

# Be the Change

**Summer 2024**

Change the life of a  
child... adopt from  
foster care



MICHIGAN  
**ADOPTION  
RESOURCE**  
EXCHANGE

## Inside:

Meet our cover girl: Page 3

MARE has teams to help you: Page 13

Get started with adoption: Pages 14-15



Welcome to the Summer 2024 edition of Be the Change – a quarterly publication dedicated to highlighting Michigan children in need of permanent, loving families. In this issue, you'll meet some of the young people in Michigan who are looking for a supportive and permanent family through adoption. These featured youth represent hundreds of others in Michigan's foster care system who are also hoping to find a loving home.

At MARE, we are here to help answer your questions and walk with you through the adoption journey. To learn more about adoption, visit [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org), call us at 800-589-6273, and follow us on social media. No matter where you are at in the process, we want to support you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michelle Parra".

- Michelle Parra, LMSW  
Director of MARE and Family Services Judson Center

## 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, 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.

So, mark your calendars, and come join us for this truly remarkable event. Make sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram for updates.

Can't join us in person? Be sure to follow us at [www.facebook.com/MichiganAdoptionResourceExchange](http://www.facebook.com/MichiganAdoptionResourceExchange) for details on how you can enjoy the festivities virtually.

## Who Can Adopt? You Can Adopt!

The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange exists to connect hopeful adoptive families with Michigan youth who need a permanent, loving family. Notice that we didn't say they need a perfect family? Trust us, the kids aren't looking for perfection. If you would struggle to help a teen with their algebra homework... that's okay. If your aim when playing a game of catch is a bit off... that's okay. If your knowledge of music and slang is still stuck in the 80s... that's okay, too! Kids need love, stability, consistency, advocacy and a parent or parents who will stick with them no matter what. There are a lot of myths about who can adopt. Let's bust some of those:

- **Do you have to own your own home?** No! As long as you have safe, stable housing with enough room for a child to play and have their own space, you can adopt.
- **Do you need to be married?** Absolutely not. Married couples, single parents, same sex parents... all family structures are welcome. In fact, some kids would thrive best in homes with same sex or single parents. Even if you aren't married, you can adopt.
- **Do I need to make a lot of money?** Nope. As long as you have the resources to adequately cover your monthly bills and necessities for your family and any children you welcome into your home, you can adopt.

## Be the change... adopt!

**Zaira C010569**

*"Zaira is a remarkable child who is very outgoing. She has a contagious smile and wonderfully bubbly personality."*



*Photo by  
Paul Rains*

### Zaira's likes:

- Tacos, cheetahs and the color black
- Playing Clue with family and friends
- Gymnastics
- Funny cat videos and memes
- Arts and crafts
- Reading and video games

### Remarkable traits:

- Outgoing, talkative, active, kind, and thoughtful

### Qualities of a forever family:

- An experienced mom, mom and dad or two moms
- Pet friendly
- Would love a sister close to her age



*Photo by  
Paul Rains*

*"Jaheim has a great sense of humor and is easy to get along with. He can be very goofy and silly."*

**Jaheim's likes:**

- Pizza and McDonald's
- Red and gold
- Black panthers
- Playing video games
- Playing football and basketball
- Favorite subject in school is math
- Shopping for shoes
- Meditation

**Remarkable traits:**

- Helpful, kind, generous, energetic, and athletic

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- Two experienced parents
- Only child in home
- Understanding, active, and patient

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*Did you know?*

*The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange has staff to help you during every step of your adoption journey. From answering your first questions about adoption to supporting your family after being matched with a child, we're here to help. Learn more at [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)*



*"Tyrell is an amazing kid! He has the best smile, an infectious laugh and the biggest heart!"*

**Tyrell's likes:**

- Spider-man and other superheroes
- Swimming
- Climbing trees
- Riding bikes
- Trampoline parks and playgrounds
- Loves his stuffed otter
- Chuck E. Cheese
- Hoverboarding

**Remarkable traits:**

- Funny, affectionate, imaginative, smart, and adventurous

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- Two experienced parents
- Youngest or only child in home
- Patient, understanding, and supportive

*Photo by  
Paul Rains*



*"What makes Kyla unique is her personality. She is respectful and nice, especially when she gets to know a person."*

**Kyla's likes:**

- Chinese food
- The color blue
- Rabbits
- Hanging out with friends
- Silly jokes
- Going on vacation
- Writing
- Favorite subject in school is math

**Remarkable traits:**

- Outgoing, outspoken, friendly, silly, and creative

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- An experienced mom, mom and dad or two moms
- Oldest child in home
- Patient, loving, and caring



