

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



GOT BIG DREAMS? LET'S HEAR 'EM

You could earn some gift cards

Sharpen your pencils and get out some blank sheets of paper because the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange has got a way for you to dream up some spending cash, er, a gift card from places such as Target, Walmart, Barnes & Noble and Five Below.

We're giving you three choices of topics to write about, and all you have to do is a little dreaming (see page 2 for details).

What's that? Writing isn't your strength? Well, perhaps you'd like to draw a picture based on the three topics or something entirely different. Well, the deal is still the same.

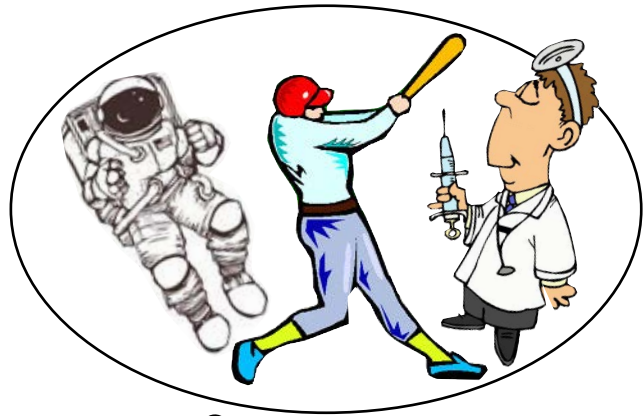
Submit your work, whether it's a drawing, painting, story or poem, and you'll earn a \$10 gift card per submission. Here are some directions for submitting your work along with rules to abide by:

- Once you've completed your work and it's ready to send, ask a staff member or adoption worker to submit your entries to Jennifer Brooks, 3840 Packard Road, Suite 170, Ann Arbor, MI, 48108 or have them email your submission to jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org.

- Once your submission is received, Jennifer will mail the gift card(s) to the adoption worker to give to you. However, there's one thing to keep in mind: MARE has a cap of three gift cards per month.

And if those gifts cards aren't enough incentive for you, perhaps becoming immortalized is. After all, your submissions likely will wind up in print in a newsletter or periodical and perhaps on Facebook.

So don't delay. Turn to page 2 for inspiration that can net you some easy money.



EASY MONEY FOR YOUR STORY



Your dream job

Digging dinosaur bones, helping the sick, teaching music, building bridges ... What do you dream of doing as an adult? Write about your "dream job" and why you've chosen it.



You're the movie director

What kind of movie would you like to make? What would it be about? Who would star in it and why? Where would it be shot and why?



Your perfect day



What would your perfect day be like? Maybe you'd go sledding at sunrise, have lunch on the beach, then get your highest score ever in a basketball game that night. Anything goes! Write about your perfect day.



AN INSIDER'S VIEWPOINT

Dylan tells workers, families what it's like waiting for home

Dylan strayed from "preaching to the choir" when he wrote about his experience in foster care. Instead, with his therapist's help, he wrote a PowerPoint presentation that is aimed, not at fellow foster care children, but at an audience of adoption workers as well as adoptive families. Perhaps you can relate to his message in the presentation entitled "How to Help, Not Hurt."

In it, Dylan wrote about foster children's feelings and behavior. He talked about how foster children might show misbehavior such as tantrums, physical and verbal aggression and ignoring others – particularly workers. He also told his audience "what you cannot see, but I can feel."

"Anger at parents," he wrote, "resentments towards workers and parents, sadness from not being with parents, and depression from not having a family."

Then he addressed why foster kids have difficulty trusting others. He cited "abuse, betrayal, not staying in one foster family," adding that those problems can trigger behaviors such as isolation and avoidance. When he wrote about how foster children, particularly teens, feel about not having a place to call home, Dylan doesn't mince words.

"Holidays stink," he says. Foster teens tend to rebel by not following rules in the foster home and at school. They might resort to smoking and drinking and "fighting because we are angry," he wrote.

Near the end of his presentation, Dylan talked about what foster children "really want you to know."

"Kids have feelings, too," he said. "We just don't show them easily, and we try not to talk about it."

Then he went on to sum up his own struggles while living in the foster care system.

"Sometimes I still sabotage myself," he said. "I still want a family, but I get nervous and scared so I act up. I'm trying to do better with that, and hoping that someone will get who I am and what I need. ... I want a family who will stick with me, no matter how hard I try to push them away."



Another MARE Dream Teen thinks big

Dylan's PowerPoint presentation "How to Help, Not Hurt" shows the powerful thoughts of waiting teens. Here's an excerpt:

Sometimes I still sabotage myself. I still want a family, but I get nervous and scared so I act up. I'm trying to do better with that, and hoping that someone will get who I am and what I need. ... I want a family who will stick with me, no matter how hard I try to push them away."

Step on up!

To learn more about Dylan and other MARE Dream Teens, call 800-589-6273 or visit www.mare.org



Dylan, 14

PHOTOS BY PHOTO BOUTIQUE

CALENDAR OF EVENTS: SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORY

November 1, 2014

Grand Rapids Match Party

11 a.m. - 2 pm

Check the MARE website for more details when they become available.

For more information regarding these events please contact

Jennifer Brooks,
MARE Youth

Specialist: Jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org



Fostering Success Michigan is seeking student stories to be highlighted on their website!

We 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 care between the ages of 18 and 24 who are currently enrolled in high school or college we would love to hear from them.

Contact Fostering Success Michigan Student Researcher, Brittney Grant, at fostering-info@wmich.edu to have the interview questions sent directly to your inbox.

We 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.



Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative - MYOI is a partnership between the Michigan Department of 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.



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.



Camellia Network - Camellia Network harnesses the power of new technology to connect youth "aging out" of the foster care system with a community of resources, opportunities, encouragement and support. Youth have profiles on the site, giving them a place to express themselves, share their goals for the future and articulate what they need to be successful. Individuals and companies from across the country are able to collectively provide the support these young people lack by offering up doses of encouragement, career advice, professional connections, and financial support to help them navigate their way into adulthood.