

PARC Quarterly Newsletter

MAY 2013-JULY 2013

VOLUME # 5



School Resource Corner:

The Michigan Special Education Reference (MI-SER) is accessible by following this link. www.michigan.gov/ose-eis

The MI-SER is designed to combine easy access to Michigan laws, statutes, administrative rules, and procedural information in a single location. In addition, the MI-SER functionality provides users with immediate access to special education policy resources through its electronic table of contents or through a word and phrase search engine.

Michigan Advocates for Special Education: <http://advocatesforspecialeducation.com/who.html>

Creating the best educational plan for your child requires a set of decisions which will last a lifetime. The guidance and expertise of a professional advocate can be instrumental to getting the job done right whether through an IEP or a 504 Plan. Please follow the link above to select an advocate nearest to you.

Adoption Poem

The one who raises, is truly our parent even if they, he/she did not give birth to us.

Growing Up With Grandma

By: Candy Canan

I don't know when it happened. I don't know when she came, but, she's the one I always knew, Grandma was her name.

She taught me how to tie my shoes. She taught me how to talk. And, though I can't remember, I think she taught me how to walk.

When all the other kids in school, would talk about Mom and Dad, I wondered where my parents were, that made me kinda' sad.

And, sometimes there were days I'd cry or hide my head in shame. But Grandma took it all in stride, and loved me all the same.

She'd wrap her arms around me, and kiss me on the head. She'd tell me that she loved me, when she tucked me into bed.

Being a teen, I remember, the days when being with friends was more fun. And I wondered what it would have been like to actually be someone's son.

To have a regular family, some siblings, a mom, and a dad, what had I done to deserve less than others? Sometimes I felt so mad.

'It's alright, it's okay,' Grandma would say, 'One day you'll understand why, Life just isn't fair to everyone you see. It's always okay to cry.'

And when I went off to college, I met the love of my life. It was Grandma who was the first I told, that I planned to make her my wife.

Soon after I'd become a father, for that I could hardly wait, to have a child of my very own, And, to make my Grandma a 'Great'.

A little girl to share her name, for all that she'd given me. So much I owed to Grandma that was plain to see.

As time passed and life grew short, I hoped my Grandma knew, that it was her love and her support, that always got me through.

If I could tell her one more thing 'Thanks Grandma', is what I'd say, for loving me and making me, the man I am today.

POST ADOPTION RESOURCE CENTER

Region 5 Office
3840 Packard Rd. Suite 170
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
(734) 794-2988

Region 6 Office
2503 S. Linden Rd. Suite 130
Flint, MI 48532
(810) 732-8510 Ext. 25401

<http://www.parc-judson.org/>

Change

By: Thomas Green
PARC Case Manager, Region 5

In today's business world, according to the Dale Carnegie Institute, "organizational change is a requirement for success. Organizational change is needed to address innovations, new technology, shifting customer demands, and other business critical issues". One of my favorite films is "Tommy Boy". In the movie, Tommy Callahan's dad, "Big Tom" Callahan, owner of Callahan Auto Parts manufacturing company, is explaining to his banker that the company needs funding to hire a workforce to start up a new brake division. During that conversation, "Big Tom" Callahan proudly says, "In this business you're either growin', or you're dyin'". Successful businesses understand and embrace the fact that customers provide valuable feedback, if given the opportunity. Successful businesses listen fully, adopt a fresh paradigm, and adapt to the changing needs of their customer.

Another type of change that we are all familiar with, and in many cases avoid is personal change. American writer, Seth Godin is quoted, "Change almost **never fails**, because it's too early. It almost **always fails**, because it's too late." As I serve adoptive families, I am prompted that sometimes change can't come soon enough, and other times changes that have been made are no longer benefiting the family. As a Family Life Educator and Psychologist, I find that my own life reflects those same sentiments. My clients, at some point, made a decision to change the course of their life story and adopted a child or children. These parents frequently inform me that the change brought powerful emotional rewards, such as joy, love, happiness, fulfillment and pride as well as issues that cause pain and prompt reflection about this life choice.

