

# MICHIGAN ADOPTION RESOURCE EXCHANGE



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*His three P's: pizza, playtime, public safety, Page 7*

*Fun facts about her include philanthropic plans, Page 9*

*She has a special way to play Capture the Flag, Page 10*

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

## **Winter 2023**

Welcome to the Winter 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](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.

### Na'Jaiya's likes:

- Swimming and volleyball
- Playing games, especially Skip-Bo and Guess Who?
- Drawing animals and making arts and crafts

### Na'Jaiya's crystal ball:

- Wants to become a singer or a rapper

### Qualities of a forever family:

- One or two parents
- Willing to help her get any assistance she needs
- A family who has pets



**Na'Jaiya C010411**

*Photo by Paul Rains*

## Upcoming chances for families to meet youth

**March 25**

**In-Person MARE Meet & Greet**

Novi  
10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

**April 29**

**In-Person MARE Meet & Greet**

Bloomfield  
10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

**May 20**

**In-Person MARE Meet & Greet**

Gaylord  
10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.

For more information, contact [jessica\\_thompson@judsoncenter.org](mailto:jessica_thompson@judsoncenter.org) or call 734-528-2070.



## 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](http://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.



Photo by  
Jen Brooks

**Dominic**  
**C09944**

### Dominic's likes:

- Swinging at the park
- Going to the movies
- Playing arcade games

### Tremendous traits:

- Has a keen sense of humor and enjoys the slapstick variety of comedy

### Qualities of a forever family:

- Two experienced and patient parents
- Able to give the appropriate attention

Photo by  
Emily Goudy



“Jordan is a fun-loving, energetic, affectionate and silly boy who loves animals.”

### **Jordan’s likes:**

- Sports, especially basketball
- Dining at McDonald’s
- Lions, his favorite animal
- Looking for bugs and exploring outside
- Spending time with friends and playing games with them
- Math, his favorite subject in school
- Going to the zoo with his family

### **Jordan’s crystal ball:**

- Becoming a police officer

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

- Advocates for any assistance he needs
- A structured home in which he receives appropriate attention
- Would benefit from being the only child in his new family

## **Did you know?**

If you’re new or not-so-new to adoption you can find valuable information about the process at [Mare.org](https://www.Mare.org) > For Families. There you’ll find links to view waiting youth, to check out FAQ’s and to seek help with pre- and post-adoption assistance. And there is much more valuable information there as well.



Photo by  
Jan Brooks

“Piper is positive, bubbly, loving, caring, helpful and friendly.”

**Piper’s likes:**

- Being active and athletic
- Hiking
- Cooking and baking after school and on the weekends
- Going to church
- Playing board games and watching TV with friends
- Celebrating every holiday with family and friends

**Creative interests:**

- Drawing and making arts and crafts

**Piper’s crystal ball:**

- Hopes to become a nurse

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- Open to all families
- Patient, involved, loving and understanding
- Strong advocates for Piper



“Elizabeth is a joy to be around,  
and I look forward to seeing her every day.”

**Elizabeth’s likes:**

- Attending art class at school
- Outdoor activities such as swimming, hiking and camping
- Watching scary/creepy/cool movies
- Dining on white bean chili, cheesy potatoes with steak and most Chinese food

**Tremendous traits:**

- Finding something to smile about every day

- A wonderful sense of humor

**Creative interests:**

- Singing and dancing
- Writing poetry
- Drawing, painting and making artwork

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- One parent or two parents
- Strong advocates
- Only or youngest child
- A family who has pets preferred

Photo by  
Paul Rains



“Tavion has the best smile and laugh ever!”

“Tavion is a sweet, loving and playful child who loves to be helpful.”

**Tavion’s likes:**

- Working with his hands
- Playing video games
- Taking things apart
- Participating in gym class
- Noshing on pizza
- Spending time with friends
- Playing outside
- The color red, his favorite hue
- Building things with Legos
- Decorations and family at Christmastime

**Tavion’s creative interests:**

- Drawing and other artistic activities

**Tavion’s crystal ball:**

- Wants to be a police officer
- Hopes for a bike and a hoverboard

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- Only or youngest child
- Fierce advocates
- A dog preferred

Photo by  
Elle Ticula Photography



“Anthony is very smart and does great quality work in school.”

