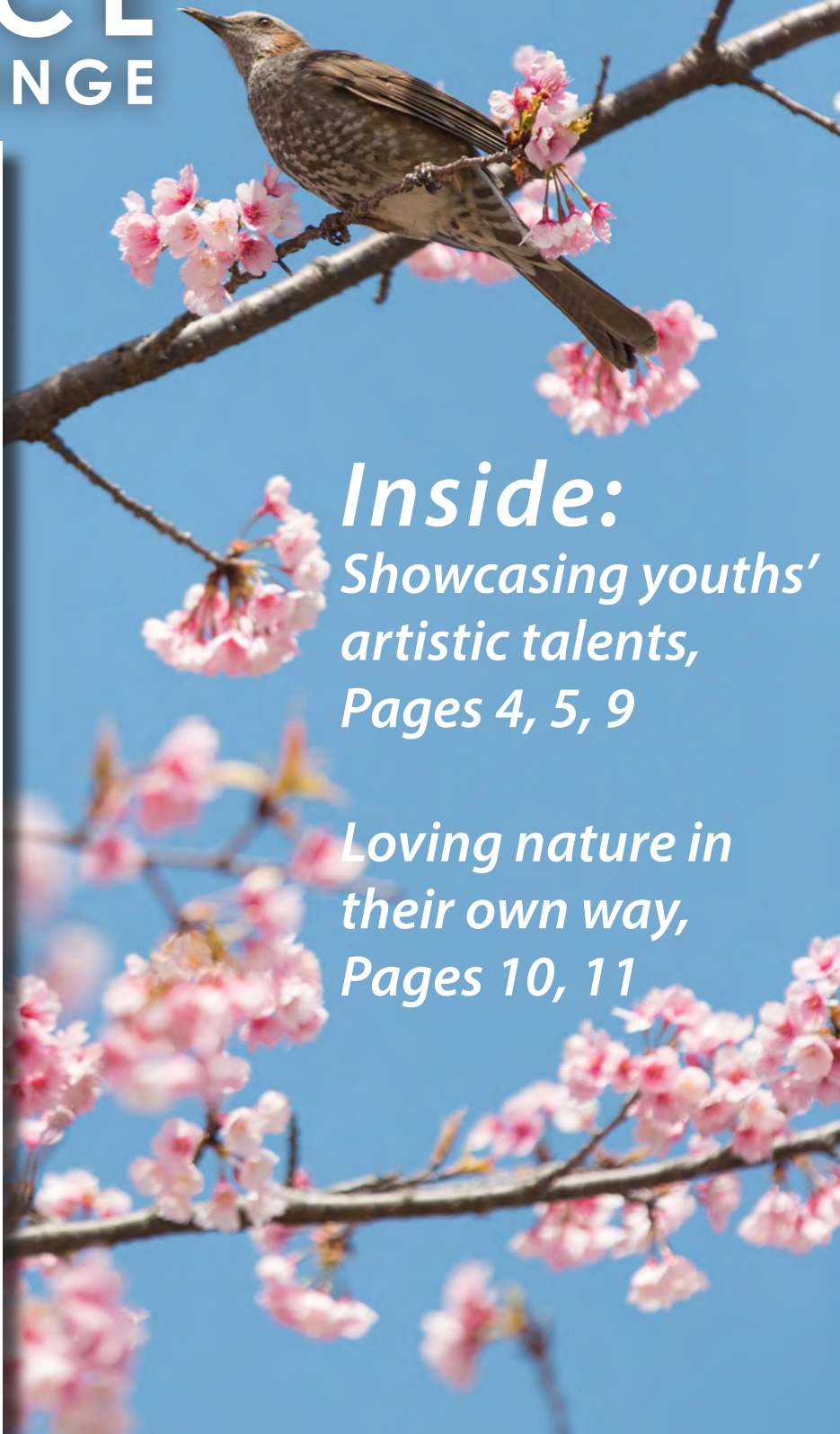


MICHIGAN ADOPTION RESOURCE EXCHANGE



*Inside:
Showcasing youths'
artistic talents,
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*Loving nature in
their own way,
Pages 10, 11*

