

May is National Foster Care Month



Did you know that there are over 13,000 Michigan children currently in foster care?

During the month of May our Presbytery's Hands-on Mission Work Group invites *every congregation* to participate in just **one** simple project. Here are some ideas to help promote May as Foster Care Month in your local congregation. Choose any one that seems like a good fit for you.

Week One of May: Launching May as Foster Care Month: Who are the foster kids in Michigan? How many? Put a face on foster care: Invite a foster youth or foster care case worker to share a moment for mission. Include current statistics or stories.

Congregational challenge: **Check to see who are foster, adoptive, kinship care parents and/or grandparents raising grandkids in your own congregation. Please let us know who they are so that we can also help provide resources to support them.** Maybe start your own foster/adoptive parents conversation /support group to offer wrap around support. Distribute "prayer cards" that feature children who are looking for a forever family. Ask members to post the cards where they can see them daily and take a minute each day to lift their child in prayer. These can be ordered through Jessica Thompson, Jessica_Thompson@JudsonCenter.org of the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange.

Week Two of May: What act of concrete care can I do to make the life of a foster youth better?

Congregational challenge: Fill Care Kits for kids going into foster care such as toothpaste, toothbrush, new pj's, underwear, socks, duffle bag or backpack. For babies: diapers, ointment, onesies, sleepers, outfit. Attach the list to grocery bags distributed after the service—or have a sign-up sheet for specific articles that can be collected at church.

Week Three of May: What's involved with being a foster parent/grandparent/tutor/mentor??

Congregational challenge: Hold an orientation meeting with one of the agencies to inform people about mentoring, volunteer opportunities, fostering and adoption, respite care giving. Contact your local service agency in April to arrange for a speaker and meeting time. Other ideas: Help sponsor a birthday party for kids in residential centers; host a meet and greet party in conjunction with the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange;

Week Four of May: Dedication and blessing of donations and for the children, youth and foster families who receive them. Another possibility: Wrap up month of praying for one child looking for a forever family by including their names during prayers of the people.

For resources including foster care statistics, suggested lists of items for donation drives, speakers to contact, etc., please contact Rev. Dr. Kate Thoresen, katethoresen@fpcbirthingam.org of the Presbytery's Hands-on-Mission Work Group.