



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](http://www.mare.org).

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# Meet MARE's Match Support team

*The Match Support Program is a statewide service offered to families adopting youth who have been featured on the MARE website. For more information, visit For Families at [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org).*

## **Amanda Dunham, Match Support Program supervisor**

**Background:** After college, I worked in mental health, then foster care case management and a brief stint in medical social work. When MARE's Match Support Program (MSP) started, I became a support specialist and then was promoted to supervisor.

**On joining MSP:** While I was a foster care worker, I worked with foster parents, and I could see how valuable a program match support would be. I was also impressed by the work that MARE does, so it was a great opportunity for me.

**Choosing child welfare:** I feel passionate about children having forever families as well as families getting the assistance they need to remain strong and supportive.

**Helping families:** As supervisor, I assist MSP support specialists so they can provide the resources that families need. I also advocate for changes to improve the way we work with families.

**Most satisfying:** I love to see children have forever families after all they've gone through, and I enjoy helping families be strongly supported.

## **Bobbi Hinton, support staff**

**Background:** Before I came to MARE, I was a lifeguard for six years at the YMCA in downtown Flint. I worked with a lot of kids.

**On joining MSP:** I could appreciate what the program does to have successful matches.

**Choosing child welfare:** When I started college, I wanted to go into teaching, but I changed my mind. After earning my degree, I still wanted to do something to help kids, so child welfare was a good



*From left are Jessica Franks, Bobbi Hinton, Amanda Dunham, Sheriane Davis and Cortney Riggs.*

way for me to still be involved in children's lives.

**Most satisfying:** Even though I do mainly behind the scenes work, there are real results happening from what I do. When we see adoption finalizations, it's nice being a part of that.

## **Cortney Riggs, MSP specialist**

**Background:** After earning my degree in social work and criminal justice, I worked in the court system, then got a job at a residential facility, then worked as a case manager at Methodist Children's Home before coming to MARE.

**On joining MSP:** When I worked in the residential facility, I saw the need for support, so I thought this program would be a great fit. I can help bridge that gap and help see the adoptions to the end.

**Choosing child welfare:** I really think that by helping our youth, we can create stronger adults and our communities will be better off.

**Helping families:** I enjoy providing support to help families through the process.

**Most satisfying:** I really enjoy seeing the love between children and families and knowing that I've had a part in helping to make them a family.

[See MSP staff on page 3](#)



## *Celebrate the season at free events*

Who doesn't like free? Even though summer is winding down, we thought it still would be helpful to scour the Internet for fun, FREE things to do in our great state of Michigan!

**Outdoor movies** all summer long throughout Southeast Michigan. [www.oaklandcountymoms.com/free-summer-movie-nights-37077/](http://www.oaklandcountymoms.com/free-summer-movie-nights-37077/)

**Outdoor concerts** in Metro Detroit [www.oaklandcountymoms.com/free-summer-concerts-metro-detroit-27778/](http://www.oaklandcountymoms.com/free-summer-concerts-metro-detroit-27778/)

**Concerts in Plymouth** [www.downtownplymouth.org/71/Music-In-The-Air-Concert-Series](http://www.downtownplymouth.org/71/Music-In-The-Air-Concert-Series)

**Kids Bowl Free** all summer long! [www.kidsbowlfree.com/index.php](http://www.kidsbowlfree.com/index.php)

**Grand Rapids Art Museum** free Tuesdays and Thursday evenings [www.experiencegr.com/event/meijer-free-days/56658/](http://www.experiencegr.com/event/meijer-free-days/56658/)

**Disc golf** throughout the state [www.discgolfszene.com/courses/Michigan](http://www.discgolfszene.com/courses/Michigan)

**Skating** throughout the summer [kidsskatefree.com/](http://kidsskatefree.com/)

**Learn about the universe** [www.muskegoncc.edu/mathphysical-sciences/carr-fles-planetarium/](http://www.muskegoncc.edu/mathphysical-sciences/carr-fles-planetarium/)

**Grand Haven Musical Fountain** [visitgrandhaven.com/things/attractions/musical-fountain/](http://visitgrandhaven.com/things/attractions/musical-fountain/)