A salient feature about humans is our connection to lifespan development. In other words, we develop from newborns to toddlers, from toddlers to children, from children to young adults, and from young adults to well, you get the idea. According to Jonathan Wells, personal change coach, personal change is made up of internal and external forces. He also shares that although personal change can happen quickly, it usually follows a sequence: **Awareness**, a sense that something is no longer working as well as it once did; **Discovery**, where your conscious mind has located the source of discomfort and is attempting to alert you of its presence. At this point you may run into resistance from your own ego, and the whole process of growth could be cut short; **Ownership** is the stage where we take responsibility for our own discomfort. That means that we fully accept that we are the source, rather than some external force. At this point we consciously acknowledge that it is our feelings, habits, perception, emotions, limiting beliefs, or faulty reasoning that needs to be adjusted; **Exposure** is the stage where we expand our search to identify the emotion or belief that is no longer serving us. This can be difficult for several reasons. For one, logic is not usually a very effective tool in the emotional arena. For another, we tend to view our beliefs as facts of life, and will always look for ways to justify them. Rather than a direct confrontation, it is much easier to look at our behavior patterns to see how different beliefs have affected our lives. Once we recognize that we have been held back by, or suffered because of, certain beliefs, we will have both logic and emotion supporting our desire for change; **Intention** is the threshold of personal change. You have identified an obsolete belief or behavior pattern, and you are now motivated to replace it with something more empowering; **Action** is the next step. If you don't act, nothing will change. In fact, your discomfort with the current reality will increase because you have a much greater awareness of it. Before, it was just a subtle sense that something is no longer working. Now, it has a face. **Integration** occurs when you have fully adopted the new belief or behavior. What started as a subtle awareness that something needed to be adjusted has resulted in new milestone on the journey of personal change. So, what does all this mean to you...?

Our kids come to us with many difficulties, there's no doubt about it. Many adopted children have been adversely affected by childhood trauma, such as severe neglect and extreme psychological and emotional abuse. Some of these challenges are not evident until years after the adoption is final. I challenge you to make one change. Change your paradigm as you seek necessary services for your troubled child. Begin by asking your service provider if they are Trauma Informed. Do your own research regarding Trauma Informed practices. Link up with other families that have adopted children. They are making changes too, and can provide a source of empathy and support. The Post Adoption Resource Center has a link on its' web site (www.parc-judsoncenter.org) to resources and contacts for your convenience. Remember "Tommy Boy"? Changes were implemented and the Callahan Auto Parts Company was successful. You will be too. All that's needed is one change at a time.

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PARC Adoptive Family Support Groups:

The adoption process and integrating an adopted child into your family certainly has its ups and downs, which can leave parents and children feeling exhausted and frustrated. Joining a support group and talking to other individuals who have gone through similar experiences and feelings can be helpful. In addition, other adoptive families can be a great source of information for finding useful, adoption sensitive resources in your area.

Region 5 -Family Support Group:
Second Thursday each month / 6:00-8:00pm
Judson Center Washtenaw Office
3840 Packard Rd. Suite 170
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
Contact: Tracy_kapusansky@judsoncenter.org
(734) 794-2988

Region 6 – Family Support Group:
Fourth Wednesday each month / 6:00-8:00pm
Judson Center Macomb Regional Office
12220 E. 13 Mile Rd.
Warren, MI 48093
Contact: Pamela_ferguson@judsoncenter.org

"I really enjoy working with the youth at the support group! We enjoy pizza, cookies, laughs and stories with each other. The kids seem to really enjoy the art projects, games and other fun activities we do in the group, and I love to see the kids laugh and share their experiences with one another. It really is a great group, and the kids really appreciate the time they spend together!"

~ Staci Suliman PARC Intern and youth group facilitator



WANTED! ADOPTIVE FAMILIES FOR SUPPORT GROUPS!!

We are searching for adoptive families who are interested in sharing their stories, learning new techniques for parenting adopted children, and being supported by other adoptive families in the community. If you are interested in learning more about support groups being offered, please contact us.