**Anthony’s likes:**

- Sports, especially football and basketball and wants to participate in others
- Playing video games
- Shopping for himself
- Any meal with lasagna as the entree
- Puppies and kittens
- Going on all the rides at an amusement park

**Tremendous traits:**

- Has a great sense of humor and loves sharing a laugh with others

**Anthony’s crystal ball:**

- Dreams of \$100 million and a mansion
- Hopes to visit parks with his new family
- Wants to relax as an adult
- Dreams of becoming an NBA all-star with the Los Angeles Lakers

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- One or two parents
- Only or youngest child
- Fierce advocates
- Open to letting Anthony maintain his sibling relationships



## Another way for you to get to know Myah and other youth

MARE has had the opportunity to interview youth who are on our website and to engage them directly in the content of their narratives. Myah is one of the youth who've agreed to having these enhanced narratives. We hope you enjoy these excerpts from her interview and her narrative, which you can read in its entirety at [Mare.org](http://Mare.org).



Photo by  
Jen Brooks

## *Fun Facts*

- Writes music and poetry – and is working on a book
- Biggest passions: drawing, painting and creating her own fashions
- Has always loved Leonardo da Vinci
- Enjoys fantasy novels or fantasy mixed with Christianity
- Wants to earn degrees in art, music, cosmetology and hairstyling so she can help the less fortunate with her knowledge and talent
- If you only had one book to read? “The Door Within”
- Pepperoni pizza? Nope, barbecued chicken pizza from Jet’s
- Star Wars or Jurassic Park? Jurassic Park because the look when the guy sees a dinosaur for the first time is hilarious

“I think everyone needs to get the kind of respect that they deserve.”

*Photo by  
Paul Rains*



**“Toriana is a very intelligent child who is beautiful, happy, loving and caring.”**

**Toriana’s likes:**

- Playing Capture the Flag after dark and with glow sticks
- Roller-skating with friends
- Interacting with pets, especially puppies and dogs
- Has participated in volleyball and gymnastics in the past
- Feasting on lasagna

**Tremendous traits:**

- An amazing artist who enjoys drawing

**Toriana’s crystal ball:**

- Traveling to Tinsel Town to see the Hollywood sign and to go snorkeling to see sharks
- Wants to become a first-responder/ paramedic
- Visiting Disneyland

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- Understanding and patient
- Fierce advocates
- Only or youngest child

Photo by  
Breanna Riley



“Aaron is a pleasant and happy child with a radiant laugh.”

**Aaron’s likes:**

- Playing basketball
- Being outside
- Playing catch with a tennis ball
- Walking around outside on a nice sunny day
- Playing video games
- Dogs, horses and bearded dragons, his favorite critters
- Cooking and hopes for a family who enjoys it as well