Spring 2024

A spotlight on children
waiting for permanent
and loving families

Welcome to the Spring 2024 Recruitment Periodical, published by the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE). Over the next several pages, you will be introduced to some of the youth in Michigan who are awaiting a loving, supportive and permanent family of their own through adoption. The youth featured here represent hundreds of other youth in Michigan's foster care system who are waiting to become part of a loving family through adoption. To learn more about these children and adoption, visit www.mare.org.

On the MARE website, you will find photos, narratives and video clips of youth waiting to be adopted, 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 a youth 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 or contact an adoption navigator at 800-589-6273. MARE is available to answer your adoption-related questions, and we will do our best to get you headed in the right direction.

Save the date: Saturday, Sept. 21

Join us at the 2024 Michigan Heart Gallery Premiere

The Michigan Heart Gallery Premiere is a great event that you won't want to miss.

It is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024, 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. This year's Michigan Heart Gallery



Premiere 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.

Can't join us in person? Be sure to follow us at www.facebook.com/MichiganAdoptionResourceExchange for details on how you can enjoy the festivities virtually.



Arrionna

C010575

Photo by Paul Rains

Arrionna's likes:

- Participating in gymnastics and doing cartwheels and tricks, especially when others join her
- Studying the wildlife such as deer, rabbits and turtles in the woodlands near where she lives
- Finding comfort in a stuffed teddy bear as well as in fast food
- Watching cartoons and laughing

Tremendous traits:

- Likes learning about new things

Qualities of a forever family:

- Two experienced, understanding and patient parents
- Supportive of her interest in her African American heritage
- Willing to help Arrionna maintain a connection with her sister

Who are the children who wait for adoption?

Children who have been placed in Michigan's foster care system and are awaiting adoption have some similar experiences related to trauma including:

- Physical/sexual/emotional abuse
- Severe neglect
- Alcohol/drug exposed infants

Many of these children share similar characteristics that can make their adoptions difficult or "special needs". Some special needs adoptions include some combination of the following circumstances:

- Physical/mental/developmental impairments of the child
- Children who are school aged and up
- Of the 98% of children ages 5 and up waiting for adoption, 75% are aged 11 to 17 years of age
- Children who are a part of a sibling group who must be placed together
- Youth who identify as LGBTQI+
- Children of color

Around 93 percent of children in Michigan's foster care system that are awaiting adoption are adopted by their foster parent(s) or relatives. The remaining children, like those highlighted in this newsletter or on the MARE website, don't have an identified family to adopt them. Recruitment of a suitable adoptive home for these children is therefore necessary.

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 adoption assistance, which is intended to assist adoptive families in meeting the children's needs.

How much does it cost to adopt a child from foster care?

The only costs you should incur from adopting a child from Michigan's foster care system are court filing and birth certificate fees. Some agencies may charge a fee for the Adoptive 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.

What is the adoption process?

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 www.mare.org) and can take an average of six months to complete. The Adoptive Family Assessment includes, but is not limited to, the following components:

- Personal history.
- Health statements.
- Criminal background checks.
- 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.

Brandon C010261

*Photo by
Paul Rains*



Brandon's likes:

- Celebrating summer with barbecue, bubbles and balloons
- Singing while listening to music
- Swimming and playing on splash pads

Qualities of a forever family:

- Two parents of any gender
- Strong advocates for Brandon

“Jesse has a big sense of humor and loves to make people laugh.”