*It's FREE, fun, educational
and dinner is provided – Come
join us!*

Region 5: Tracy Kapusansky
734-528-1692
Tracy_kapusansky@judsoncenter.org

Region 6: Pam Ferguson
810-732-8510
Pamela_ferguson@judsoncenter.org

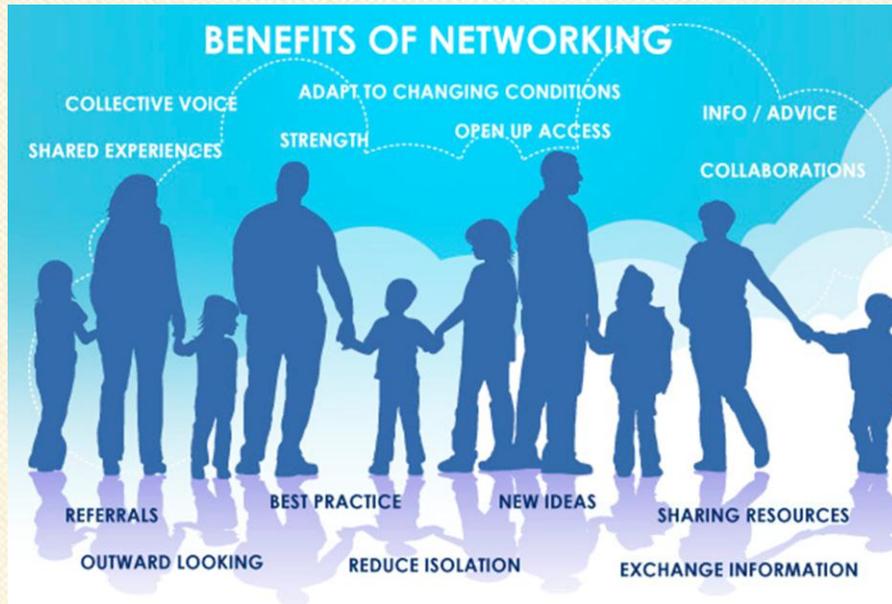
We look forward to seeing you
soon!

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A New Support Group, Saving Our Sanity (S.O.S.), is coming to Berrien County!

PARC is very excited to announce that Saving Our Sanity (SOS), a newly formed parent led support group for adoptive, foster, guardianship and kinship families, will have its first official meeting on August 22, 2013. This group is designed to support families with the unique challenges they face in foster care, adoption, guardianship and kinship care. This support group will meet in Stevensville, MI the third Thursday of every month. The meetings will alternate between topic discussions and training topics. Each meeting will start at 6:00pm with refreshments and socializing. At 6:30, there will be a discussion time for families to share any specific challenges they may be facing and get support from the group. From 7:00pm to 8:00pm either a topic discussion or training will be featured. Some of the topics planned are Secondary Trauma, Transitions and Triggers, and "Emotional First Aid Kit". Training topics will include Trauma 101, Attachment and Development, and Parent Self Care. If you are interested in more information and/or would like to be put on the S.O. S. email list you can contact T.C. Lopez, Thomas_lopez@judsoncenter.org or at 248-961-0824.

Does your child need an IEP?

If you think your child may qualify for an IEP (Individualized Education Plan) now is the time to ask your school for one. If you put it in writing, the schools have 30 school days to complete an evaluation and determine eligibility.

The following website has more information about IEPs, <http://www.projectfindmichigan.org/about.php?ID=48&sub=62>.

Their project motto is "Helping Young People Succeed in School"! If you click around on the site you will find several sections that you might find helpful (ISD contacts by county and a parent resource section).

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What are Intermediate School Districts?

**The purpose of an ISD is to provide the leadership, programs and services which complement and enhance the efforts of constituent school districts in extending educational opportunities to all students.*

*ISDs are structured as separate taxing units to provide various administrative and instructional services to local school districts. All Michigan ISDs have elected board members. However, unlike school board members in local school districts who are popularly elected by the residents of a given school district, many ISD boards of education are chosen by the board members of each local school district within its borders. Each ISD has a superintendent that is hired by the board of education.

*The 57 intermediate school districts (ISDs) or regional educational service agencies (RESAs) were created by the legislature in 1962 to bring about quality and equitable educational opportunities to students and schools throughout the state. ISDs accomplish this mission in a number of ways, namely by:

1. Creating and promoting economies of scale through things like cooperative purchasing and special education services;
2. Sharing current and credible research, best practices, and innovation through initiatives like the fiber project and professional development.
3. Providing oversight and liaison roles through programs like Head start!



