

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 photolisting and videos of waiting children, visit our website at www.mare.org.



Our library lends families a hand

Consider this resource a life support system of sorts

STORY BY **BOBBI HINTON, MARE MATCH SUPPORT STAFF**

Now is the perfect time to cozy up with a new book and a great blanket.

Why not make your reading list this winter one that will increase your knowledge about how to best support the child who will grow your family? One of the resources frequently utilized by MARE's Match Support families is our Lending Library.

We have numerous books with tips on things from child hygiene to how trauma affects the neurological system to real life stories from other families who have adopted. Our library has something for just about everyone, and if we don't have the book that would best fit your family's needs, we'd be happy to help you find it!

Aside from books, our 90 days of family-centered services can include other educational resources such as articles and webinars, training opportunities and referrals to support groups. In addition to providing educational opportunities, Match Support specialists listen about successes and struggles and work to assist with any bumps that may develop during the transition into the home and the



adoption process.

If you are or you know of an adoptive family who could use some extra support, call 734-528-2020!

Save the date: Saturday, April 13

Join us at the Michigan Heart Gallery Grand Opening

The Michigan Heart Gallery Grand Opening is a great event that you won't want to miss. It is scheduled for Saturday, April 13, 2019, at the Emagine Theater in Royal Oak. The show features the unveiling of this year's Michigan Heart Gallery, a traveling photographic exhibit featuring photos of youth currently in the foster care system waiting for their forever family through adoption.



The festivities also include food and refreshments and a red carpet where many youth will walk and get their pictures taken. This year's Michigan Heart Gallery Grand Opening includes a special feature film that we're sure you'll love. So, mark your calendars, and come join us for this truly remarkable event. Make sure to follow us on Facebook and Twitter for updates.



An “alongside” approach to behaviors can benefit you and your child

In her roles as an adoptive parent and adoption navigator for MARE, Kelli Ostrosky constantly seeks information to understand the behavior of children.

Her recent journey for helpful information led her to the story below by Kirk Martin, a nationally known behavioral therapist who founded a website dedicated to helping children and their families.

BY **KIRK MARTIN**

“Here’s what (can) typically happen.

“Your kids misbehave and consequences are given. Only your kids don’t care about consequences and they don’t teach them anything. They already know that what they are doing is wrong. That’s why they lie! They are embarrassed by their behavior. This is a huge insight for you.

“As much as kids appear to be defiant and disrespectful, the two

words I’d use to describe them are frustrated and ashamed.

“Please let that sink in. Meditate on that for a moment. If you could read what’s smeared all over their hearts, it’s frustration and shame.

“They know they don’t fit in. But they feel misunderstood (rightly so), like everyone assumes they are bad on purpose. Is it any wonder they develop a hard shell that pushes people away?

“Instead of shaming the child with, ‘How many times do I have to tell you?’ you come alongside and say quietly, ‘I know that you know what you did was wrong. I’m not surprised or upset at you. My assumption is you don’t want to be in trouble all the time. So if you want to come outside and kick the soccer ball around, I’ll show you three different ways to make a better choice next time. Why don’t we rewind that situation and practice doing it differently?’

“See, now I am SHOWING and giving the child tools. It’s moving from thinking, ‘He’s just an insolent (youngster) who wants to make my life miserable’ to ‘He’s overwhelmed, frustrated and ashamed. I’ll come alongside and help.’

“Now you’ve assumed the best about your child’s intentions, demonstrated that you’re a safe place to come with problems, and equipped your child with tools so they don’t keep making the same mistake. Always think, ‘What tool can I give my child to help with focus, impulse control, social skills, etc.?’”

In the next issue of our Family Newsletter, Kelli Ostrosky discusses how seeing Kirk Martin speak at a conference affected her parenting style and influenced her advisory role in her job helping other adoptive parents.

Story courtesy www.CelebrateCalm.com

Jaxx is always ready to aid others

They say moss can't grow on a rolling stone, so don't expect Jaxx to gather any.

Jaxx is a teen who likes to stay on the go and get involved. In fact, his worker says, "He enjoys being a busybody," but not as a meddling or prying person. Instead, he's personable and empathetic.

"Jaxx loves to help others in all areas," says his worker.

Jaxx describes himself as respectful and hardworking. When asked about school, Jaxx says that he enjoys it and that math is his favorite subject.

However, he's modest about his grades and says he's "just an average student," although evidence might suggest otherwise.

Jaxx isn't a big fan of cats, but he is open to families who have other animals. He shares no preference for urban or rural homes.

Jaxx's worker says he would benefit from a female as his primary caregiver, so a single female or two-female home would be best. The family needs to be knowledgeable about how trauma affects a child.



Shenella is quite sagacious

On her list of wishes, Shenella has a few that could melt your heart.

For instance, she dreams of "giving children a life I didn't have." She longs for the opportunity to attend college, and she wants a chance "to do better."

Even though she looks to the future, Shenella stays planted in the present and takes pride in "getting to the stage I'm at. I've come a long way."

This wise-beyond-her-age young lady loves to engage with others and can be entertaining. "She is funny, quick-witted and likes to joke around," says her worker.

Shenella also is a smart girl with a good memory. She's got talent, too.

"She is creative and enjoys reading, coloring and drawing," the worker says.

When she gets older, Shenella wants to become a foster parent because, she says, "I can care for children of all ages."



More ways for you to engage with us

There have been some exciting additions to MARE's social media in recent months.

First of all, MARE created an Instagram account shortly before the end of 2018. Instagram is a popular social media platform for many people, including potential adoptive families, and we thought it would be a good idea to join you there.

Then in January 2019, we launched a video series called the MARE Minute on all of our social media platforms. This weekly segment – which airs on our social media outlets each Monday – features MARE staff members discussing commonly asked questions such as the cost of adoption, the reason MARE exists, the programs we offer and the help available to families on their journey to adoption.

"We wanted to take a literal minute and give the families and workers who follow our social media channels a chance to learn a little more about MARE, adoption and MARE procedures," says MARE Social Work Supervisor Margaret White. "Understanding the adoption process makes it easier to empower yourself and make the most out of it!"

Another reason why we started the MARE Minute was to help you put a face to the names of the people you come into contact with and to provide you an additional opportunity to interact with us via social media.

"We are really excited about starting the MARE Minute on Facebook,



Twitter and Instagram; it has been a great way to engage our followers," says MARE Program Manager Michelle Parra. "We've gotten positive feedback from prospective families as well as suggestions for future MARE Minute topics."

To watch the MARE Minute, make sure to follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/MichiganAdoptionResourceExchange, on Twitter at @MAREinMichigan and on Instagram at mareinmichigan. If you have a suggestion for a future MARE Minute, email it to mare@judsoncenter.com or comment on our Facebook page.

Calendar of Events

May 18

MARE Meet & Greet, Sterling Heights
11 a.m.-2 p.m.

June 8

Art & Soul Meet & Greet, Utica
11 a.m.-2 p.m.

June 22

MARE Meet & Greet, Portage
11 a.m.-2 p.m.

For more information about these events, contact Jessica Thompson, MARE Recruitment Specialist: jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org

MARE contact info

Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange
3840 Packard Road, Suite 170
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
Toll Free: 800-589-6273
TTY: 734-794-2984
Fax: 734-528-1695
mare@judsoncenter.org