



FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION HOW COMMUNITY & FAITH ORGANIZATIONS CAN HELP

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

- Partner with your MDHHS county office, private agencies, and/or the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange.
- Provide gathering space for foster care and adoptive visitations and support groups.
- Host a foster care/adoption orientation and PRIDE training with members of your organization or congregation.
- Share the need for foster parents to care for older children, siblings, and children with special needs.
- Schedule/host a child abuse and neglect mandated reporter training. Mandated Reporter pamphlets are available online at www.michigan.gov/mandatedreporter.
- Request free safe sleep resources to provide in your community and faith-based organizations.
- Become a registered MDHHS volunteer to provide transportation assistance for local MDHHS county offices and foster families by driving children in foster care to visits with their parents and siblings.
- Request free posters, brochures, and/or bookmarks on foster care and adoption to display in your foyer, community center, etc.
- Post a link on your website to the MDHHS foster care and adoption site, www.michigan.gov/hopeforahome.
- Invite a Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative youth to share with members of your organization or congregation.
- Become a licensed foster parent!
- Support the Michigan Education Trust Charitable Tuition Program to provide scholarships for students in foster care.
- Highlight the need for foster and adoptive families in your bulletins, newsletters, annual conferences, etc.
- Build awareness of the need for foster and adoptive parents within your alliances/districts/regions.
- Mentor foster youth through the Mentor Michigan Foster Care Initiative, www.michigan.gov/mentormichigan.
- Learn more and sign up for monthly emails on the MDHHS community and faith partner website, www.michigan.gov/communityandfaith.

For more information on any of these resources, services, and programs, please contact, Trina D. Richardson, MDHHS, Community and Faith-Based Coordinator, at 231-398-8497, RichardsonT12@michigan.gov, or Monica S. Jackson, MDHHS, Statewide Community Partnership Coordinator on Recruitment and Support of Foster and Adoptive Parents, at 517-241-6807, JacksonM9@michigan.gov.

Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange

Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange, or MARE, is an information and referral service for prospective parents who are interested in adopting through the foster care system and for adoption workers looking for homes for waiting youth. MARE facilitates recruitment events and public awareness campaigns throughout the state and maintains a photolisting website, www.mare.org, and a toll-free information hotline at 800-589-MARE (6273). MARE's adoption navigators, who are adoptive parents themselves, respond to families who contact MARE and help guide them along their adoption journey. There are many ways your community can become involved at every level.

MARE is currently looking to partner with local and faith communities on the following projects:

- Pray for a child waiting for his or her forever family by distributing prayer cards supplied by MARE.
- Feature a waiting child's photo in your bulletin or newsletter, or on your website.
- Display the Michigan Heart Gallery - a professional photographic exhibit of Michigan's longest-waiting youth available for adoption. Learn more at www.miheart.org.
- Host a "Meet and Greet," where families approved for adoption and children waiting for adoption come together for fun, food and games.
- Host a large-scale adoption awareness event for 200 to 400 people.

If you are interested in or would like more information on any of the MARE opportunities, contact the MARE recruitment specialist at 800-589-6273 or mare@judsoncenter.org. If you or someone you know is interested in becoming an adoptive parent, contact an adoption navigator at 800-589-6273.

MARE is a program of the Judson Center and is funded by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

Post Adoption Resource Centers

Post Adoption Resource Centers, or PARCs, are a resource for families with children ages 21 years or younger who have been adopted in Michigan from the foster care system, or through an international or direct consent adoption, or who are placed in guardianship through Michigan's foster care system and are eligible for guardianship assistance through MDHHS Adoption and Guardianship Assistance Office. PARC's services are provided across the state through eight regional offices and include family activities, monthly groups and events, information about resources in the community, helping families to access and coordinate community services, and adoption sensitive in-home case management to support families who are dealing with challenges that sometimes arise in foster care adoption.

Local and Faith Community Organizations can:

- Contact PARC for information about their services within your community.
- Invite a PARC Specialist to present at adoption awareness events.
- Provide information to PARC about events and trainings being provided by community and faith organizations, for inclusion on the PARC website.
- Provide information about PARC services to families interested in adoption.

For more information about the Post Adoption Resource Center, visit www.michigan.gov/adoption.

Foster Care Navigator Program

The Foster Care Navigator Program provides support before, during, and after the foster parent licensing process. All foster care navigators have experience as a foster parent and are eager to assist families throughout the licensing process. Navigators provide support, information and referrals in order to ensure that families have the resources they need to be successful as licensed foster parents.

Local and Faith Community Organizations can:

- Contact the Foster Care Navigator Program for information on the foster parent licensing process and information about local child placing agencies.
- Invite a foster care navigator to present at foster care awareness events.
- Provide information on foster care events/trainings being provided by community and faith organizations to the Foster Care Navigator Program, for inclusion on the Navigator website.
- Refer families interested in becoming licensed foster parents to the Foster Care Navigator Program.

For more information about the Foster Care Navigator Program, visit www.fcnp.org or call 855-MICHKIDS (642-4543).

Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care

The Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care (FCC) is a collaboration that provides a catalyst to educate and motivate congregations to engage in at least one project or program that will support foster children in Michigan.

- Volunteer your time or talents for the benefit of foster youth and families to the Faith Communities Coalition or other organizations serving these groups.
- Request a volunteer speaker to provide expert training on issues facing foster youth and families to your congregation, schools, civic groups, or organizations.
- Donate household items, kitchen supplies, linens, etc., for youth transitioning out of foster care.
- Donate goods or services, including dental or orthodontic services, music lessons, beds and school supplies, through For the Seventh Generation to provide opportunities for foster children at:
 - www.fortheseventhgeneration.org.
- Increase church and community awareness of the need for foster and adoptive families.
- Promote and recruit families for specific children waiting to be adopted.
- Conduct informational meetings, trainings, adoption events and small group discussions to encourage interested families and individuals within your congregation or organization.
- Assist in the recruitment of additional community churches to participate in foster care/adoption ministries.
- Pray for foster youth and their birth and foster families.
- Attend a local FCC meeting and make contact with area foster care agencies.
- Recognize and support foster and adoptive families within the congregation or organization.

For more information about opportunities to become involved with FCC, visit www.faithcommunitiescoalition.org.