Intermediate School Districts for Region 5 and Region 6:

Barry ISD	Barry	www.barryisd.org	269-945-9545
Berrien RESA	Berrien	www.berrienresa.org	269-471-7725
Branch ISD	Branch	branch-isd.org	517-279-5730
Calhoun ISD	Calhoun	www.calhounisd.org	269-781-5141
Eaton ISD	Eaton	eaton.k12.mi.us	517-543-5500
Genesee ISD	Genesee	www.geneseeisid.org	810-591-4400
Hillsdale ISD	Hillsdale	hillsdale-isd.org	517-437-0990
Huron ISD	Huron	www.hisd.k12.mi.us	989-269-6406
Ingham ISD	Ingham	inghamisd.org	517-676-1051
Jackson ISD	Jackson	www.jcisd.org	517-768-5200
Kalamazoo RESA	Kalamazoo	www.kresa.org	269-250-9200
Lapeer ISD	Lapeer	www.lcisd.k12.mi.us	810-664-5917
Lenawee ISD	Lenawee	lisd.k12.mi.us	517-265-2119
Lewis Cass ISD	Cass	www.lewiscassisd.org	269-445-3891
Livingston ESA	Livingston	www.livingstonesa.org	517-546-5550
Macomb ISD	Macomb	www.misd.net	586-228-3300
Monroe ISD	Monroe	misd.k12.mi.us	734-242-5799
Saint Clair County RESA	St. Clair	www.sccresa.org	810-364-8990
Saint Joseph County ISD	St. Joseph	www.sjcisd.org	269-467-5400
Sanilac ISD	Sanilac	www.sanilac.k12.mi.us	810-648-4700
Tuscola ISD	Tuscola	www.tisd.k12.mi.us	989-673-2144
Van Buren ISD	Van Buren	www.vbisd.org	269-427-7961
Washtenaw ISD	Washtenaw	www.wash.k12.mi.us	734-994-8100

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Internet Safety and Adopted Children: How to Find Balance in the Information Age

By: Brenna Cavanaugh
PARC Case Manager, Region 6

There are many issues that adoptive families face concerning confidentiality, public records, and assisting children in the journey to look for answers to the questions about how and why they were adopted. Often adopted children, in an effort to get answers to these questions, seek out birth family members.

The issues for parents when it comes to contacting birth family can run the gamut from concern about not wanting their children to have contact with birth parents who have been perpetrators, to simply not being comfortable with their child getting too close with his/ her birth family and the fear that this will cause confusion or strained loyalties.

So how do you deal with these topics in an era where public records and connections can be found in an instant?

There is so much available via search engines such as Google, as well social networking such as Facebook. This leaves many parents wondering what can be done to keep their family safe.

The first “rule of thumb” for internet safety is to keep computers in areas that are public. Many families keep the home computer in an open area so that adults can “see” what is being accessed. This provides less opportunity for children to be searching for items or looking at things that they might be more prone to research behind closed doors. The use of passwords, firewalls, and checking in frequently to the web browser history are all ways of monitoring and limiting what your children are able to view when using computers at home.

While the use of privacy settings and passwords may seem like easy options, there are always loop holes. Many children are much more computer savvy than their parents, and with access to the internet at school, the library, and on cell phones; it may not be easy to monitor what children are able to access.

Even with their limitations these are still good options that should be in place, but the most important element is having an open dialog with your children about these topics and sharing your personal views and guidelines. For example a fellow PARC worker and concerned father shared the following about computer usage at his house: “I have the passwords for all of my children’s email inboxes, social networking sites; all of it. We discussed that if they are using it properly then they should have no problem with me checking in from time to time.” This father also shared an incidence in which the birth mother of one of his children contacted the child via a social networking site. “I had the password, so I contacted her (the child’s birth mother) and very plainly stated that we would contact her when my child is older, and asked her not to attempt any further contact with my child.” In that instance the father also share: “I shared with the mother that I did want to reach out to her at some point in the near future and have a connection if that is something my child wants.”

Continued on next page...

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Continued...

Each family is different, while some options will work for some, they make no be appropriate or work for others.

Another parent, a mother here in Michigan, dealt with the issue of confidentiality by saying: "We have asked family not to post pictures of our kids on Facebook, Flickr, etc., without asking. I would also personally take it on a case-by-case basis as far as a yearbook and things like that. We fostered school-age siblings temporarily and the parents knew what town we lived in, just not our last names. The people had some issues, of course, but I had no fear of them coming after us or coming to find their kids outside the system. If I were fostering the child of a parent with a criminal background who might want to come seek us or the child out, I would be more cautious about protecting the child's picture."