*Photo by  
Paul Rains*

*"Kaizen is someone who likes to make others laugh. He cares about the people who are important to him and is very loyal."*

**Kaizen's likes:**

- Being outside and active
- Basketball and football
- Playing video games and watching funny videos
- Making crafts
- Rap music
- Helping his friends
- Sharing with others

**Remarkable traits:**

- Energetic, goofy, affectionate, helpful, and loyal

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- An experienced mom or two moms
- Fierce advocates for Kaizen
- Oldest or only child in home
- Affectionate, patient, and active

*Photo by  
Paul Rains*



*"Ashley is an outgoing child who enjoys making those around her laugh."*

**Ashley's likes:**

- Reading
- Coloring
- Exploring the outdoors
- Volleyball
- French fries and ice cream in any flavor except mint chocolate chip
- Getting her nails done

**Remarkable Traits:**

- Charismatic, humorous, outgoing, ambitious, and active

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- One or two experienced parents
- Youngest child in home
- Supportive, patient, and outdoorsy



*Photo by  
Lillian Scull*



**Breonna's likes:**

- Pepperoni pizza
- The color pink
- Cats
- Playing video games or with dolls
- Going to the beach
- Arts and crafts
- Singing and dancing

**Remarkable Traits:**

- Energetic, animated, sensitive, talkative, and creative

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- An experienced mom and dad or two moms
- Only child in home
- Understanding, supportive, and patient

*"Breonna is outgoing, friendly, polite and speaks her mind."*



Photo by  
Paul Rains

### **Ezera's likes:**

- Ice cream
- Dogs and cats
- Singing and dancing
- English class
- The colors black, red and blue
- Stuffed animals
- Swimming
- Anime
- Helping people

### **Remarkable Traits:**

- Charismatic, outgoing, well-spoken, resilient, and caring

### **Qualities of a forever family:**

- One or two experienced parents
- Siblings would be a bonus
- Supportive, understanding, and kind
- Needs to be open to letting him maintain his sibling relationship

*"Ezera is a goofy teen who has a high desire to be brought into a family and share his life with them. "*

### **Aiden's likes:**

- Pasta and chicken
- The color blue
- Dogs
- Riding his bike
- Watching TV
- Football and basketball
- Funny jokes and memes
- Science and art class

### **Remarkable Traits:**

- Well-mannered, positive, adventurous, active, and vibrant

### **Qualities of a forever family:**

- One or two parents
- Siblings close to his age would be preferred
- Active, present, and fierce advocates
- Must be open to letting him maintain his current relationships

*"Aiden loves to try anything once and strives to be the very best at everything he does."*



*Photo by  
Paul Rains*



*Photo by  
Paul Rains*

**Jason's likes:**

- Tacos
- The color black
- Tigers
- Video games
- Science class
- Camping
- Fishing
- Riding bikes
- Bowling

*"Jason is funny, caring, and outgoing. He has a vivid imagination. He loves to talk to people. He loves to help around the house and is eager to please his caregivers."*

**Remarkable Traits:**

- Funny, outgoing, outdoorsy, imaginative, and caring

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- Two experienced parents
- Youngest child in home
- Patient, caring, and fierce advocates

# Ready to adopt? MARE is here to help!

When you're ready to learn more about adoption or to begin the process, the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is available to you free of charge.



## Adoption Navigators: Guiding families interested in adoption.

Staffed by experienced adoptive parents, the MARE navigator team is eager to provide support to all families considering adoption. Whether you just have a few questions you want answered or you are ready to begin the adoption process, the navigators are available to assist you and be a listening ear. The navigator team offers several services:

- Guiding your family by answering questions and helping initiate the adoption process.
- Providing support throughout your adoption journey.
- Hosting regular trainings and providing referrals
- Providing a voluntary directory of approved families.

If you'd like an experienced adoptive parent to walk alongside you on your adoption journey, complete the General Adoption Information Inquiry on [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org) or call 800-589-6273 to be connected with an adoption navigator.



## Match Support Specialists: Supporting families after they're matched with a child.

Match Support is a statewide service available to you once you're matched with a child from the MARE website and are proceeding with adoption. Program specialists tailor their services to your unique needs, goals, and interests. While specialists have the flexibility to assist in several ways, families' top requests often include:

- Providing parenting resources and training options
- Navigating trauma and developing attachment
- Understand behaviors and brainstorming solutions
- Working with adoption teams
- Locating service providers

If you'd like a caring, professional partner on your adoption journey, Match Support is here for you! For more information, contact Julie Miller, Match Support Program Supervisor, by calling 734-528-2002 or emailing [Julie\\_Miller@judsoncenter.org](mailto:Julie_Miller@judsoncenter.org).



