

# MICHIGAN ADOPTION RESOURCE EXCHANGE



## ***Inside:***

***She wants to make felines and canines feel divine, Page 5.***

***The Force courses through his veins, Page 7.***

***She'll take your breakfast order one day, Page 13.***

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

## ***Winter 2022***

Welcome to the Winter 2022 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](http://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.

## Leeah C09915

Photo by  
Jennifer Brooks



### Leeah's likes:

- Playing with baby dolls
- Playing outdoors
- Going to softball games on the weekend
- Celebrating her birthday, Halloween and Christmas by dancing

### Leeah's great traits:

- Described as sweet, happy and caring

### Qualities of a family:

- Two understanding and patient parents
- Youngest child

## Adoption Navigator Team

Adoption Navigators are experienced adoptive parents who offer guidance and personal knowledge to potential adoptive families. For more information, visit [Mare.org/For-Families/Adoption-Navigators](http://Mare.org/For-Families/Adoption-Navigators)



**Top row, Kim Ross, Jessica Franks, Judy McNaughton, Kelli Ostrosky; bottom row, Kim Wolowski (navigator supervisor), Amber Tiemeyer, Aimee Loudon, Kimberly Grover**

## 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.



**Aaron C010170**

*Photo by  
Jennifer  
Brooks*

### Aaron's likes:

- Monster trucks, motorcycles and fast cars such as Ferraris
- Riding bikes
- Playing basketball
- Listening to country music

### Qualities of a forever family:

- One or two experienced parents
- Strong advocates for Aaron
- Understanding and patient

“Anthony is a very resilient young man who is very smart and does great quality work in school”

*Photo by  
Laura Shurtz*

**Anthony’s likes:**

- Doing backflips
- Playing with Beyblades
- Building things with Legos
- Collecting Pokémon
- Spending time outdoors

**Anthony’s great traits:**

- Has a comedic side and a great sense of humor

**Anthony’s crystal ball:**

- Dreams of being an engineer

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- A single male parent or two experienced parents
- Only or youngest child
- Fierce advocates for Anthony
- Open to letting Anthony maintain his sibling relationships

**Did you know?**

In addition to this quarterly periodical, the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange also publishes newsletters for youth, families and professionals. You can find them at [www.mare.org](http://www.mare.org) > Resources > Newsletters.



**Family  
Newsletter**



Photo by  
Jennifer Brooks

"Aiyanna cares  
a lot about others."

### **Aiyanna's likes:**

- Visits to parks and zoos
- Watching TV and YouTube videos
- Munching on a hot cheese pizza with mushrooms, pepperoni, ham and peppers
- Riding bikes
- Kicking a soccer ball and shooting hoops
- Playing with Barbies in her room

### **Aiyanna's great traits:**

- Patient, kind, friendly and loving

### **Creative interests:**

- Coloring, painting and doing arts and crafts

### **Aiyanna's crystal ball:**

- Wants to become a pet sitter
- Traveling with a family to fulfill some of the dreams on her wish list

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

- Patient and loving
- Only or youngest child
- Experienced female parent
- Would thrive in a family who has pets

“Sarah wants a family who will love her unconditionally.”



**Sarah’s likes:**

- All animals and especially cockatoos
- Spending time with other people and helping them
- Going camping
- Getting her hair, nails and makeup done
- Watching SpongeBob and Disney movies

**Sarah’s crystal ball:**

- Hopes to visit Colorado
- Being a member of an understanding and welcoming forever family

**Creative interests:**

- Coloring, drawing, doing arts and crafts

**Sarah’s great traits:**

- Takes pride in being loving and caring

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- A single female parent, two female parents or a mom and dad
- Wants a family who has pets

Photo by  
Jennifer Brooks



“If he could visit one place, he would visit the home planet in the Star Wars movies!”

**Darius’ likes:**

- Watching Star Wars movies and practically everything else about the movie series
- Listening to music
- Drawing and coloring
- Playing with Star Wars Legos
- Going to school
- Munching on pizza
- Christmas so he can open presents and hope for more Star Wars toys
- Working toward goals
- Dogs, cats and birds

**Darius’ crystal ball:**

- Acquiring the power of The Force so he can use it for good to vanquish evil

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- Two experienced parents who can provide the one-on-one attention he requires to thrive
- Strong advocates for the services Darius needs
- Youngest child in the home with one or two other children

“Selena is a cute and friendly girl who is funny, silly and creative.”

“Serenity is a fun and sweet girl who is very friendly and tries to help others.”



**Selena’s likes:**

- Singing while watching Disney movies
- Using her active imagination
- Exploring
- Playing tag and hide and seek
- Spending time with friends and running outside with them

**Serenity’s likes:**

- Playing with kitchen toys
- Tidying up with her toy cleaning items
- Coloring
- Doing arts and crafts
- Getting her nails done
- Spending time with family

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- Willing to adopt Serenity and Selena together
- Loving and patient as the girls transition into the home
- Able to provide one-on-one attention
- Fierce advocates for the services that will benefit the girls



“Omaryana has a great sense of humor and loves to laugh.”

“Mikel is very creative and loves to tell stories.”



