

MAY IS NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH



YOU CAN CHANGE A LIFETIME!

All children deserve a safe, happy life—including the 17,500+ children and youth in Michigan who need foster care and mentoring. Young people need nurturing adults on their side especially when their own families are in crisis and unable to care for them. We salute the compassionate people who make a difference by serving as foster parents, relative caregivers, mentors, advocates, social workers, and volunteers. Thanks to many of these unsung heroes, many vulnerable children are able to grow and thrive in safe, stable homes.

But some children are less fortunate. Most communities across the state are urgently seeking more everyday people to help our youth overcome troubled childhoods and realize their full potential. Now is the time to get involved. No matter how much time you have to give, you have the power to do something positive that will change a lifetime for a young person. The following ideas were developed specifically to inspire and encourage faith-based groups to be informed and more involved.

Have your congregation become a partner with other faith communities and service agencies. Proclaim May as National Foster Care Month. Educate and motivate members to respond to the Call to Action on behalf of our vulnerable children. Participate in the Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care.

Spotlight foster care during May. Some may want to **feature** information about the needs of youth in foster care during sermons. Others can ask members of the congregation to share their personal experiences as a foster parent, relative caregiver or foster care alumni as part of the service. As part of the children's ministry or mission outreach programs, invite representatives from local foster care agencies to answer questions and provide informational materials. Hand out a flyer to feature key facts about foster care in your church bulletin. Distribute ways to get involved for all members.

- **“Adopt” a foster youth (as a congregation).** This is particularly important for older youth who have “aged out” of foster care, typically at 18 years of age, yet still require significant support to live independently. Provide college care packages, a place at the table for holiday celebrations and, most importantly, strong ties to caring adults whom they can count on in both good and bad times.
- **Hold a donation drive** to collect clothing, books, toys, computers, sports equipment, musical instruments and school supplies for distribution to children in foster care via local agencies.

You can help your faith community to respond to the Call to Action on behalf of our most vulnerable children. For more information, to arrange for a speaker or to get on the email list, contact the Save Our Children Coalition at **313-593-5052** - www.saveourchildrencoalition.org or the Faith Communities Coalition on Foster Care coordinator, Rev. Kate Thoresen, at kthoresen7@gmail.com. (248-643-8373).