

MICHIGAN ADOPTION RESOURCE EXCHANGE



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Summer 2023

**A spotlight on children
waiting for permanent
and loving families**

Welcome to the Summer 2023 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. 16

Join us at the 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. 16, 2023, 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 premiere virtually.

Logan C09378

Photo by
Paul Rains



"Logan is intelligent and eager to learn."

Logan's likes:

- Playing basketball, football and baseball
- Hugs and spending one-on-one time with others
- Everything about history

Logan's crystal ball:

- Traveling and celebrating holidays with family

Qualities of a forever family:

- An experienced mom and dad
- Fierce advocates for Logan

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.



Mashone C010112

Photo by Paul Rains

Mashone's likes:

- Playing games and eating family dinners
- Roller skating and dancing

Mashone's crystal ball:

- Going to space and meeting a dinosaur
- Becoming a veterinarian
- Going on vacations and spending time outdoors with a new family



“Elijah is a great kid who is very smart and athletic.”

Elijah’s likes:

- Swimming and playing basketball and football
- Playing outside and going bike riding
- Spending time with friends
- Cleaning his own room and helping with the cooking
- Celebrating holidays by “eating a good dinner, doing cool stuff, going out and being happy”
- Watching movies
- Playing video games

Elijah’s crystal ball:

- Wishes to become an NBA superstar or a police officer
- Traveling to Disney World
- Going to movies or playing games with a future family

Qualities of a forever family:

- A parent or parents who’ll look out for his best interests
- Open to letting Elijah maintain appropriate and important relationships

Did you know?

The MARE web page, www.mare.org/For-Families/New-to-Adoption/Find-a-Licensed-Agency, lets adoptive families find an interactive map to locate adoption agencies near them. The web page and the map include contact information and links to the agencies’ websites. Families also can see the type of adoption services the agencies provide.



“I am kind, funny, smart, happy and caring, and I love laughing.”

Kaylee’s likes:

- Unicorns and horses
- Going to church and visiting people on the weekends
- Playing Monopoly
- Watching TV shows and movies with imaginative story lines
- Napping after school
- Swimming and gardening
- Being outside

Kaylee’s crystal ball:

- Going to the movies, going for ice cream and going to the zoo with a future family

Qualities of a forever family:

- One or two female parents or a mom and dad who are patient and experienced
- Only or oldest child in the family
- Would do well in a forever family with pets

Photo by
Erin Dalke

"Serenity is outgoing and vivacious. She is thoughtful. If she goes to the store, she will pick out items for the people whom she cares about."

Serenity's likes:

- Singing and dancing
- Participating in choir
- Going on outings on weekends
- Attending English class at school
- Celebrating Christmas by "spending time with people and opening gifts"
- Playing Uno

Serenity's crystal ball:

- Having game nights, watching movies and telling stories with a forever family

Qualities of a forever family:

- Well-structured household where she gets supervision and attention
- Patient, experienced parent or parents

Justin's likes:

- Swimming
- Bike riding
- Playing tag with friends
- Sports and being outdoors
- Cooking on weekends

Justin's tremendous traits:

- Imaginative, detail-oriented, engaging

Justin's crystal ball:

- Dreams of traveling to Antarctica to see penguins

Qualities of a forever family:

- Able to make sure that Justin receives any services that will help him
- Would do best as the only child in the home

“Justin is a very bright young boy with a kind heart.”

*Photo by
Kristina Mayre
Photography*





“Family is the most important thing to me.”

Photos by Ellie Francis Photography

Sophia’s likes:

- Watching her favorite TV show, “Vampire Diaries”
- Cheerleading, dancing and gymnastics
- Doing makeup
- Going to the movies
- Spending time with friends while listening to music, socializing and having sleepovers
- Playing the card game Rat-A-Tat Cat

Sophia’s crystal ball:

- Wants to visit Los Angeles so she can meet famous people

Qualities of a forever family:

- A patient and understanding forever family
- Two female parents or a mom and dad who are experienced

“Sophia recently wrote a powerful poem titled ‘Fight for My Life’ that is being published in a book.”



*Joseph
Photo by
Paul Rains*

Joseph's likes:

- Playing outside
- Camping and going to the beach
- Playing on the trampoline with friends

Joseph's crystal ball:

- Looks forward to going on adventures with his future forever family

Jordan's likes:

- Playing with superhero toys
- Drawing and coloring
- Learning about science

Jordan's crystal ball:

- Visiting New York City "because that is where Spider-Man lives"

Qualities of a forever family:

- Two parents who are willing to adopt Joseph and Jordan together
- Able to make sure Joseph and Jordan receive the services they need



*Jordan
Photo by
Paul Rains*

Photo by
Paul Rains



“Joshua has the biggest imagination
and is really a joy to be around.”

Joshua’s likes:

- Learning all about the new people in his life
- Taking advantage of any opportunity to play outside
- Playing with toy cars and trucks
- Building things with Legos
- All animals
- Cheeseburgers from McDonald’s

Joshua’s tremendous traits:

- Offers a warm welcome to everyone he meets and beams with excitement when talking about the things he loves to do

Qualities of a forever family:

- Fierce advocates for Joshua
- Only or youngest child in the home
- One parent or two parents

Photo by
Paul Rains



Shantea's likes:

- Relaxing after school
- Listening to music
- Playing video games
- Munching on pizza and spaghetti with ice cream for dessert
- Going on outings on the weekends
- Cats and dogs
- Drawing and face painting

Shantea's crystal ball:

- Playing games and watching movies with her new family

Qualities of a forever family:

- Female parent or parents
- Youngest child in the home
- Able to make sure Shantea gets any supports she needs to flourish

“Shantea has potential to be a leader as she is assertive and confident.”

