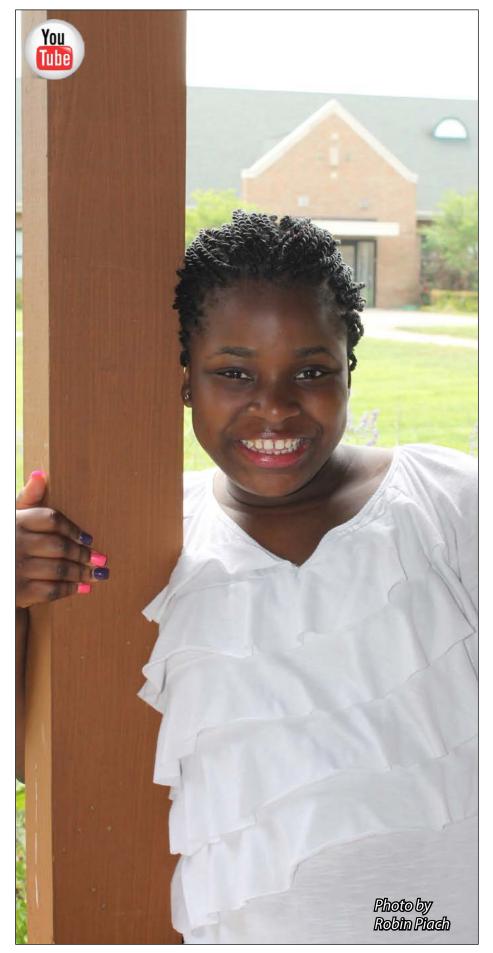
#### Autumn's crystal ball:

• Dreams of becoming a lawyer one day and helping children.

# Qualities of a forever family:

• Will accept her while allowing her time to transition into her new home.

• Strong advocates for the services that Autumn needs now and into adulthood.



#### Angelina C08573

# **Quotable:**

"When I grow up I'd like to be a social worker and a foster parent for teenagers who are forgotten about most of the time."

#### Angelina's likes:

• Drawing, painting, writing, listening to music and being around animals.

#### Intangible assets:

• A good listener whose peers often come to her to share their problems and seek advice.

 Inqusitive and always wants to learn more.

• Describes herself as "energetic, caring and laid back" with a good sense of humor.

# Qualities of a forever family:

• A two-parent or strong single-parent family who can provide her with a consistent, safe and stable home.

• Must be active and supportive in helping Angelina manage her emotional needs while providing encouragement, stability and structure.

• Willingness to seek out any support services that are beneficial to her well-being.



#### **Brian C08448**



#### **Brian's likes:**

- Cars and superheroes.
- Candy, chocolate, popsicles, crackers, bread and meat.
- Playing with wooden or magnet letters and puzzles.
- Playing on his iPad, going swimming and dancing to music.
- Being outside and searching for sticks.

#### Intangible assets:

- "Can brighten up a room with his smile."
- Brightens up people's days by giving hugs to others.
- Very outgoing and personable and enjoys being around people.

# **Quotable:**

"Brian primarily communicates through writing. Despite the fact that Brian is non-verbal, he is quite intelligent."

#### Qualities of a forever family:

- Must continue and seek out any support services that can aide Brian as he grows up.
- Patient and willing to continue the structured lifestyle that Brian thrives on.
- Dedicated to him and willing to help him reach his fullest potential.

#### **Rocky C08692**

# **Quotable:**

"I'm very good at building forestry forts, and I'm an outdoorsman."

#### **Rocky's likes:**

Sledding, fishing, hunting and playing with airsoft guns, or Nerf guns.
Has fun doing just about anything outside.
"Monopoly" and other board and card games.

#### Intangible assets:

• Very kind and thoughtful and will share what he has with his peers.

• Fun-loving and sweet.

#### Rocky's crystal ball:

• Wants to become a self-sufficient outdoorsman when he gets older.

# Qualities of a forever family:

• Two experienced parents who are patient, understanding and able to provide consistent structure.

• Willing to help him with his need to feel in control and give him one-on-one attention.

• Able to help him with coping with his past trauma.

• Wants a family who would allow him to play with his airsoft guns.



