

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



YOUTH NEWSLETTER August 2020

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Meshia steps into the kitchen to prepare her own video story

Yah'Meshia is part of MARE's new 20 in 2020 project to celebrate 20 Michigan youth who want to share their stories with potential adoptive families in 2020 by creating In-Depth Profiles.

In these profiles, every youth helps plan and play a role in the production of their own videos shared on the MARE website. MARE has selected youth ages 13 to 17 years old who are able to participate and desire to play an active role in finding a family.

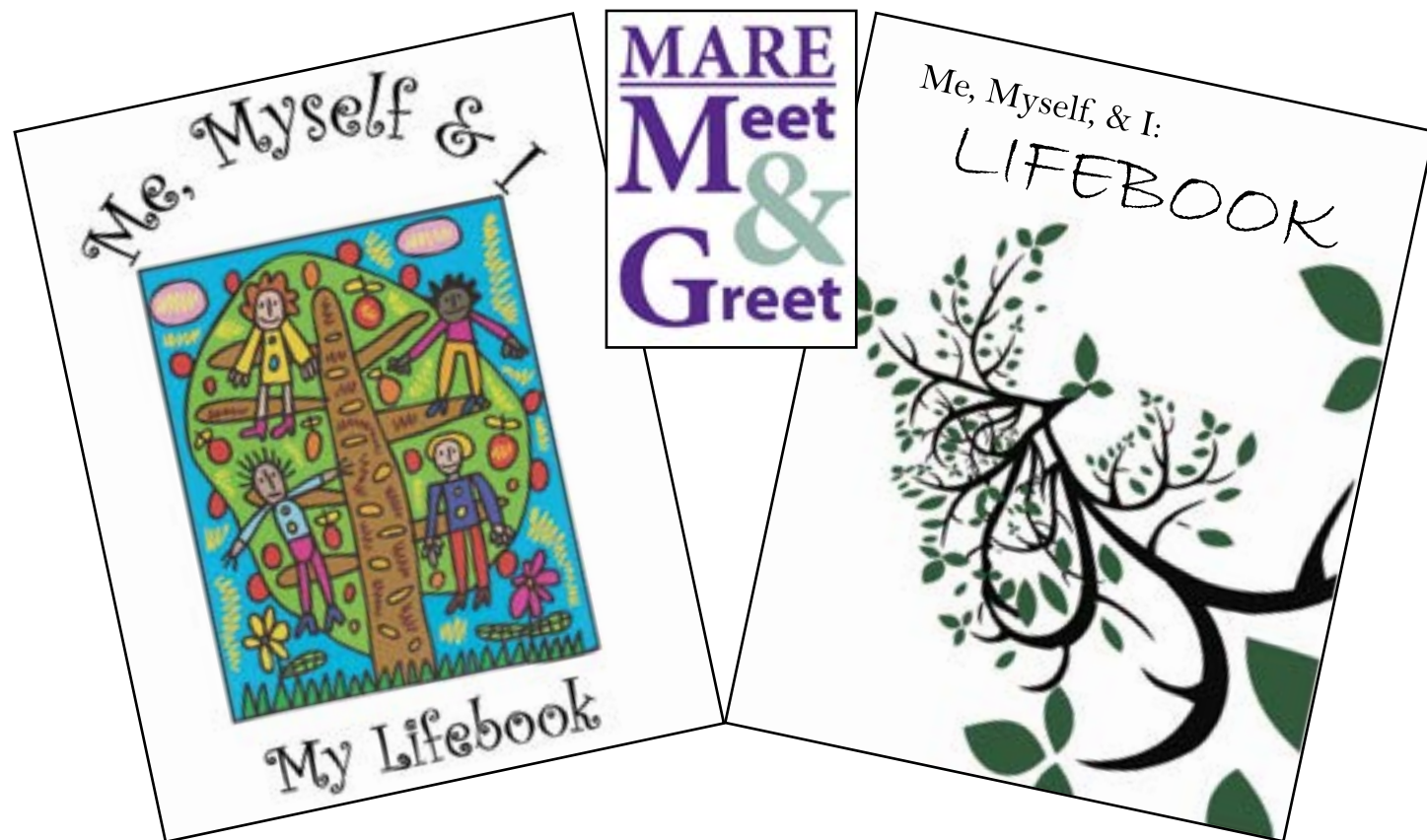
In her expanded profile, Meshia decided to make her own cooking tutorial so she could share something she loves and chat further about what she wants potential families to know about her.



Some of the things Meshia shared with families include:

"My favorite color is emerald green because it's the color of my birthstone."

