



Professional Newsletter

Spring 2024

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Jordan (C09998) was one of the youth having a good time at a recent Meet & Greet.

Share information about MARE Meet & Greets with your families

STORY BY **KIMBERLY GROVER, MARE ADOPTION NAVIGATOR**

If you're an adoptive parent, you might have heard about the MARE Meet & Greets, and if you haven't heard, well, here are reasons for you to join the festivities.

These events are aimed at providing youth who await adoption a fun day of activities while also giving adoptive families and youth the chance to meet and get to know each other. Although attendance will vary based on location, the events are small enough and structured to maximize interaction between youth and adults. Each event follows the same basic structure. Adoptive parents as well as

youth will arrive, sign in and attend separate orientations to answer questions and outline what to expect during the event. MARE staff will review the conduct guidelines, provide some tips for interactions between youth and adoptive parents and describe how the event will be organized.

After the orientation, the Meet & Greet generally starts off with an ice-breaker activity so youth and families can introduce themselves. Many Meet & Greets then go on to activities involving playing games while providing opportunities for youth

Let adoptive parents know that they can learn about foster care adoption at www.mare.org.



Aspen (C010647), above, and Cal (C09585), right, joined the festivities recently at the MARE Meet & Greet at the Sloan Museum of Discovery in Flint.



Facts About MARE Meet & Greets

MARE's in-person Meet & Greets are held throughout the state at various churches and community centers.

They are typically held on Saturdays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and lunch will be provided.

Virtual Meet & Greets often occur during hours such as weekday evenings that are more convenient for many youth and families.

and families to interact and get to know each other.

The events also can include activities such as making arts and crafts, engaging with animals at a petting farm or meeting up at a bowling alley, baseball game, zoo or museum.

After an active morning, lunch is served, which provides additional, more casual time to interact. Afternoons generally consist of more opportunities for youth and families to interact before the event wraps up with a debriefing, which includes separate sessions for youth and adults.

MARE staff then answers any questions before having participants complete a survey that lets us know about any possible mutual connections between youth and families. Typically, 20-25 youth and 6-10 families attend the in-person Meet & Greets.

The virtual Meet & Greets are very similar to the in-person events. They are often a bit shorter since we don't serve virtual lunch, but youth and families still have the opportunity to meet face-to-face via Zoom and interact through a designated activity

or game.

These virtual opportunities allow the inclusion of youth and prospective adoptive parents who might otherwise not be able to attend in-person events. Typically, 10-15 youth and six or so families attend the virtual events.

Whether it's in-person or virtual, registration for Meet & Greets is posted on Mare.org with notifications of upcoming events also mentioned on MARE's Facebook page. For a list of upcoming dates, contact MARE at 800-589-6273 or see the calendar on page 4.



MARE's Calendar of Events

– A contract reminder –

MARE would like to take this opportunity to remind agencies that adherence to contractual obligations, as well as policy and procedures, ensures that children of Michigan's child welfare system will be uniformly served, resulting in opportunities to connect children with forever families.

Section 210(c)(8) of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Contractual Agreement refers to MARE Related Responsibilities and states: "The contractor shall notify MARE no less than quarterly of planned adoption related events, scheduled or tentatively scheduled for the next quarter. These activities shall include but are not limited to orientations, training dates, workshops, adoption fairs, recruitment activities, post adoption support activities and guest speakers. The contractor will indicate if the events are open to the public or limited to a specific audience and any costs for family participation."

Remember to submit your events at least quarterly to MARE Support Staff Karen Gowan at karen_gowan@judsoncenter.org. This can also be done via MARE's Calendar of Events Form, through a Contact Us form submission on the MARE website or by simply emailing your event flyer to mare@judsoncenter.org.

MARE applauds the efforts of Michigan's adoption workers to find forever families for children waiting to be adopted and welcomes the opportunity to provide information, referral and support to all those who promote adoption.

Campus support for foster care youth in Michigan

STORY BY **GABRIELLE WERKHEISER, MARE YOUTH SPECIALIST**

Did you know that there is support for college students who have experienced foster care?

MARE met with the coordinator of the MAGIC (Mentorship, Access and Guidance in College) Program at Eastern Michigan University (EMU) to learn more about their program as well as others at many college and university campuses across Michigan.

Each campus program is different, but at Eastern Michigan University's campus specifically, it is open to any student who has experienced foster care from the age of 14 and older. This program provides support for students to increase the chance of graduation.

This program is designed to look after the well-being

of the student in all areas, not just their academic needs. Students are paired with a mentor whom they meet with monthly to receive academic support, and students can attend workshops and receive financial aid. EMU also has a pantry for the students that has food, laundry and personal hygiene products available.

Whether it's EMU or another university in the state, this is a resource youth should consider. The support that is offered is different for each campus, so youth will need to contact the coordinator at the campus of your choice to learn more.

There is a list of participating campuses on Fostering Success Michigan's website under Campus Support at <http://fosteringssuccessmichigan.com/library/campus-support-in-michigan>



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.

A Worker FAQ

Q: Where can I get the most recent MARE forms?

A: You can find forms at www.mare.org/For-Professionals/Worker-Forms, including the Recruitment Consent form and the Child Specific Recruitment Plan, which were

updated in the past year. If you have questions or problems downloading the forms, contact MARE at 800-589-6273.



Calendar

May 18
MARE In-Person Meet & Greet
Oxford
10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

June 22
MARE In-Person Meet & Greet
Holland
10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

July 20
MARE In-Person Meet & Greet
Midland
10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

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.

MARE contact information

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