#### Kristina C08805



#### Kristina's likes:

- Working out and going roller and ice skating.
- Participating in cheerleading and shop.
- Going to the movies with friends on the weekends.
- Munching on her favorite foods such as grilled chicken salad and pizza.
- Eating and being on the phone after school.

#### Kristina's crystal ball:

- Wants to go to Miami and relax on a sandy beach while overlooking big blue water.
- Dreams of becoming a model or singer.
- Wants a forever family, one who she says will make her comfortable to be around and enjoy each other's company.

## **Quotable:**

"I do my own laundry, and I keep my room clean."

### Qualities of a forever family:

- A single-female-parent or two-parent home where she is the only or oldest child.
- Must be patient, kind and able to communicate clearly and honestly with her.
- Would do her best with a calm and easygoing personality.
- Willing to give Kristina time to build trust and transition into her new home.
- Loves dogs and has stated a preference for living in an urban environment.

\*Make sure to check out the MARE YouTube Channel to see videos of several of the children featured in the Fall 2015 Periodical.\*

#### Adoption Agencies in Michigan

The following is a list of adoption agencies whose primary focus is facilitating the adoption of children from the foster care system. Many of these agencies may also provide foster care services. This agency list is organized by regions of the state. Please contact an agency in your area if you are interested in beginning the adoption process.

#### **Upper Peninsula**

Anishnabek Community & Family Services, Sault Ste. Marie, 906.632.5250, www.saulttribe.com Catholic Social Services of the U.P., Escanaba, 906.786.7212, www.cssup.org Catholic Social Services of the U.P., Iron Mountain, 906.774.3323, www.cssup.org Catholic Social Services of the U.P., Marquette, 906.227.9119, www.cssup.org Child & Family Services of the U.P., Marquette, 906.228.4050, www.cfsup.org U.P. Kids, Houghton, 906.487.9832, www.upkids.com Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin & Upper MI, Marquette, 877.994.8344, www.lsswis.org Teaching Family Homes of Upper Michigan, Marquette, 906.249.5437, www.teachingfamilyhomes.org

#### **Northern & Central Lower Michigan**

Adoption Option Inc., Midland, 989.839.0534, www.adoptionoptioninc.org Bethany Christian Services, Fremont, 231.924.3390, www.bethany.org/fremont Bethany Christian Services, Traverse City, 231.995.0870, www.bethany.org/traversecity Catholic Family Services of the Diocese of Saginaw, Bay City, 989.892.2504, www.cfssite.org Child & Family Services of Northeast MI, Alpena, 989.356.4567, www.cfsnemi.org Child & Family Services of Northwest MI, Traverse City, 231.946.8975, www.cfsnwmi.org Eagle Village, Hersey, 231.832.2234, www.eaglevillage.org Heaven Sent Adoption, Charlevoix, 231.237.9880, www.heavensentadopt.com Lutheran Adoption Service, Bay City, 989.686.3170, www.lasadoption.org Lutheran Adoption Service, Clare, 989.386.2101, www.lasadoption.org New Light Child & Family Consultants, Millington, 989.871.6695, www.newlightonline.net

Upper Peninsula Family Solutions, Marguette, 906.273.1095, www.upfs.org

#### Tri-County Area (Wayne, Oakland & Macomb Counties)

Adoption Options Worldwide, West Bloomfield, 248.855.2813, www.adoptionoptionsworldwide.com Bethany Christian Services, Madison Heights, 248.414.4080, www.bethany.org/madisonheights Catholic Social Services of Wayne County, Detroit, 313.883.2100, www.csswayne.org Child Safe Michigan, Royal Oak, 248.353.0921, www.childsafemichigan.org/ The Children's Center of Wayne County, Detroit, 313.831.5535, www.thechildrenscenter.com Ennis Center for Children, Detroit, 313.342.2699, www.enniscenter.org Ennis Center for Children, Pontiac, 248.334.2715, www.enniscenter.org Family Adoption Consultants, Utica, 586.726.2988, www.facadopt.org Forever Families, Novi, 248.344.9606, www.noviforeverfamilies.net Homes for Black Children, Detroit, 313.961.4777, www.homes4blackchildren.org Judson Center, Redford, 313.794.5653, www.judsoncenter.org Lutheran Adoption Service, Troy, 248.423.2770, www.lasadoption.org Methodist Children's Home, Redford, 313.531.4060, www.mchsmi.org Oakland Family Services, Pontiac, 248.858.7766, www.oaklandfamilyservices.org Orchards Children's Services, Southfield, 248.258.0440, www.orchards.org Spaulding for Children, Southfield, 248.443.7080, www.spaulding.org Spectrum Human Services, Southfield, 248.552.8020, www.spectrumhuman.org St. Francis Family Center/CSS of Oakland County, Southfield, 248.552.0750, www.cssoc.org Vista Maria, Dearborn Heights, 313.271.3050, www.vistamaria.org Wolverine Human Services, Taylor, 888.625.8669, www.wolverinehs.org