### **Omaryana's likes:**

- Playing volleyball and gaga ball, the variation of dodgeball
- Making art and doing other creative activities
- Baking brownies
- Attending English class
- Swimming

### **Omaryana's crystal ball:**

- Becoming an interior designer

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

- Willing to adopt both Omaryana and Mikel
- At least one female parent in the home

### **Mikel's likes:**

- Kicking around a soccer ball
- Shooting hoops
- Fishing
- Playing board games
- Football and baseball
- Studying math
- Magic the Gathering

### **Mikel's crystal ball:**

- Wants to become an electrician

- Patient and understanding
- Would do best as the only children

"Ashton can be shy and slow to warm to new people, but he is very silly and playful once he trusts you."



Photo by  
Jennifer Brooks

**Ashton's likes:**

- Everything to do with Mega Man
- Playing Dig Dug, Tetris and Super Smash Bros
- Attending coding class at school
- Listening to Japanese music
- Eating mac 'n cheese and pizza

**Ashton's crystal ball:**

- Wants to be a video game creator
- Traveling to Okasha, Japan, because that's where the original Mega Man was made

- Looks forward to spending time with his new forever family watching movies and playing video games

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- Two parents or one parent who has a strong support network
- Only or youngest child
- Patient, experienced parent or parents
- Willing to allow contact with his older sister
- Able to make sure Ashton gets the services that will help him excel

“I am funny, I enjoy being around people and I like to hang out with friends.”



*Photo by  
Jennifer  
Brooks*

### **Brandin's likes:**

- Reading the Twilight book series
- Writing
- Playing hockey, football, softball and basketball (just try to beat him in a game of H-O-R-S-E.)
- Munching on pizza
- Celebrating the holidays in the company of others while eating good food

### **Brandin's crystal ball:**

- Traveling to Hawaii
- Wants to play basketball professionally

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

- A single female parent, two female parents or a mom and dad
- Only child
- Able to make sure Brandin gets the services that will help him flourish



"I like to work on problems  
and solve them."

**DaShawn's likes:**

- Rolling up his sleeves and working on things
- Playing football and participating in wrestling
- Building things
- Helping with projects such as repairing cars
- Celebrating his birthday and New Year's Eve
- Doing things with a family such as going to the beach or just sitting around talking

**DaShawn's great traits:**

- Takes pride in his intelligence and the ease in which he can interact with others
- Outgoing and athletic
- Enjoys attending school

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- A forever family who will remain committed to him
- Two parents who can provide structure and consistency
- Youngest child

“Ariel is a very positive young lady who is very polite.”

**Ariel's likes:**

- Pitching in around the house
- Cooking – breakfast anyone? – and making scrambled eggs, her specialty
- Playing games
- Making arts and crafts
- Dancing
- Doing gymnastics
- Playing with LOL dolls and race cars
- Laughing at knock-knock jokes
- Noshing on pizza and chicken nuggets

**Ariel's crystal ball:**

- Owning a breakfast-themed food truck, serving up pancakes, eggs, bacon and sausage

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- A forever family who'll help her maintain her sibling relationships
- A single female parent, two female parents or a mom and dad.
- Patient and attentive

Make sure to check out the MARE YouTube Channel to see videos of several of the children featured in the 2021 Winter Periodical.

**Visit [www.mare.org](http://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](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 & Central Lower Michigan**

Adoption Option Inc., Midland, 989-839-0534, [www.adoptionoptioninc.org](http://www.adoptionoptioninc.org)  
Bethany Christian Services, Fremont, 231-924-3390, [www.bethany.org/fremont](http://www.bethany.org/fremont)  
Bethany Christian Services, Traverse City, 231-995-0870, [www.bethany.org/traversecity](http://www.bethany.org/traversecity)  
Child & Family Services of Northeast MI, Alpena, 989-356-4567, [www.cfsnemi.org](http://www.cfsnemi.org)  
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)  
Holy Cross Services, 989-781-2780, [www.holycrossservices.org](http://www.holycrossservices.org)  
Lutheran Adoption Service, Bay City, 989-686-3170, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
Lutheran 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)

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

Bethany Christian Services, Madison Heights, 248-414-4080, [www.bethany.org/madisonheights](http://www.bethany.org/madisonheights)  
Catholic Charities of S.E. Michigan, 855-882-2736, [www.ccsem.org](http://www.ccsem.org)  
Community Social Services of Wayne County, Detroit, 313-883-2100, [www.csswayne.org](http://www.csswayne.org)  
Child Safe Michigan, Royal Oak, 248-353-0921, [www.childsafemichigan.org](http://www.childsafemichigan.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, Redford, 313-794-5653, [www.judsoncenter.org](http://www.judsoncenter.org)  
Lutheran Adoption Service, Troy, 248-423-2770, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
Methodist Children's Home, Redford, 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.catholiccharitiesjllhc.org](http://www.catholiccharitiesjllhc.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)  
 Ennis Center for Children, Saginaw, 989-558-0020, [www.enniscenter.org](http://www.enniscenter.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)  
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Ann Arbor, 734-971-1944, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Jackson, 517-789-6444, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
 Lutheran 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

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)  
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Grand Rapids, 616-356-1934, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
 Lutheran Adoption Service, Kalamazoo, 269-345-5776, [www.lasadoption.org](http://www.lasadoption.org)  
 Arbor Circle, Holland, 616-396-2301, [www.pathwaysmi.org](http://www.pathwaysmi.org)  
 Youth Guidance Foster Care & Adoption Center, Battle Creek, 269-969-9181, [www.cityinc.org](http://www.cityinc.org)



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**  
**3840 Packard Rd., Suite 170**  
**Ann Arbor, MI 48108**



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