



How can I help youth in foster care if I can't foster or adopt?

Whether it's you, you and your family, a community, or an organization, there are ways to help youth in foster care and youth navigating adult life after foster care that don't require fostering or adopting.

One time, quick and easy

Donate

Are you spring cleaning? Have your kids outgrown their clothes, books and toys? Donate suitable, hand-me-down items to your local foster closet. The Macomb Foster Closet maintains a list of foster closets across Michigan. Visit their website at macombfostercloset.org to find one near you. Reach out to a foster care agency or a foster closet or a program that serves youth in foster care. Find out what they need, make some purchases and drop them off.

Recruitment Cards/Prayer Cards

If you have a place of worship, consider ordering free prayer cards from the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange. The cards give basic info about the youth, feature their photo and are great to post on a fridge or on tables at a faith event to help recruit an adoptive family. Contact MARE to obtain prayer cards.

Monetary Donation

Donate to an agency or program that serves youth in foster care.

Take it all up a notch

Encourage other people you know to donate to a foster closet. Organize your school or church or other community group to gather and donate gently-used items.

Get even more involved

Mentor

Locate a mentoring program such as the YMCA, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club, or Child Safe Michigan. You will be matched with a youth by the mentoring program staff so be sure to tell them your goal is to mentor youth in foster care.

Provide respite

Consider becoming a respite care provider. Respite care is intended to "provide temporary and occasional relief to the child and the child's current placement caregiver, legal parent, or legal guardian to maintain the ability to meet the needs of the child and to support the well-being of the current placement caregiver." Contact the Foster Care Navigator Program (FCNP.org) or your local Department of Health and Human Services for more information.

Formally advocate

Become a Court Appointed Special Advocate (michigancasa.org) to support a child going through the family court system. Encourage businesses and organizations to have policies that support youth in foster care and those navigating college and adult life beyond foster care as well as families who foster and/or adopt. You can influence child welfare laws. Legislation at the state and federal level impacts child welfare systems and service delivery. Keep an eye on what's happening in the legislative system and contact your legislators to let them know what you think.

Host a youth who is living independently

Become an independent living home. This is a program for older youth who are transitioning from being in foster care to navigating adult life. This is similar to hosting an exchange student, but for foster youth. Youth must meet program behavior and independence requirements. Agencies facilitate this arrangement and establish a contract with the family and the youth. Contact a local agency to learn more.

Use your specific talents and skills

Photographers needed

The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is always looking for photographers who can volunteer their skills to photograph youth and families for the Heart Gallery displays and events and for youth profiles on the MARE website (MARE.org). If you are a professional, semiprofessional or experienced hobby photographer with special training and skills in this area, contact MARE to learn more. The photographer always receives artistic credit when images are used.

Get an organization or business involved

Host the Michigan Heart Gallery

The Michigan Heart Gallery is a traveling photographic exhibit featuring photos of youth currently in the foster care system waiting for their forever family. It includes banner stands and a display of photos to promote adoption and get youth's profiles into the public eye. These are displayed throughout the year in various places around the state of Michigan - places of worship, business locations, private venues, special events. Do you know of a location that might have the space to and interest in displaying the gallery? Contact MARE to learn more.

Provide a unique event space

The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange hosts numerous events each year, the most frequent being the MARE Meet and Greet. Space is always needed for these events. Perhaps you have a place in mind, or you have a personal or professional relationship with an organization that might invest in this cause. Commitment can vary. Some venues provide space only. Some donate more, including lunch, activities, or even volunteers for the event. It is recommended to speak with them first to gauge their interest, time, space availability, and financial ability to help. Then contact MARE to suggest your location.

Reach out to Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange

Bonus way to help!

Find us on social media and get a conversation going!

Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Phone: (800) 589 - 6273

Use the QR code to Contact MARE



@MichiganAdoptionResourceExchange



@mareinmichigan



@VideosbyMARE