#### Southern Central Michigan

Adoption Specialists, Inc., Lapeer, 810.660.7590, www.adoption-specialists.org Alternatives for Children & families, Burton, 810.250.3800, www.acfinc.org Bethany Christian Services, East Lansing, 517.336.0191, www.bethany.org/eastlansing Catholic Charities of Lenawee County, Adrian, 517.263.2191, www.catholiccharitiesjlhc.org Catholic Charities of Shiawassee & Genesee, Flint, 810.232.3418, www.catholiccharitiesflint.org Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw, Ann Arbor, 734.971.9781, www.csswashtenaw.org Child & Family Charities – Capital Area, Lansing, 517.882.4000, www.childandfamily.org Ennis Center for Children, Flint, 810.233.4031, www.enniscenter.org Ennis Center for Children, Port Huron, 810.990.1424, www.enniscenter.org Family Counseling & Children Services of Lenawee, Adrian, 517.265.5352, www.fccsoflenawee.org Family Service & Children's Aid, Jackson, 517.787.7920, www.strong-families.org Fostering Futures, Ann Arbor, 734.481.8999, www.fostering-futures.com Hands Across the Water, Ann Arbor, 734.477.0135, www.hatw.org Livingston County Catholic Charities, Howell, 517.545.5944, www.livingstoncatholiccharities.org Lutheran Adoption Service, Ann Arbor, 734.971.1944, www.lasadoption.org Lutheran Adoption Service, Jackson, 517.789.6444, www.lasadoption.org Lutheran Adoption Service, Lansing, 517.886.1380, www.lasadoption.org St. Vincent Catholic Charities, Lansing, 517.323.4734, www.stvcc.org

#### Southwest Michigan

Bethany Christian Services, Grand Rapids, 616.224.7550, www.bethany.org/grandrapids Bethany Christian Services, Holland, 616.396.0623, www.bethany.org/holland Bethany Christian Services, Kalamazoo, 269.372.8800, www.bethany.org/kalamazoo Bethany Christian Services, Muskegon, 231.733.1618, www.bethany.org/muskegon Catholic Charities–West MI, Grand Rapids, 616.456.1443, www.ccwestmi.org Catholic Charities–West MI, Muskegon, 231.726.4735, www.ccwestmi.org D.A. Blodgett Services, Grand Rapids, 616.451.2021, www.dablodgett.org Family Adoption Consultants, Kalamazoo, 269.343.3316, www.facadopt.org Family & Children's Services, Inc., Kalamazoo, 269.344.0202, www.fcsource.org Family & Children's Services, Inc., Battle Creek, 269.965.3247, www.fcsource.org Greater Hopes Family Services, Grand Rapids, 616.356.1934, www.lasadoption.org Lutheran Adoption Service, Kalamazoo, 269.345.5776, www.lasadoption.org Pathways, Holland, 616.396.2301, www.pathwaysmi.org Youth Guidance Foster Care & Adoption Center, Battle Creek, 269.969.9181, www.citylinc.org

# Please visit www.mare.org for a complete listing of agencies who license families for foster care, in addition to adoption homestudies, including your local County Department of Health and Human Services office.



The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is proud to offer the Adoption Navigator Program. Adoption Navigators are experienced adoptive parents who offer guidance and personal knowledge to potential adoptive families. The Adoption Navigators have many years of parenting experience, have adopted a number of children, and have knowledge of foster care, infant & older, and domestic & international adoption procedures.

Families who contact MARE for initial adoption information will be given the option to work with a Navigator to help guide them through the process. Having an Adoption Navigator is a free & voluntary service. Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange 3840 Packard Rd., Suite 170 Ann Arbor, MI 48108



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