Photo by
Paul Rains



Jesse’s likes:

- Participates in baseball, basketball, football, lacrosse and cheer
- Making music with the guitar
- Immersing himself in a good read, especially fantasy books

Tremendous traits:

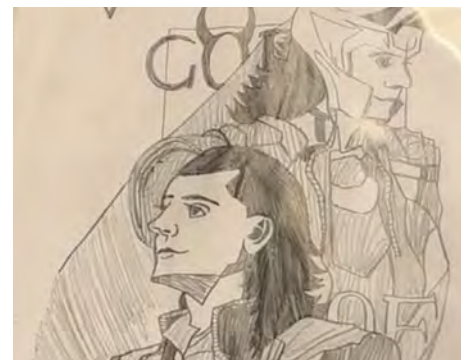
- Friendly, talkative and exceptionally polite and well-mannered

Creative interests:

- Very talented at drawing and takes pride in creating a school mural for MLK Day

Qualities of a forever family:

- Patient, experienced and well-versed in caring for teens
- Can provide routine and set clear expectations
- Supportive of his continued contact with siblings



Did you know?

In addition to this quarterly periodical, the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange also publishes newsletters for youth, families and professionals. You can find them at www.mare.org > Resources > Newsletters.



**Family
Newsletter**

Treasure's likes:

- Reading books and admits to crying when reading "Where the Red Fern Grows"
- Drawing and talking about the process
- Snoozing after school and on weekends

Treasure's crystal ball:

- Wants to travel to Paris and Italy as much for the food as the art
- Becoming an artist
- "Hair that looks beautiful every day without having to do anything to it"

Tremendous traits:

- Kind and well-mannered
- A good advocate for herself

Qualities of a forever family:

- One or two parents who are experienced
- A family with or without other children
- Willing to let Treasure maintain her connection with her brother
- A family who has pets, preferably cats and dogs

Photo by
Paul Rains



"Treasure is a kind, well-mannered young lady who is a good kid."





“Oliyah is a very sweet, smart, polite and helpful young girl who thrives on positive interaction and affection.”

Oliyah’s likes:

- Participating in Girl Scouts
- Coloring, drawing and making jewelry
- Playing soccer, going rollerblading and riding bikes
- Attending summer camps
- Going to the park and to the zoo
- Munching on hot Cheetos
- Participating in church activities

Tremendous traits:

- Caring, giving, loving, thoughtful, kind and well-mannered

Qualities of a forever family:

- An experienced mom and dad
- Fierce advocates for Oliyah
- Youngest child
- Understanding, affectionate and patient

*Photo by
Memories by Mandy
Photography*



“Lily is a very down-to-earth, interested and driven girl who can do wonders with someone who believes in her.”

Lily’s likes:

- Walking after school along with napping and cooking
- Going on adventures, especially anything water-related
- Participating in volleyball, kickball and pottery at school
- Going to community events, volunteering and hanging out with family on weekends

Lily’s crystal ball:

- Wants to become a travel nurse

Qualities of a forever family:

- Understanding and patient with her transition into the home
- Able to provide the guidance and attention she thrives on
- Open to Lily’s sibling relationships

Elijah's likes:

- Outdoor activities such as swimming, hiking, swinging on a swing set, jumping on the trampoline and helping feed the animals
- Being around other children
- Playing with Play-Doh and stuffed animals
- Water toys

Tremendous traits:

- Has a very good memory and enjoys spending time with those he knows
- Learns well by copying the actions of others

Qualities of a forever family:

- Two experienced parents who can provide the attention and supervision he requires
- Able to provide structure and stability
- Would do best as the youngest child

“Elijah is a very sweet and happy boy who has a beautiful smile that brings joy to anyone who sees it.”



Elijah loves hanging out in his element, the playground!

Aiden's likes:

- Skateboarding and football
- Spending time with pets, especially dogs
- Noshing on pepperoni pizza
- Playing with Transformers

Creative interests:

- Drawing and making art and wants to make art his profession

Qualities of a forever family:

- Experienced, loving and patient parent or parents
- A home with or without other children
- Willing to let Aiden maintain his sibling relationships

“Aiden is a very bubbly and funny teenager who loves to make jokes and be creative.”



