

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 children, visit our website at [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org).



Let us  
help!



## *MARE's Match Support program welcomes new team members*

MARE's Match Support program has been adding new faces to its team over the past several months, and we are excited to introduce them!

Shelby, Sierra, and Kristine are new Match Support specialists. Erin is the program's new support staff member. They are a powerhouse of support for families who are navigating the adoption process and transitioning youth into their families.

The new team members have a variety of professional experiences to utilize in working with families and adoption teams. Their backgrounds include work in adoption, foster care, residential,

education and parent training. That knowledge means families can be matched with the specialist who is able to best support and understand their needs and those of the children being adopted.

### **Partnering with Match Support**

Our new team members have shown that they understand the importance of developing a relationship with families, earning their trust, and becoming a personal support for them. They also tailor their services to meet each family's unique interests, needs, and goals. The specialists work with adoption teams to assist with any adoption concerns or barriers.

The team also works collectively to locate county-specific services and trainings, and educational resources on a wide-range of topics. These resources are available in print, online articles, videos, webinars, podcasts, training DVDs, and audio books.

Specialists also utilize MARE's lending library with families, which features books, DVDs, and sensory items. It also has games to help with bonding, emotions, self-esteem, and behavior.

*Turn to pages 2 and 3 to get to know more about the new members of our team.*

# Getting to know the new team



**Shelby Denham**

**What led you to choose Judson Center?**

I worked for Judson previously, and I love the atmosphere here. I have always been passionate about what MARE does and knew I wanted to be a part of it.

**How long have you been working in your position?**

Six months.

**What do you like best about your job?**

I love building a bond with the families I work with and take pride in knowing they trust me with their situations and concerns. My coworkers and supervisor are also absolutely phenomenal people both professionally and personally!

**What interested you in working with families?**

I have always loved helping people, so social work was an easy choice for me.

**If you could describe what you do in one word, what would it be?**

Listen!



**Sierra Bates**

**What led you to choose Judson Center?**

The values of Judson Center resonated with my own values and passions. I knew it would be a great organization where I could make a big impact.

**How long have you been working in your position?**

Five months.

**What do you like best about your job?**

In addition to working with the families, I like that I can lean on my team for support. If I am ever looking for ways to help a family, the MSP team will lend their own time to help me find resources.

**What interested you in working with families?**

I wanted to work with families because they are so important to a child's future. The love and support of a family can change a child's entire life.

**If you could describe what you do in one word, what would it be?**

Listen!

[Continued on page 3](#)





**Kristine Crummel**

**What led you to choose Judson Center?**

I was an unmatched adoption worker years ago and had the pleasure of working closely with MARE. I knew then that a long-term goal was to work for Judson to be a part of the MARE team because I am so passionate about what they do!

**How long have you been working in your position?**

Four months.

**What do you like best about your job?**

Just one thing? Creating safe, loving, happy homes for children.

**What interested you in working with families?**

I have always loved children and wanted to make a difference in their lives, which is why I went into teaching. However, I soon discovered that it was not enough to work with the children; I wanted to make an impact at home. Working with families gives me the chance to not only educate, but to build lasting bonds and empower people.

**If you could describe what you do in one word, what would it be?**

Inspire.



**Erin Dwan**

**What led you to choose Judson Center?**

I hadn't worked closely with social workers before, and I was attracted to the opportunity so that I could learn if social work was something I was interested in pursuing.

**How long have you been working in your position?**

Three months.

**What do you like best about your job?**

I love being able to find creative solutions to problems that make a huge impact in families' lives.

**What interested you in working with families?**

Family is a major part of our lives, no matter what stage of life we're in. I wanted to work with families because I'm so grateful for my own, and I want to make sure as many kids as possible end up with parents as great as mine are.

**If you could describe what you do in one word, what would it be?**

Connect!

Ardez (C08972).



## Ardez: Mitten State is truly great

For Ardez, there's no place on Earth he'd rather be than in the Great Lakes State. "I live here, and I like it here," says this Mitten State lover.

He'd be a good arbiter of the divide between Michigan and Michigan State fans since Ardez's favorite colors are blue and green. Ardez has discovered another Michigan favorite: football. "He loves being on a team and enjoys the sport," says a person close to Ardez. "This helps him channel his emotions in a healthy and productive manner.

"He attended an event where he was able to meet Detroit Lions players, and he reported this was a fun time for him."

When he gets older, Ardez wants to be a police officer. His other interests include playing with superhero action figures and video games.

Ardez loves being outside, but when he's indoors, he enjoys watching movies. When he's asked about his future forever family, Ardez says he wants one who enjoys doing things together.

## Rebecca dreams of having fun with family

When Rebecca enters a room, it naturally brightens. That's because this fun-loving girl has a bubbly personality.

"Rebecca is very outgoing and funny," says a person close to her. "Rebecca is very detail-oriented, inquisitive and creative."

She enjoys chilling by doing anything hands-on such as drawing and coloring. "She loves word search puzzles and is amazing at solving riddles," says a person close to her.

Playing with dolls and playing the board game Amazed also rank high on Rebecca's list of favorites.

On the weekend, Rebecca enjoys watching TV and going to the gym. When she gets older, Rebecca wants to become a teacher.

If she could visit anywhere, Rebecca would go to Florida to visit a friend. More than anything else, Rebecca wishes she had a home and a family who likes to do things together.



Rebecca (C09233).

## Calendar of Events

### February 13

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

### February 25

5:30-7:30 p.m.

*Check out Mare.org to sign up for these virtual events and other Meet & Greets and for the next Waiting Family Forum to be presented Feb. 17, 2021.*

## MARE contact info

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