(<http://www.mothering.com/community/t/1341072/privacy-guidelines-for-foster-kids-in-internet-public-publishing>)

I interviewed another worker in the field who shared with me that he and his wife had given this topic much thought before they ran into a problem with social networking. They sat down and completed a safety plan, which is a written document that outlines exactly what they would do if any of the fears they shared for their child happened. For example, if the child were to run away, they would call the police first, and then move on to the family member or members that were in contact with the child. This family had decided upon finding out that the child and birth mother had been in contact via social networking to contact the mother and allow some visits and contact if the mother agreed to a set of ground rules laid out by the family. That worked for a short period of time, but when the mother broke the rules the child disclosed to the adoptive parents what had happened and shared that she no longer wanted to have contact with her birth mother.

It really is up to the parents to decide what will work best for their family, but unless you choose not to post any information; there are ways around even the most secure settings on most social networking sites. Being realistic about what teenagers have access to and initiating an open discussion may be the only time a parent will know or be able to influence what their children will do to search for information and /or connections to birth family. Common sense is a wonderful starting point, but learning about the new and different sites and sources of technology and information may also be helpful. Getting assistance on how to deal with the emotions that you as parents may encounter may also be beneficial. A lot of this is available on the internet as well. Here are a few online resources to answer some questions and get you started:

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/experts/archive/2009/05/exploring-the-concerns-of-adop.html>

<http://voices.yahoo.com/how-adoptive-parents-cope-childs-search-for-6386466.html>

<http://ouradopt.com/adoption-blog/mar-2011/lisas/adoptive-parents-adult-adoptees-who-feel-threatened-birth-parent-search>

In the end, all we can really do for our children is to give them the tools to keep themselves safe. What they do with those tools is really up to them.

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Upcoming Events:

August 8th - 6PM to 8PM. **Adoptive Family Support Meeting and Youth Club.** Judson Center Ann Arbor. Pizza provided. RSVP to tracy_kapusansky@judsoncenter.org.

August 15th - 6PM to 8PM. **Adoptive Family Support Meeting.** Lansing Area. Pizza provided. RSVP to tracy_kapusansky@judsoncenter.org. More details to follow.

August 17th - 10a-3p. **FREE Fostering Family Fun Event – Proud Lake Recreation Area** (between Detroit and Lansing). Free catered lunch and family-friendly outdoor activities: Archery, Fishing, Canoeing, Rock Climbing, Zip Line, Nature Hikes, Scavenger Hunt, And More! **Register here by Friday, August 9.** If you have questions or need help registering, contact Christie Higbee 517-241-9865. at HigbeeC1@michigan.gov.

August 17th - Region 6 Family Picnic. Holly Recreation Area. 8100 Grange Hall Rd. Holly, MI 48442 11am-2pm. Contact Pamela_ferguson@judsoncenter.org or call 810-732-8510 ext. 25401.

August 16-18th: - Families on the Move Inc. 14th Annual Family Camp. For more info, contact Veda Thompkins at 313-532-0012

August 22nd - 6PM to 8PM. **Adoptive Family Support Meeting.** Berrien County. Pizza provided. RSVP to tracy_kapusansky@judsoncenter.org. Details to follow.

August 22nd - 6PM to 8PM. **Adoptive Family Support Meeting and Youth Club.** Judson Macomb Regional Office. Pizza provided. RSVP to Pamela_ferguson@judsoncenter.org or call 810-732-8510 Ext 25401.

August 29th: - Region 6 Task Force Meeting. To RSVP or for more info, contact Pam Ferguson at 810-732-8510 ext. 23507

September 7th - **Foster Family Fun Event - Yankee Springs Recreation Area.** Barry County. More information to follow.

September 7th – FREE Training Opportunity – 9am-12pm. **How to Bring Love and Laughter Back into your home while Raising Challenging Children.** Orchards children's Services. 30215 Southfield Rd. Southfield, MI 48076. Questions call 517-353-3060.

September 18th - 6-9pm. **FREE Training: Cross Cultural Parenting – Beyond Race.** Location TBA. **More info: call 810-732-8510 ext. 25401 or email Pamela-ferguson@judsoncenter.org**

September 19th – FREE Training Opportunity – 6pm-9pm. **Nurturing the Wholehearted Parent: Preventing Burnout.**

MSU Department of Radiology, Radiology Building, Auditorium 846 Service Road, East Lansing, MI 488274. 517-353-3060.

September 19th - 1 pm – On-line Webinar - **Healing from Food Insecurity: Beyond the Stash** — by Katja Rowell, M.D. \$15 for NACAC members and \$20 for non-members. To register go to www.nacac.org.