**Tremendous traits:**

- A well-behaved boy who likes helping and learning new things

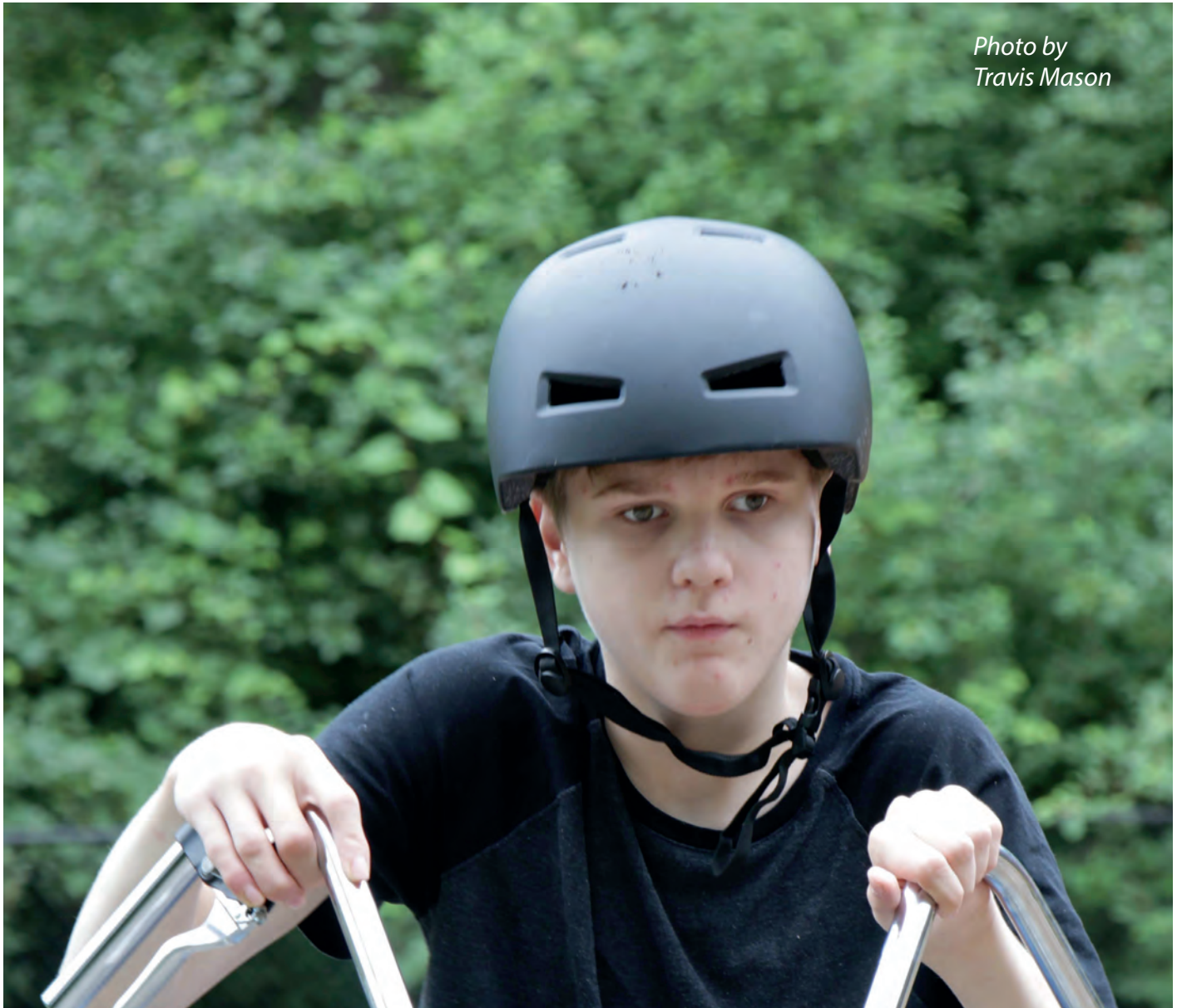
**Aaron’s crystal ball:**

- Working as a mechanic in the morning and as a ghost hunter at night
- Doing fun things with a family such as going to the zoo and going to indoor amusement centers
- Wants to travel to Hawaii

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- Supportive, strong, patient and attentive to Aaron’s needs
- Youngest or only child
- Prefers a family who has pets
- Able to help Aaron with any assistance that would benefit him

Photo by  
Travis Mason



“Nicholas loves to learn and do activities to just kind of learn about life.”

**Nicholas’ likes:**

- Inspecting doors and doorknobs
- Getting hugs
- Playing with gadgets
- Shopping
- Listening to rock music
- Visiting Home Depot so he can see its collection of doors
- Eating French toast
- Dogs and spiders, his favorite creatures

**Nicholas’ crystal ball:**

- Wants to become a doorman or a maintenance man
- Going on car rides and eating breakfast for dinner with his new family

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- Two patient, experienced parents who can provide the attention he requires
- Strong advocates
- Would do best as the only child

**Nex's likes:**

- Studying English in school
- Listening to music
- Doing hair and makeup
- Noshing on nachos and tacos
- Tuning into tunes while showering
- Dressing up in costume for Halloween
- Spending time with friends

**Creative interests:**

- Singing and dancing
- Drawing and cooking

**Nex's crystal ball:**

- Wants to become a cosmetologist

**Qualities of a forever family:**

- Two experienced parents
- Willing to advocate for Nex
- Patient and understanding
- Would do best as the youngest child

“Nex can be very helpful around the house and loves to be around other children.”

*Photo by  
Emily Moelker*



Make sure to check out the MARE YouTube Channel to see videos of several of the children featured in the Winter 2023 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 and 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)  
Ennis Center for Children, Saginaw, 989-558-0020, [www.enniscenter.org](http://www.enniscenter.org)  
Holy Cross Services, Saginaw, 989-781-2780, [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)

### **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.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, Monroe, 734-349-6546, [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.fcssource.org](http://www.fcssource.org)  
 Family & Children's Services, Inc., Battle Creek, 269-965-3247, [www.fcssource.org](http://www.fcssource.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.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**



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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