See [Meshia](#) on page 2



Youth advisors had a big influence over the alterations made to the MARE Lifebook including a cover for younger kids and one for teens. With feedback from youth, MARE changed the name "Match Party" to "MARE Meet & Greet."

YAB meetings to go virtual

MARE is planning to start hosting upcoming Youth Advisory Board meetings virtually.

They will still be fun events that are designed to share information from individuals who are or who have been in foster care so MARE can educate adoption workers and officials about the concerns of youth in care.

Meshia, continued from page 1

"I like playing softball and volleyball and attending youth group."

"I'm proud of overcoming many obstacles in my life and how far I've grown."

"I don't use my past as an excuse; I use it to make me stronger."

Meshia's In-Depth Profile is featured on a new extension of MARE's website to highlight and showcase her creativity, and we will be regularly publishing new profiles throughout 2020. If you're interested in this new way to be featured on MARE's website, let your worker know.

If you are interested in participating in YAB and want to be included in a future virtual meeting, make sure you contact your worker.

If you are a former foster care youth, you can contact Jennifer Brooks at 734-528-2061 or Jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org.

Meanwhile, if you get a chance, check out the extended profile of Meshia at mare.indepthprofiles.org/profiles/introducing-meshia.



In addition to Meshia, Dre and Michael have helped create their own In-Depth Profiles.

MARE hosts virtual Meet & Greets

And you're invited to participate!

Virtual Meet & Greets are MARE's new events for families who are approved for adoption and youth who are photolisted on MARE. These events are still a great way for youth and families to meet and interact with one another!

Prior to the pandemic, we were able to host Meet & Greets in person. However, since then we've started hosting these events virtually via Zoom. We plan to host

these events once a month; however due to the virtual platform we will be hosting them in smaller groups.

These virtual Meet & Greets are similar to the ones MARE hosted in-person. You'll not only get a chance to interact with adoptive families but also other youth.

It's important to remember to have fun and be yourself! These

virtual Meet & Greets are just an opportunity to get to know new people and share the things that you like to do over the different planned games and activities.

If you want to participate in one of these Meet & Greets, let your worker know.

We are really excited to still be able to bring youth and families together during this time.



FosterClub - FosterClub is a national network for young people in foster care and young foster care alumni. The site includes blogs from current foster youth, success stories from youth who were in the foster system as well as celebrities who faced foster care. It also provides a listing by state of contact information for professionals and hotlines. (www.fosterclub.com 503-717-1552)

Help us improve your story

MARE is trying to upgrade and update our What I Want Others To Know form (pictured), and we need your help.

Youth fill out this form so MARE can let prospective adoptive families know about your favorite activities and interests. We want your suggestions about how to improve it.

For instance, we're considering a suggestion to replace the what's your favorite color question with what's your favorite superhero and possibly your most desirable super power.

So look over the form and let us know topics you'd like included and/or those you'd like to see removed.



- ☺ My favorite food is:
- ☺ My favorite color is:
- ☺ My favorite animal is:
- ☺ My favorite toy/game is:
- ☺ My favorite subject in school is:
- ☺ My favorite thing to do after school is:
- ☺ Activities I participate in include: (clubs, sports, youth groups, etc.)
- ☺ My favorite thing(s) to do on the weekend are:
- ☺ When hanging out with friends, I like to:
- ☺ Chores and tasks I help with around the house include:
- ☺ Things that make me laugh include:
- ☺ Holidays I like to celebrate include:
- ☺ To celebrate them, I like to:
- ☺ If I could visit one place on earth, it would be:
- ☺ I want to go there because...
- ☺ When I'm an adult, I want to be:
- ☺ If I had three wishes, they would be:
- ☺ I am most proud of...
- ☺ The kinds of things I would like to do with my "Forever Family" are:
- ☺ The most important things I want people to know about me are:
- ☺ Other information I would like to share:

By helping us improve the form, it can help you convey a better story about yourself to adoptive families.

To make suggestions, contact your worker or send them to Jennifer_brooks@judsoncenter.org.

YOUTH RESOURCES

Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative - MYOI is a partnership between the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative, the Oakland/Livingston Human Services Agency and many other local community partners. MYOI's goal is to ensure that young people in foster care have successful outcomes in housing, education, employment, community engagement and health.

(Michigan.gov/FYIT > MYOI)



Foster Youth in Transition - MDHHS website geared towards older youth who are experiencing foster care. It's a comprehensive, youth-oriented site with advice, interactive features, a useful glossary of foster care terms, and information on a variety of issues important to current and former foster youth. The site provides links on how to develop supports, find services, get answers to important questions and just keep you posted on what's new. (Michigan.gov/FYIT)