

MICHIGAN ADOPTION RESOURCE EXCHANGE



MICHIGAN
HEART
GALLERY
2015

Special 2015 Heart Gallery Edition

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Is Jevon sending a message to LeBron? Page 5.

Artistic, playful and loving best describe these sibs, Page 8.

She's not fussy, so the one food Nisha dislikes is surprising, Page 11.

A spotlight on children waiting for permanent & loving families

Winter 2015



WELCOME TO THE Winter 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 a loving, supportive and permanent family of their own through adoption. The children in this edition also will appear on the 2015 Michigan Heart Gallery display (see below).

The youth in the Winter 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.

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.

Grand Opening: Saturday, April 18, 2015



The 2015 Michigan Heart Gallery makes its debut Saturday, April 18 at the Emagine Theater in Royal Oak. Mark your calendars for this special event in which waiting youth become VIPs of the day. For more information, please visit The Michigan Heart Gallery Website, www.miheart.org, the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange website at www.mare.org or contact MARE at 800-589-6273.

Who are the children who wait for adoption?

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





Becca's likes:

- Lists reading and science as favorite subjects in school.
- Being outside and swimming and going to church.

Becca's crystal ball:

- Dreams of traveling to Europe to pick up an accent.

Creative interests:

- Drawing, dancing and singing.

Intangible assets:

- Outgoing with a smile that lights up a

Quotable:

“I am full of creativity, and I love kids. I also like to help others.”

room and loves to fill hearts with laughter.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Wants a family who will set aside “a night every week to spend time together.”
- Need to be patient, sensitive and understanding about Becca's tumultuous past.
- Must be encouraging and supportive of the services that Becca needs to be her best.

Did you know?

MARE has page on its website for people who are new to the adoption process. Subjects covered include the first step in the process, costs and type of home needed by an adoptive family and the different types of adoption. For more information, visit www.mare.org and click on For Families > New to Adoption.



Photo by
Tracy Grosshans



Jevon's likes:

- Playing video games, wrestling, fishing and playing basketball and football.
- Lists Chinese, red and baby tigers as his favorite food, color and animal.
- Soaking up the outdoors and visiting the library.

Creative interests:

- Baking, drawing and listening to music, particularly rap and R&B.

Jevon's crystal ball:

- Wants to be a professional basketball player and some day would like to meet Lebron James ... perhaps on the court???

- Longs for a forever family who will go places and do things with him.

Intangible assets:

- Polite, well-mannered and loyal and protective of those he trusts.
- Likes helping adults and other children.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Wants older brothers and sisters.
- Ability to provide structure, discipline, support and one-on-one attention.
- Commitment to seeking the types of services that will benefit Jevon now and in the future.
- Willingness to be positive role models.

Marcus' likes:

- Fishing and when he's done, he's still ready for more fishing. Wants to fish after school, on the weekend and with a forever family.
- Favorite food isn't fish quiche, fish tacos or even fish 'n chips, but rather fried chicken.

Intangible assets:

- Enjoys participating in community activities and would like to continue to have that opportunity.
- Finds humor and shares it and enjoys life.

Marcus' crystal ball:

- Wishes to be "such a good fisherman to where nobody could beat me." Take that Babe Winkelman, Jimmy Houston and all you other celebrity anglers out there!!!
- Fishing or otherwise, Marcus wants to "be successful in life."

Creative interests:

- Did we list fishing?
- Hooked on other pursuits such as riding bikes, playing video games and cooking.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Wants a family who will take him ... guess where?
- Would do best with experienced parents who can provide one-on-one attention.
- Able to set firm boundaries and be consistent and patient.
- Loves animals and wants a home that has pets.

Quotable:

"I LIKE TO FISH!!! "

"I like to have fun."



Autumn's likes:

- Bowling with her highest game ever being a 158! Let's hear it for spares and strikes forever!
- Also likes playing cards, going skating and playing video games.
- Pizza and pink, her favorite food and color.

Autumn's crystal ball:

- Wants to become a lawyer so she can stand up for the rights of children who have been neglected and abused.

Intangible assets:

- Has good communication skills and openly expresses her feelings.
- Feels most comfortable when she is talking with others.
- Is outgoing, social and silly at times..

Qualities of a forever family:

- Wants to spend time together doing family activities such as shopping, going to the movies and going out for family dinners.
- Would do best with a strong female role model in a home in which she is the youngest child.
- Willing to be active and advocate for Autumn's needs and the services that would help her reach her full potential.

**Quotable:**

"It's not bad to watch TV, but it's better to read."

"I have the best sister and brother in the whole world. They mean the world to me, and I would like to keep in touch with them."

"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."

*Photo by
Robin Pfach*



Taelynn's likes:

- Loves horses and wants to live where she can ride them.
- Participates in sports, particularly skateboarding, volleyball, softball and track.
- Playing video games and going to the movies.
- A country kid at heart who likes being close to the city (see her quote).

Creative interests:

- Shows off her artistic skills by drawing.

Intangible assets:

- Likes exploring new places, an interest that would come in handy on wayard family trips.

Taelynn's crystal ball:

- Wants to become a tattoo artist.

Quotable:

"There's not enough to do in the countryside!"*

*See "likes," above.

Aiden's likes:

- Trying out new sports, especially T-ball.
- Activities such as swimming and riding his bike.



- Playing with Transformers video games and monster trucks.
- Roughhousing with his younger brother, Jaycen.

Intangible assets:

- Needs help coming out of his "shell," yet he's "very opinionated."