Photo by
Deborah Gillespie



“Zahira is a smart girl who’s an animal lover and who loves to laugh. She is full of love and kindness.”

Zahira’s likes:

- Skating
- Anime
- Going out to eat
- Foods that are “o” so good such as tacos and nachos
- Going to the mall
- Playing video games
- Going to the movies

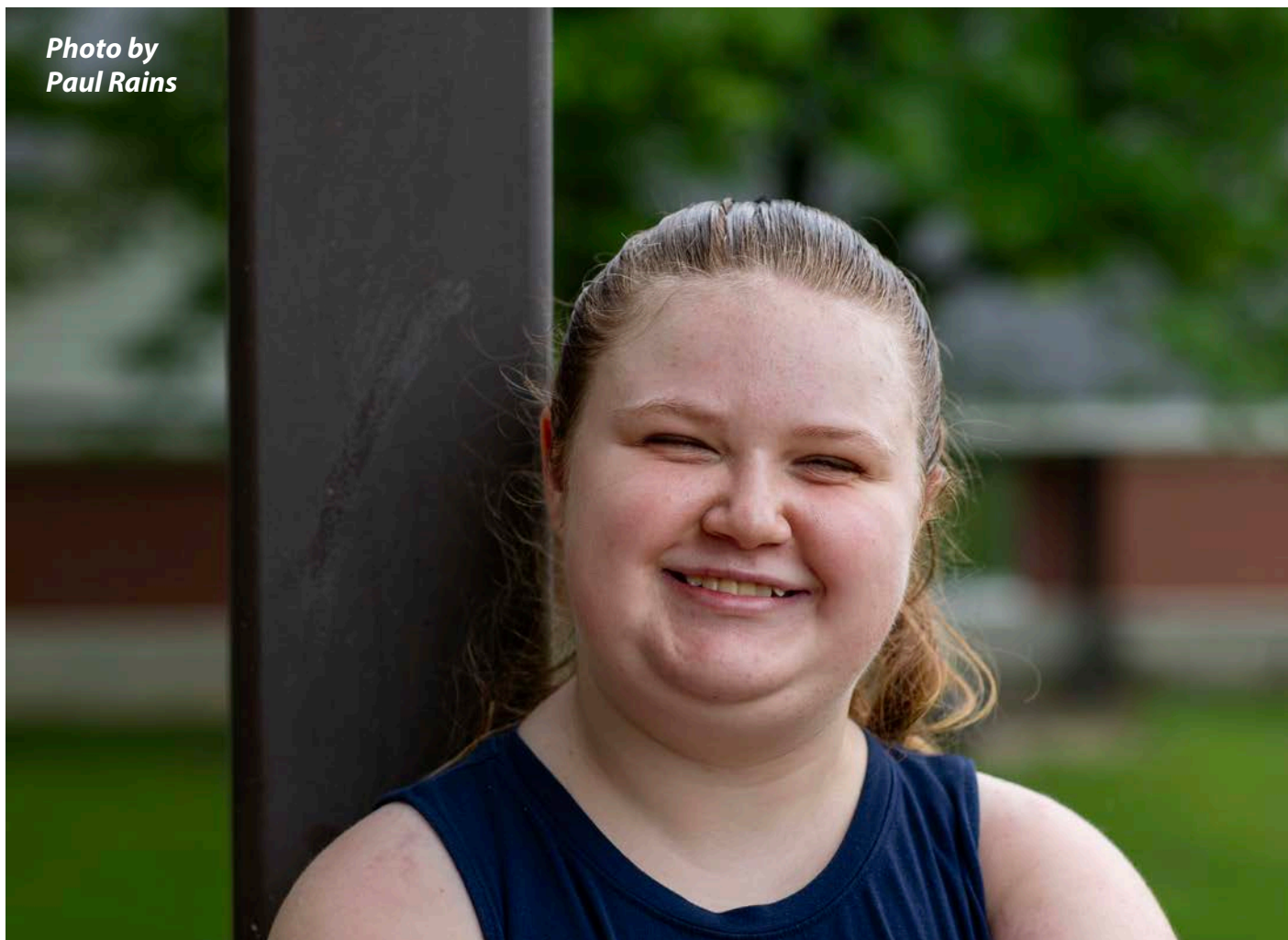
Zahira’s crystal ball:

- Dreams of visiting Italy because “I have Italian in me”

Qualities of a forever family:

- Single female parent, two female parents or a mom and dad
- Can be placed in a home with or without other children and pets

Photo by
Paul Rains



Amanda's likes:

- Princess/Queen Elsa from the "Frozen" movies
- Playing dress-up and pretending that she's a princess
- Playing with toys, especially unicorns and the action figure of Mal from Disney's "Descendants"
- Relaxing, going out to eat and watching TV on the weekends

Amanda's tremendous traits:

- Described as a sweet, loving, imaginative and playful girl with a warm smile and a good heart

Qualities of a forever family:

- One or two experienced parents
- Youngest child in the home
- Able to provide the attention and structure that Amanda thrives on

"Amanda is easy to engage with and enjoys positive attention."

Make sure to check out the MARE YouTube Channel to see videos of several of the children featured in the Summer 2023 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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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
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