## 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. For an interactive map of statewide licensed agencies, follow the QR code.

### Upper Peninsula

Catholic Social Services of the U.P., Escanaba, 906-786-7212, [www.cssup.org](http://www.cssup.org)  
Catholic Social Services of the U.P., Iron Mountain, 906-774-3323, [www.cssup.org](http://www.cssup.org)  
Catholic Social Services of the U.P., Marquette, 906-227-9119, [www.cssup.org](http://www.cssup.org)  
Child & Family Services of the U.P., Marquette, 906-228-4050, [www.cfsup.org](http://www.cfsup.org)  
Sault Tribe Binogii Placement Agency, Sault Ste. Marie, 906-632-5250, [www.saulttribe.com](http://www.saulttribe.com)  
Upper Peninsula Family Solutions, Marquette, 906-273-1095, [www.upfs.org](http://www.upfs.org)  
U.P. Kids, Houghton, 906-487-9832, [www.upkids.com](http://www.upkids.com)

### Northern and Central Lower Michigan

Adoption Option Inc., Midland, 989-839-0534, [www.adoptionoptioninc.org](http://www.adoptionoptioninc.org)  
Bethany Christian Services, Traverse City, 231-995-0870, [www.bethany.org/traversecity](http://www.bethany.org/traversecity)  
Child & Family Services of Northwest MI, Traverse City, 231-946-8975, [www.cfsnwmi.org](http://www.cfsnwmi.org)  
Eagle Village, Hersey, 231-832-2234, [www.eaglevillage.org](http://www.eaglevillage.org)  
Ennis Center for Children, Saginaw, 989-558-0020, [www.enniscenter.org](http://www.enniscenter.org)  
Holy Cross Services, Saginaw, 989-577-5814, [www.holycrossservices.org](http://www.holycrossservices.org)  
Legacy Adoption Service, Bay City, 989-686-3170, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
Legacy Adoption Service, Clare, 989-386-2101, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
New Light Child & Family Institute, Millington, 989-871-6695, [www.newlightonline.net](http://www.newlightonline.net)  
Northeast Michigan Family Resource Center, Alpena, MI, 989-356-4567, [www.nemifrc.org](http://www.nemifrc.org)

### Tri-County Area (Wayne, Oakland & Macomb Counties)

Bethany Christian Services, Southfield, 248-414-4080, [bethany.org/locations/us/michigan/southeast-michigan](http://bethany.org/locations/us/michigan/southeast-michigan)  
Catholic Charities of S.E. Michigan, 855-882-2736, [www.ccsem.org](http://www.ccsem.org)  
The Children's Center of Wayne County, Detroit, 313-831-5535, [www.thechildrenscenter.com](http://www.thechildrenscenter.com)  
Ennis Center for Children, Detroit, 313-342-2699, [www.enniscenter.org](http://www.enniscenter.org)  
Ennis Center for Children, Pontiac, 248-334-2715, [www.enniscenter.org](http://www.enniscenter.org)  
Family & Community Services, Inc., Utica, 586-726-2988, [www.facadopt.org](http://www.facadopt.org)  
Forever Families, Livonia, 734-762-0909, [www.forever-families.org](http://www.forever-families.org)  
Homes for Black Children, Detroit, 313-961-4777  
Judson Center, Dearborn, 313-794-5653, [www.judsoncenter.org](http://www.judsoncenter.org)  
Legacy Adoption Service, Troy, 248-423-2770, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
Methodist Children's Home, Dearborn, 313-531-4060, [www.mchsmi.org](http://www.mchsmi.org)  
Oakland Family Services, Pontiac, 248-858-7766, [www.oaklandfamilyservices.org](http://www.oaklandfamilyservices.org)  
Orchards Children's Services, Southfield, 248-258-0440, [www.orchards.org](http://www.orchards.org)  
Spaulding for Children, Southfield, 248-443-0300, [www.spaulding.org](http://www.spaulding.org)  
Spectrum Human Services, Southfield, 248-552-8020, [www.spectrumhuman.org](http://www.spectrumhuman.org)  
Vista Maria, Dearborn Heights, 313-271-3050, [www.vistamaria.org](http://www.vistamaria.org)  
Wolverine Human Services, Taylor, 888-625-8669, [www.wolverinehs.org](http://www.wolverinehs.org)