**State Capitol** in Lansing [capitol.michigan.gov/index](http://capitol.michigan.gov/index)

**MSU Botanical Gardens** [www.cpa.msu.edu/beal/beal\\_frames.htm](http://www.cpa.msu.edu/beal/beal_frames.htm)

**Tour the Jiffy Mix Plant** in Chelsea [site.jiffymix.com/about/?cid=933](http://site.jiffymix.com/about/?cid=933)

**Kelsey Museum of Archaeology** in Ann Arbor [lsa.umich.edu/kelsey/](http://lsa.umich.edu/kelsey/)

**Marvin's Mechanical Museum** in Farmington Hills [www.marvin3m.com/](http://www.marvin3m.com/)

**If you live in Macomb, Oakland or Wayne** county you can visit the DIA in Detroit for free. [www.dia.org/](http://www.dia.org/)

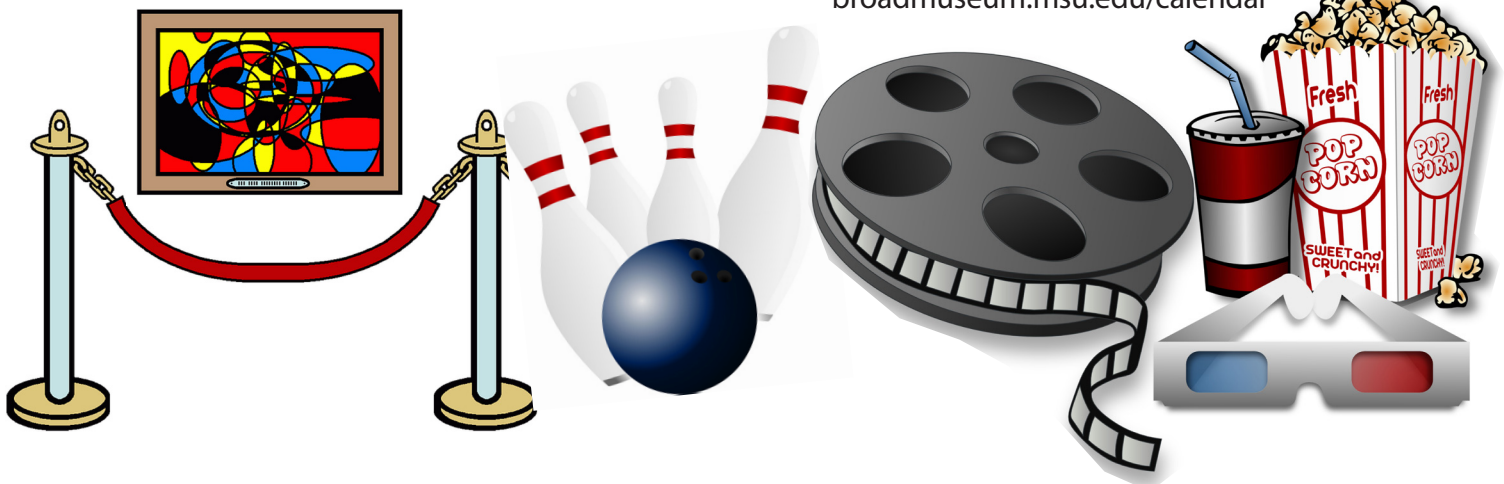
**Visit the Calder Dairy Farm** in Carleton [calderdairy.com/visit-the-farm/](http://calderdairy.com/visit-the-farm/)

**Heritage Park's splash pad** in Canton [mi-canton.civicplus.com/Facilities/Facility/Details/Heritage-Park-27](http://mi-canton.civicplus.com/Facilities/Facility/Details/Heritage-Park-27)

**The Outdoor Adventure Center** in Detroit last Wednesday of the month [www.michigan.gov/oac/0,5736,7-329-68731\\_72450---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/oac/0,5736,7-329-68731_72450---,00.html)

**Broad Museum** in East Lansing first Saturday of the month [broadmuseum.msu.edu/calendar](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu/calendar)

**Charles Wright Museum of African American History** in Detroit second Sunday of the month [broadmuseum.msu.edu/calendar](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu/calendar)



# 28th Annual Adoption Festival and Family Fun Day

Wednesday, Aug. 8, 2018, 5:30 p.m., Veterans Memorial Park, St. Clair Shores

- Free and open to the public • Meet youth awaiting adoption • Visit the Michigan Heart Gallery • Speak with adoption professionals • Food and attractions and activities for all ages

Music On The Lake, featuring Air Margaritaville, a Jimmy Buffet tribute band, immediately follows the festival

800-589-6273 • [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)



MSP staff, continued from page 1

## Jessica Franks, MSP specialist

**Background:** I earned a human services degree from Western Michigan University then I began in child protective services in South Carolina. I returned to Michigan to work for Families First through Judson Center and then had some other jobs before joining Match Support.