Photo by
Derek Cookson



Count Aiden as one of the people who ranks Scooby-Doo among the best cartoons ever. Here, he shows off his drawings based on the cartoon series, which he made during a recent event. There are Aiden's depictions of Scooby, Shaggy, below, and Velma, left, and the drawings show a young artist at the top of his game, don't you think?





*Photo by
Kristina Mayre
Photography*

Jayden's likes:

- Looking for and finding bugs to study or collect
- Going on nature walks and looking for wildlife, especially on the weekends
- Playing basketball whether it's indoors or out
- Rock-wall climbing and working out
- Participating in organized ball as much as possible including gaga ball
- Attending science class

Jayden's crystal ball:

- Going on adventures, going fishing and hiking in the woods with his forever family
- Traveling to Florida to visit Disney World
- Owning a house and lots of animals

Qualities of a forever family:

- Experienced, patient and understanding parent or parents
- Able to provide structure and consistency
- Youngest or only child

“Jayden has a great personality and enjoys making other people laugh. Any family would love having him.”

Photo by
Lizzie Photo



Ivy's likes:

- Dancing and twirling
- Socializing with others
- Listening to music and singing
- Playing with Play-Doh and slime
- Swinging on the hammock swing or tire swing
- Visiting the petting zoo and interacting with many different animals
- Munching on grapes and cheese sandwiches

Tremendous traits:

- Sweet, social and affectionate
- An adventurous girl who loves having fun
- Gets along well with children of all ages

Qualities of a forever family:

- Two parents or a single female parent with strong support
- Able to make sure she gets the supervision, services and attention she requires

“Ivy is a well-behaved girl who shows a strength and willingness in learning new skills.”



“Carrie is such a sweetheart who is truly a light in everyone’s life and will provide so much love and passion to any family.”

Carrie’s likes:

- Going to the store and helping out with the shopping
- Playing outside on a swing set
- Making arts and crafts
- Unwinding by watching TV and sleeping in on weekends
- Dogs, particularly black labs
- Watching the animated film “Elemental”
- Playing Monopoly
- Doing makeup
- Using her imagination by playing with Barbies

Carrie’s crystal ball:

- Visiting Disney World so she can swim in one of the feature pools
- Becoming a fashion designer
- Wants to participate in cheerleading or a similar hobby

Qualities of a forever family:

- Two experienced parents
- Only or youngest child
- Able to provide love and support in a predictable and structured home
- Yes to pets!



“Joshua always strives to do better, and he cares about others.”

Joshua’s likes:

- Having sleepovers with friends
- Playing football and basketball
- Spending time with family, particularly on special occasions such as his birthday, Mother’s Day, Easter and Christmas and celebrating them by eating well
- Going out to eat
- Going to the park
- Sharing a laugh with others

Joshua’s crystal ball:

- Wants to become a mechanic “so I can make a lot of money”

Qualities of a forever family:

- A single female parent, two female parents or a mom and dad who are experienced
- Patient and understanding
- Fierce advocates to help Joshua flourish

Make sure to check out the MARE YouTube Channel to see videos of several of the children featured in the Spring 2024 Periodical.

Visit www.mare.org for a complete listing of agencies who license families for foster care, in addition to adoption homestudies, including your Michigan Department of Health and Human Services county office.

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. For an interactive map of statewide licensed agencies, visit: <http://www.mare.org/For-Families/New-to-Adoption/Find-a-Licensed-Agency>

Upper Peninsula

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
Sault Tribe Binogii Placement Agency, Sault Ste. Marie, 906-632-5250, www.saulttribe.com
Upper Peninsula Family Solutions, Marquette, 906-273-1095, www.upfs.org
U.P. Kids, Houghton, 906-487-9832, www.upkids.com

Northern and Central Lower Michigan

Adoption Option Inc., Midland, 989-839-0534, www.adoptionoptioninc.org
Bethany Christian Services, Traverse City, 231-995-0870, www.bethany.org/traversecity
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
Ennis Center for Children, Saginaw, 989-558-0020, www.enniscenter.org
Holy Cross Services, Saginaw, 989-577-5814, www.holycrossservices.org
Legacy Adoption Service, Bay City, 989-686-3170, www.lasadoption.org
Legacy Adoption Service, Clare, 989-386-2101, www.lasadoption.org
New Light Child & Family Institute, Millington, 989-871-6695, www.newlightonline.net

