



Recruitment: Helping youth put their best foot forward

WRITTEN BY ADRIANA CAZZELL AND MARGARET WHITE

Videos and photos are powerful parts of the MARE recruitment tools available to you and the youth you serve. Just like we want to make sure their narratives are strength-based, photos and videos need to show youth at their best as well. As their adoption worker, you can help with this by making sure youth have appropriate clothes and are neat and clean for any video or photo shoots.

MARE sometimes shows up to video shoots to find youth in unkempt or heavily worn clothing and with their hair overgrown, unclean, and unbrushed. There isn't much MARE can do on the spot to improve that. So, some planning and preparation before the video or photo shoot is appreciated! Once you schedule a video/photo day with MARE, you can contact their foster or residential placement to make arrangements. But how can you be certain they will look their best?



Celeste Kelley, Foster Care, Adoption, and Foster Care Licensing Supervisor at Spectrum Human Services took the extra step to make a video shoot positive for a youth on her caseload. When the youth expressed wanting to get their hair done and get new clothes, Celeste knew she had to do something. This youth was living in a residential placement at the time of the video shoot. Celeste held a meeting with the child's team to determine who could help with the costs to make this youth's wish come true.

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Celebrate National Adoption Month with MARE! Go to www.mare.org to nominate an Outstanding Adoptive Family for recognition.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services were willing to contribute part of the cost and the residential had a budget for haircuts and grooming. The youth was able to plan her own outfit and came to the video shoot feeling and looking her best!

Celeste understands the impact youth appearing well groomed for videos or photos makes on recruitment. "If a family doesn't see a well-groomed child, they tend to pass over them," explains Celeste. "It's the presumption that if they don't see a well-kept child, that child is unkempt."

Celeste went on to say that proper attention and care for children with textured hair is not often addressed. MARE has had good luck reaching out to salons who specialize with textured hair and asking them to volunteer their services.

Before a youth on your caseload has their next video or photo shoot take some time to talk to the youth about how they want to present themselves. Do they have clothes they would like to wear? If not, Foster Closets are a good resource or you can check with their foster care worker to see if there is budget available. Does the youth need or want to have their hair cut or styled? Check to see if there is budget available from existing funds and if not, ask an appropriate salon to volunteer services. On the day of the shoot, make sure there is an adult at the youth's placement that will guarantee the youth is clean and prepared for the shoot. With your help, we can all make video and photo shoots more fun and a more effective recruitment tool for youth.

The 2024 Michigan Heart Gallery Premiere



Arabella, C010664

Photo by Purely Blissful Photography



Jaheim, C09549

Photo by Paul Rains

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

It is scheduled for Saturday, September 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.

Registration to attend is open on www.mare.org. We would love to see you there. Be sure to sign up MARE youth on your caseload to attend and recommend the event to families you work with!

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.



As a preview to the show, we asked MARE Recruitment Specialist Jessica Thompson what can be expected.

What makes this event special?

It's a chance for foster youth to have a day of fun. They get to come to the theater, see a short film, they get free pop and popcorn, and if they're featured in the 2024 Heart Gallery, they get to see themselves on the display. They also might get a chance to interact with adoptive families who are attending.

What are some of the fun things to do at this event?

The theater has some arcade games in the reception area that will be open for free play. Foster youth will see the premiere of the 2024 Michigan Heart Gallery film, and they'll get the chance to have their picture taken just like celebrities who attend a premiere movie, complete with a walk on the red carpet. They'll also receive movie passes to either use the day of the event or come back to the theater another time.

Will there be food other than popcorn?

We will be having pizza, chicken tenders and salad for lunch. The theater has rented us their grill area so that we can dine in comfort there.

How can foster youth attend?

If your foster care youth is interested in attending the event, you can pre-register them, but they don't have to be pre-registered. They can arrive the day of the event and enjoy the festivities. They also don't have to be featured in the 2024 Heart Gallery display to attend the event. However, you should let your foster care youth know about the event in case they want to attend.

From top to bottom: Lashayla, C010576, photo by Katie Dubuc. Braydon, C010509, photo by Paul Rains. Kauron, C010508, photo by Memories by Mandy Photography.

In-Depth Profiles

GIVING YOUTH THE OPPORTUNITY TO TELL THEIR OWN STORIES



There's a new rookie on the scene and he just finished an In Depth Profile with MARE. Aiden is a football fanatic so he chose to feature his love of the sport on his In Depth Profile. He's in the early stages of his high school football career, but he has his sights set on playing for U of M one day. He hopes to be scouted and play for the NFL after his college days. Check out Aiden's In Depth Profile. Just follow the QR code!



Creating an In Depth Profile gave Aiden a chance to choose what he wanted to let potential adoptive families know about him. MARE worked with Aiden to develop the concept and create the material... and nothing was published until Aiden gave MARE the final thumbs up. If you have a youth interested in creating an In Depth Profile, contact jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org.

Did you know?

When uploading a document to remove a child from MARE photolisting, the document you choose matters!

- **Intent to Adopt:** The DHS-4809 Intent to Adopt for Current Placement should only be used for foster homes or relative homes the child is currently residing in.
- **Consideration to Adopt:** For all other parties, such as relatives or fictive kin who don't have current placement and recruited families, the MDHHS-6038 Consideration to Adopt form should be used.

Calendar

August 27
Waiting Family Forum
Virtual Event

5:30PM - 7:30PM
Registration will be available soon on www.mare.org

September 21
Heart Gallery Premiere
Imagine Theater
Royal Oak
11AM - 2PM

For more information, contact jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org or call 734-528-2070.

Take note: Watch for notices of upcoming Meet & Greets on www.mare.org and on Facebook and Instagram.

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