**On joining MSP:** I thought it sounded interesting. Now that I'm going through the adoption process myself, I see the value of it even more.

**Choosing child welfare:** Initially I didn't know much about it, but once I got into it I grew passionate about it. Helping adoptive families stay together has been rewarding.

**Helping families:** The number one thing I hear most from families is just having a support person there, someone who they can lean on, somebody who they can talk to.

**Most satisfying:** I love helping families to adoption finalization. I enjoy just watching families during the journey and process and seeing them be successful.

## Julie Miller, MSP specialist

**Background:** I earned a master's degree in social work from Rutgers University. After a stint in business, I returned to social work first with the Post Adoption Resource Centers (PARC) then later as a specialist with the Match Support Program.

**On joining MSP:** I liked the opportunity to work hands on with families and helping them prepare for youth to come into their homes.

**Choosing child welfare:** I really built a connection with the kids while working with the PARC youth group and I became interested in finding new ways to support them.

**Helping families:** I like having the ability to partner with a family. I'm the person they can call for any highs or lows and everything in between.

**Most satisfying:** I enjoy helping with that journey to help strengthen them so they feel empowered to become adoptive parents, adoptive families.

## Sheriane Davis, MSP specialist

**Background:** I'm working on a master's degree in social work. Prior to that, I worked in pastoral care where we did a lot of counseling with families and children. I've also worked in a residential facility.

**On joining MSP:** It seemed like a great way to make sure that families get whatever support and resources they need to have a successful outcome.

**Choosing child welfare:** I had an aunt who did foster care, so our family always had foster care children at family events, and we tried to make them feel a part of the family. That's what drew me in earlier, and then I noticed that there was a gap to fill to make sure that foster children get what they need to become productive adults.

**Helping families:** When we contact families, we give them educational material and talk to them about experiences other families have had. They discover they're not alone, and that helps them see a brighter future.

**Most satisfying:** When a match works and there's an adoption, that is so rewarding.

# Eddie dreams of hoops heaven

Eddie is an outgoing and vibrant young man who knows what he likes, including math, reading and gym class.

"Academics has always been a strength for Eddie," says his worker. "Last fall he had the opportunity to participate in honors classes."

Eddie enjoys sports and would like to play basketball and football. In fact, Eddie already has had a shot at hoops heaven. He's visited the Detroit Pistons' locker room, and he's posed with the jersey of their star player, Andre Drummond.

He even sat in the Piston center's locker-room chair, and he's dribbled on the Pistons' practice court, but he isn't done there. When Metro Airport clears the Pistons' jet for takeoff, Eddie wants the star treatment aboard the team plane.

And if the Pistons don't draft and sign him, "I would be OK with any other team as long as I'm in the NBA."



Eddie (C08115).



Rachel (C08372).

# Animal lover Rachel wants to be a vet

Rachel is affectionate and very personable, and she likes hugs.

"Rachel is a very silly, social and happy child," says her worker.

When she's alone, Rachel uses her strong imagination and enjoys playing with her stuffed animals. One of her favorite activities is making cards and pictures for the people she cares about.

"Rachel is very creative and artistic," says her worker. Rachel's other interests include playing board games, riding her bike, listening to music and going swimming.

Rachel wants to become part of a forever family who has "a home full of pets," according to her worker. It naturally follows that when she gets older, Rachel wants to become a veterinarian. "Rachel loves animals and spends a lot of time tending to the chickens" where she lives, her worker says.

## Calendar of Events

### August 8

#### Kinship Adoption Festival,

The festival begins at 5:30 p.m., at Veterans Memorial Park, 32400 Jefferson Ave., St. Clair Shores.

### September 15

#### MARE Meet & Greet, Midland

11 a.m.-2 p.m.

*For more information regarding these events*

*contact Jessica Thompson, MARE recruitment specialist: [jessica\\_thompson@judsoncenter.org](mailto:jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org)*

Looking to meet some of the children on MARE who are available for adoption?

Attend a Meet & Greet! Contact us at 800-589-6273 or at [mare@judsoncenter.org](mailto:mare@judsoncenter.org) for more information and upcoming events.

**MARE**  
**Meet**  
&  
**Greet**