## Southern Central Michigan

Adoption and Foster Care Specialists, Inc., Lapeer, 810-660-7590, [www.adoption-specialists.org](http://www.adoption-specialists.org)  
 Bethany Christian Services, East Lansing, 517-336-0191, [www.bethany.org/eastlansing](http://www.bethany.org/eastlansing)  
 Catholic Charities of Jackson, Lenawee and Hillsdale counties, Adrian, 517-263-2191, [www.catholiccharitiesjlhc.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesjlhc.org)  
 Catholic Charities of Shiawassee & Genesee, Flint, 810-232-9950, [www.catholiccharitiesflint.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesflint.org)  
 Catholic Social Services of Washtenaw, Ann Arbor, 734-971-9781, [www.csswashtenaw.org](http://www.csswashtenaw.org)  
 Child & Family Charities – Capital Area, Lansing, 517-882-4000, [www.childandfamily.org](http://www.childandfamily.org)  
 Ennis Center for Children, Flint, 810-233-4031, [www.enniscenter.org](http://www.enniscenter.org)  
 Ennis Center for Children, Howell, 517-881-0723, [www.enniscenter.org](http://www.enniscenter.org)  
 Ennis Center for Children, Port Huron, 810-990-1424, [www.enniscenter.org](http://www.enniscenter.org)  
 Family & Community Services, Inc., Howell, 517-615-1275, [www.facadopt.org](http://www.facadopt.org)  
 Family Service & Children’s Aid, Jackson, 517-787-7920, [www.strong-families.org](http://www.strong-families.org)  
 Fostering Futures, Ann Arbor, 734-481-8999, [www.fostering-futures.com](http://www.fostering-futures.com)  
 Fostering Solutions, Adrian, 517-263-0020, [www.fosteringsolutions.org](http://www.fosteringsolutions.org)  
 Growing Hope Through Love, Howell, 517-798-4020  
 Hands Across the Water, Ann Arbor, 734-477-0135, [www.hatw.org](http://www.hatw.org)  
 Livingston County Catholic Charities, Howell, 517-545-5944, [www.livingstoncatholiccharities.org](http://www.livingstoncatholiccharities.org)  
 Legacy Adoption Service, Ann Arbor, 734-971-1944, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
 Legacy Adoption Service, Jackson, 517-789-6444, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
 Legacy Adoption Service, Lansing, 517-886-1380, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
 Open Door Adoption Services, Jackson, 517-936-7713, [www.opendooradoptionsservices.org](http://www.opendooradoptionsservices.org)  
 St. Vincent Catholic Charities, Lansing, 517-323-4734, [www.stvcc.org](http://www.stvcc.org)

## Southwest Michigan

Arbor Circle, Holland, 616-396-2301, [www.pathwaysmi.org](http://www.pathwaysmi.org)  
 Bethany Christian Services, Grand Rapids, 616-224-7550, [www.bethany.org/grandrapids](http://www.bethany.org/grandrapids)  
 Bethany Christian Services, Holland, 616-396-0623, [www.bethany.org/holland](http://www.bethany.org/holland)  
 Bethany Christian Services, Kalamazoo, 269-372-8800, [www.bethany.org/kalamazoo](http://www.bethany.org/kalamazoo)  
 Bethany Christian Services, Muskegon, 231-733-1618, [www.bethany.org/muskegon](http://www.bethany.org/muskegon)  
 Catholic Charities–West MI, Grand Rapids, 616-456-1443, [www.ccwestmi.org](http://www.ccwestmi.org)  
 Catholic Charities–West MI, Muskegon, 231-726-4735, [www.ccwestmi.org](http://www.ccwestmi.org)  
 D.A. Blodgett Services, Grand Rapids, 616-451-2021, [www.dabsj.org](http://www.dabsj.org)  
 Family & Children’s Services, Inc., Kalamazoo, 269-344-0202, [www.fcsource.org](http://www.fcsource.org)  
 Family & Children’s Services, Inc., Battle Creek, 269-965-3247, [www.fcsource.org](http://www.fcsource.org)  
 Legacy Adoption Service, Grand Rapids, 616-356-1934, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
 Legacy Adoption Service, Kalamazoo, 269-345-5776, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
 Youth Guidance Foster Care & Adoption Center, Battle Creek, 269-969-9181, [www.citylinc.org](http://www.citylinc.org)

For an interactive map of statewide licensed agencies, follow the QR code.





FOR CHILDREN IN  
FOSTER CARE

800-589-6273

[www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org)

## Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange

3840 Packard Rd., Suite 170

Ann Arbor, MI 48108



The Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange is a program of Judson Center and is funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

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