

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

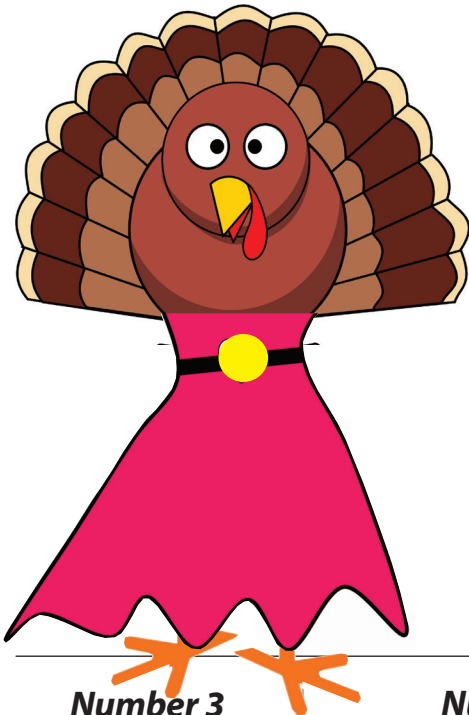
To learn about foster care adoption and view photolistings and videos of waiting children, visit our website at www.mare.org.



Things associated with Thanksgiving

With Thanksgiving and the dinners associated with it coming up, we thought it would be a good time for some exercise ... for your brain. Dig into these mind-benders then feast your eyes on page 3 for puzzle hints, answers and seconds, er, another Thanksgiving word puzzle and a coloring activity.

Number 1



Number 2



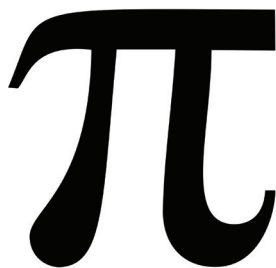
Number 3

April



June

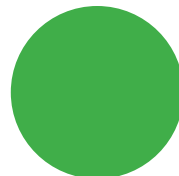
Number 4



Number 5



Number 6



Youth Advisory Board scores big goals

You can join the effort to improve the lives of youth in care

STORY BY **JENNIFER BROOKS, MARE YOUTH SPECIALIST**

The MARE Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is taking shape and getting things done.

With help from staff and youth at St. Vincent's Catholic Charities in Lansing, Bethany Christian Services in Kalamazoo and Whaley Children's Home in Flint, the new YAB has had three meetings and has made some suggestions to improve the lives of youth living in foster care. The board's contributions include:

- **Improvements to Duffle Bags of Love**, which are given to youth entering foster care. YAB's suggestions include socks, a fidget spinner, towel, coloring book, puzzle book and a book to read.

- **Suggestions for MARE's worker training forums.** Youth want workers to get to know what youth on their caseload like, they want more one-on-one time with workers doing fun things together and they want to know worker expectations. In addition, they want workers to advocate for them such as, helping youth get involved with team sports and get enrolled in driver's education. They also want workers to provide resources for them when needed and bring treats.

- **Tips from rock star youth in residential** for youth entering residential. Youth on the board would suggest that incoming youth listen to residential staff and be open minded, respectful and focused. They also suggest incoming youth find someone they like talking to and continue doing the things they enjoy such as reading, drawing and listening to music.

In addition to discussing these topics, youth participating in the YAB meetings have been able to enjoy a fun lunch and receive prizes for participation.

So take a careful look at YAB's mission statement and rules for participation, and if you'd like to join the meetings, let your team know and have them contact Jennifer Brooks, MARE youth specialist, 734-528-2061 or email jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org.



Photo by Jennifer Brooks

Some of the youth who participated in a recent Youth Advisory Board meeting include Ni'Shawn (C07906), Sally (C08409), Nikkoley (C09292), Jason (C08167) and Le-Azhanique (C08821).

Facts About Youth Advisory Board

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

Meetings: Held quarterly at locations throughout Michigan.

How to attend: If you are in the foster care system, contact your worker. If you are a former foster care youth, 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.