Creative interests:

- Playing video games.

Jaycen's likes:

- Enjoys playing on computers and lists eating as a favorite activity.

Jaycen's crystal ball:

- Wants to become a police officer when he gets older so he can help people.

Intangible assets:

- Loves people.
- Is learning to write his name, which could come in handy for his career plans.



Creative interests:

- Wants to live in a house with a pool ... on the roof. It'd save on yard space!!

Quotable:

"I'm really fun!"

Qualities of a forever family:

- Two experienced parents who can provide consistency.
- Patient parents who will advocate for the services the

children need.

- Provide guidance and encouragement to make sure they stay on track in school.
- Taelynn has stated an interest in having a sister her age

while the boys just want a family who will play video games with them.

- Aiden states he wants pets while the others have no preference.

*Photo by
Monique Gallivan*



Mauricio's likes:

- Loves the King of Pop along with the songs that made Michael Jackson famous.
- Likes acting, but don't expect him to break out into a moonwalking imitation of the gloved one. He's a bit shy.
- Reading, watching TV and listening to music.
- Playing basketball, playing games and doing puzzles.

Intangible assets:

- Has an indepent spirit and enjoys doing things on his own.
- Talkative and friendly once he gets to know someone.
- Takes pride in doing well in school.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Experienced parents who can help Mauricio overcome his turbulent past.
- Patient and understanding as he slowly transitions into a home setting.
- Willing to advocate for his needs.
- Accepting of Mauricio maintaining contact with his brother.

Quotable:

"I love acting (like) Michael Jackson, and I love his music ... Some of his songs taught me stuff like not to be mean and not to hurt other people."



*Photo by
Stephanie
Dobbins*



Nisha's likes:

- Reading, especial romance and scary novels.
- All types of food except ... pizza??

Intangible assets:

- Friendly, polite, well-mannered.
- Outgoing, talkative and funny.
- Likes to be helpful with younger kids and will look out for them.

Creative interests:

- Writing in her journal and singing.

Nisha's crystal ball:

- Wants to visit Disney World one day because she's never been there.

- Plans to become a plastic surgeon when she gets older because, "I like helping people."

Qualities of a forever family:

- Some of the words Nisha uses for a family include funny, creative, smart, helpful.
- Loving, patient and willing to help Nisha achieve her goals.
- Advocates for the services that she needs.

Quotable:

"Why was SpongeBob afraid of Kwame? Because Kwame killed Patrick."

*Photos by
Jim Wildermuth*



Gabby's likes:

- Lists tacos and purple as favorite food and color and dog and parrot as favorite animal.
- Playing any kind of Wii game.

Intangible assets:

- Takes pride in her sisters and brother, and family is important to Gabby.
- Participates in track and cheerleading.

Creative interests:

- Feeds her creative urges by singing, dancing and making crafts.

Gabby's crystal ball:

- Dreams of returning to Mexico, where she visited when she was little.
- Wants to become a police officer when she gets older.

Quotable:

"I'm a happy person. "

"I don't like when people yell or raise their voice at me. "

Qualities of a forever family:

- Wants to go out, have fun and play games.
- Prefers a two-parent family, but a single-parent home will be considered.
- Fiercely committed to her in spite of challenging behavior.
- Would do best as youngest or only child.
- Must be active advocates for Gabby in the community and at school to ensure she continues to make positive progress.

Ni'Shawn's likes:

- Spending time playing his Xbox 360.
- Making others laugh and doing card tricks.

Intangible assets:

- Is respectful, and listens and follows directions well from others.
- Uses his sense of humor to connect and interact with people.
- A people-pleaser and is very helpful.
- Outgoing and social.

Creative interests:

- Likes to read and is interested in science fiction.

Qualities of a forever family:

- Would benefit from a strong single- or two-parent family with a good support system.
- Patient and supportive as Ni'Shawn learns to manage his emotions.
- Would do best as the youngest or only child.
- Willing to seek services as needed.

*Photo by
Into The Woods*



Make sure to check out the MARE YouTube Channel to see videos of several of the children featured in the Winter 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
Good Will Farm, Inc., Houghton, 906.482.9832, www.upkids.com
Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin & Upper MI, Marquette, 877.994.8344, www.lsswis.org
Michigan Indian Child Welfare Agency (MICWA), Baraga, 906.353.6178, www.itcmi.org
Michigan Indian Child Welfare Agency (MICWA), Wilson, 906.466.2070, www.itcmi.org
Teaching Family Homes of Upper Michigan, Marquette, 906.249.5437, www.teachingfamilyhomes.org
Upper Peninsula Family Solutions, Marquette, 906.273.1095, www.upfs.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

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, Madison Heights, 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, 248.552.1135, 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, 810.232.9950, www.catholiccharitiesflint.org
 Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw, Ann Arbor, 734.971.9781, www.csswashtenaw.org
 Child & Family Services—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
 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
 Michigan Indian Child Welfare Agency, Lansing, 517.393.3256, www.itcmi.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.fcsources.org
 Family & Children's Services, Inc., Battle Creek, 269.965.3247, www.fcsources.org
 Greater Hopes Family Services, Grand Rapids, 616.451.0245, www.greaterhopes.org
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Grand Rapids, 616.356.1934, www.lasadoption.org
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Kalamazoo, 269.345.5776, www.lasadoption.org
 Michigan Indian Child Welfare Agency, Grand Rapids, 616.454.3142, www.itcmi.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 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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HOMES
FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

800.589.6273
www.mare.org



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

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