Tri-County Area (Wayne, Oakland & Macomb Counties)

Bethany Christian Services, Southfield, 248-414-4080, bethany.org/locations/us/michigan/southeast-michigan
Catholic Charities of S.E. Michigan, 855-882-2736, www.ccsem.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 & Community Services, Inc., Utica, 586-726-2988, www.facadopt.org
Forever Families, Livonia, 734-762-0909, www.forever-families.org
Homes for Black Children, Detroit, 313-961-4777
Judson Center, Dearborn, 313-794-5653, www.judsoncenter.org
Legacy Adoption Service, Troy, 248-423-2770, www.lasadoption.org
Methodist Children's Home, Dearborn, 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, 248-443-0300, www.spaulding.org
Spectrum Human Services, Southfield, 248-552-8020, www.spectrumhuman.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 and Foster Care Specialists, Inc., Lapeer, 810-660-7590, www.adoption-specialists.org
 Bethany Christian Services, East Lansing, 517-336-0191, www.bethany.org/eastlansing
 Catholic Charities of Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale counties, Adrian, 517-263-2191, www.catholiccharitiesjllhc.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 Charities – Capital Area, Lansing, 517-882-4000, www.childandfamily.org
 Ennis Center for Children, Flint, 810-233-4031, www.enniscenter.org
 Ennis Center for Children, Howell, 517-881-0723, www.enniscenter.org
 Ennis Center for Children, Monroe, 734-349-6546, www.enniscenter.org
 Ennis Center for Children, Port Huron, 810-990-1424, www.enniscenter.org
 Family & Community Services, Inc., Howell, 517-615-1275, www.facadopt.org
 Family Service & Children's Aid, Jackson, 517-787-7920, www.strong-families.org
 Fostering Futures, Ann Arbor, 734-481-8999, www.fostering-futures.com
 Fostering Solutions, Adrian, 517-263-0020, www.fosteringsolutions.org
 Growing Hope Through Love, Howell, 517-798-4020
 Hands Across the Water, Ann Arbor, 734-477-0135, www.hatw.org
 Livingston County Catholic Charities, Howell, 517-545-5944, www.livingstoncatholiccharities.org
 Legacy Adoption Service, Ann Arbor, 734-971-1944, www.lasadoption.org
 Legacy Adoption Service, Jackson, 517-789-6444, www.lasadoption.org
 Legacy Adoption Service, Lansing, 517-886-1380, www.lasadoption.org
 Open Door Adoption Services, Jackson, 517-936-7713, www.opendooradoptionsservices.org
 St. Vincent Catholic Charities, Lansing, 517-323-4734, www.stvcc.org

Southwest Michigan

Arbor Circle, Holland, 616-396-2301, www.pathwaysmi.org
 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.dabsj.org
 Family & Children's Services, Inc., Kalamazoo, 269-344-0202, www.fcsource.org
 Family & Children's Services, Inc., Battle Creek, 269-965-3247, www.fcsource.org
 Legacy Adoption Service, Grand Rapids, 616-356-1934, www.lasadoption.org
 Legacy Adoption Service, Kalamazoo, 269-345-5776, www.lasadoption.org
 Youth Guidance Foster Care & Adoption Center, Battle Creek, 269-969-9181, www.cityinc.org

MICHIGAN
ADOPTION
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EXCHANGE

Adoption
Navigators

MARE 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, adopted a number of children, and have knowledge of foster care, infant and older, and domestic and 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 and voluntary service.

Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange
3840 Packard Rd., Suite 170
Ann Arbor, MI 48108



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Follow the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange on Social Media:



@MichiganAdoptionResourceExchange



@VideosbyMARE



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