September 21st -, 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.: Kinship Adoption Festival, WCCC, Northwest Campus, 8200 W. Outer Drive, Detroit, MI. Children's activities, workshops for adoptive/prospective adoptive families, entertainment. Free to the public.

September 25th - 6PM to 8PM. **Adoptive Family Support Meeting and Youth Club.** Judson Macomb Regional Office. Pizza provided. RSVP to Pamela_ferguson@judsoncenter.org or call 810-732-8510 Ext 25401.

October 5th – FREE Training Opportunity – 9am-12pm. **Courageous Parenting: Helping Children Heal from Sexual Abuse.** 30685 Barrington St. Suite 140. Madison Heights, MI 48071. Questions, Call 517-353-3060.

October 17th – FREE Training Opportunity – 6pm-9pm. **Understanding your Child's Mental Health Diagnosis.** MSU Department of Radiology, Radiology Building, Auditorium 846 Service Road, East Lansing, MI 488274. 517-353-3060.

October 24th - 6PM to 8PM. **Adoptive Family Support Meeting and Youth Club.** Judson Macomb Regional Office. Pizza provided. RSVP to Pamela_ferguson@judsoncenter.org or call 810-732-8510 Ext 25401.

November 2nd - Family **Enrichment Center Annual Fall Conference**, Battle Creek. RSVP to 269-660-0448. Post Adoption Resource Center Speakers 10:30-Noon: Speakers: Tracy Kapusansky BA, and TC Lopez, BS, Topic: **"Talking to Your Child About Adoption"**

2:45 p.m.-4:15: Speakers: Jon Albert and Brenna Cavanaugh, BA Topic: **"Understanding Your Child's Diagnosis"**

November 7th – FREE Training Opportunity - **Raising Children Who Have Experienced Trauma.** 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM Location: Bethany Christian Services, Conference Center, Building G . 901 Eastern Avenue, NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49501. Questions ? call 517-353-3060.

November 14th – FREE Training Opportunity - **Raising Children with Attachment Issues.** 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM Location: The Samaritan Center, 5555 Conner Avenue, Detroit, MI 48213. Questions? Call 517-353-3060.

Please check out our website for other upcoming events! www.parc-judson.org

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Michigan Heart Gallery 2013

The Heart Gallery is a travelling exhibit that features children from the Michigan foster care system who are available for adoption and have been waiting for permanent families for an extended period of time. Professional photographers contribute their time and services to present the children in a strong and positive light. In the process, the children may build new relationships and certainly build their self-esteem. At the time of this writing, there are about 280 children in Michigan who do not have families to support them. Most of them are teenagers.

The 2013 Michigan Heart Gallery Grand Opening occurred on April 20, 2013 at Jamison Temple Baptist Church. Approximately 120 people were in attendance, including adoptive and foster families, agency workers, community members, and of course, waiting children. This year, Judson Center's President and CEO, Cam Hosner was the Master of Ceremonies; DHS Director Maura Corrigan was the Keynote Speaker. Pastor Jamison welcomed us on behalf of his church community. Kelly Pergeau, adoptive parent and Heart Gallery photographer also spoke. There were special performances by youth waiting for adoption. In addition, an art exhibit of ceramic plates created by waiting youth from St. Vincent/Catholic Charities in Lansing was featured. You got to look up the next exhibit and check out Tashiana's plate!

Tristan was the keynote speaker, age 16; he has been waiting for an adoptive family for an extensive length of time. He was open, articulate, and sincere in his presentation. Following the event, a family who met him at the Heart Gallery expressed an interest in adopting Tristan, and has begun the adoption process!

If you would like to find out more about our waiting children, please visit the MARE website www.mare.org.



The Michigan Association of Adoptive, Foster and Kinship Parents

The Michigan Association of Adoptive, Foster And Kinship Parents (known as MAFAK) held its 9th annual spring training conference on April 25, 26 & 27 2013. This year, due to funding assistance from the Department of Human Services, the conference was free to attendees. Hundreds of foster adoptive, and kinship parents as well as child welfare professionals attended.

The focus of this year's conference was "transitions." Many of the workshops offered focused on transitioning children into foster care, kinship care, reunification and adoption. Workshops also focused on the effects of trauma on children and those who parent them, and provided information regarding parenting children who have experienced trauma. Our program manager, Rosemary Jackson and Region 6 supervisor, Pamela Ferguson each presented workshops.

If you get a chance, attend next year's conference – you won't regret it!



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