Thanksgiving double word scramble

1. SPILRMIG
2. FWAOEMLRY
3. UTEYKR
4. INSNAID
5. BNMEOVRE
6. ASRHVET
7. CNRO
8. ULMHPYOT
9. FTASE
10. DGTITARUE

Page One Puzzle Hints

1. A food mixture.
2. Motor City kitties.
3. A very old ship.
4. Dessert.
5. Where pilgrims landed.
6. A side dish.

Page One Puzzle Answers

1. Turkey dressing.
2. Detroit Lions.
3. The Mayflower.
4. Pumpkin pie.
5. Plymouth rock.
6. Green beans.

Word Scramble Hints

1. Early settlers.
2. See number 3 in Puzzle Hints.
3. The main dinner attraction.
4. Native Americans.
5. Month.
6. Taking of crops.
7. Yellow vegetable.
8. See number 5 in Puzzle Hints.
9. Big eats.
10. Appreciation (First letter is "G.")

Word Scramble Answers

1. Pilgrims.
2. Mayflower.
3. Turkey.
4. Indians.
5. November.
6. Harvest.
7. Corn.
8. Plymouth.
9. Feast.
10. Gratitude.

Dazzle us with your coloring skills

Color these drawings or create your own then send your work to us for publication in a future edition of

the Youth Newsletter. Mail your submissions to Jennifer Brooks, 3840 Packard Road, Suite 170

Ann Arbor, MI, 48108. Or you can email your work to: jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org



Confused about your various workers?

Here's who they are and what they can do to help you

Youth in foster care often have a number of professionals who look after different aspects of a youth's life.

Here's a look at the differences between the workers, what each worker does and who youth in care should call for different reasons.

Foster care case managers (a.k.a. foster care workers) look after youth in the foster placement and make sure the family or caregivers provides them with everything they need – food, shelter, clothing, nurturing, help with homework, etc. Your foster care worker wants to make sure that you are safe, happy and doing well. If you ever have problems in your foster placement or questions about foster care this is the worker you would call.

Adoption specialists focus on finding a family to adopt a youth after his or her parents' rights have been terminated. Sometimes, the foster family or relatives are able to adopt a youth placed in their home and the adoption worker will help the family fill out forms and assess them for adoption. Other times, the foster family cannot adopt a youth in their home and the adoption worker needs to find other families who want to adopt the youth. The adoption specialist will start recruitment activities such as photolisting the youth on mare.org and AdoptUSKids, they will go with the youth to Meet & Greets and other recruitment events and anything else they can do to find a family for the youth. Youth should contact their adoption specialist if they have adoption questions or to discuss their feelings about adoption.

A guardian ad litem (GAL) is a court-appointed lawyer who looks after the well-being of the youth and reports their recommendations to the court. GALs often work closely with agencies, youth and workers to determine the best options for youth. You should call your GAL if you have legal questions. If you are nervous calling them, you can also talk to your foster care and/or adoption specialist and they can relay the messages to your GAL.

Court appointed special advocates (CASA) are volunteers appointed by judges to monitor a youth's case and advocate for the youth's needs. They stay with each case until it is closed and the youth is placed in a safe, permanent home.

Adoption Resource Consultants (ARCs) and Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) recruiters are like adoption specialists who help connect waiting youth with family members from their past or even some family members they may have not known or met. Recruiters also help assess and engage new recruited families who may not have been studied for adoption yet and who are interested in specific youth in need of an adoptive family.

Photolisted youth on MARE who have been available for adoption for more than a year get to work with an Adoption Resource Consultant (ARC). Wendy's Wonderful Kids (WWK) recruiters are part of the Dave Thomas Foundation. Did you know that Dave Thomas, the founder of Wendy's Restaurants was adopted? The Dave Thomas Foundation works to help recruit families to adopt youth and educate families about how to start the adoption process. Not every youth in care will have a WWK recruiter or an ARC worker, but if you want to know more about recruiters, ask your adoption specialist.

