

## Statewide Colleagues Praise Michele Corey's Dedication to Improving Foster Care

### Stacy Bladen, Deputy Director, Children's Services Agency, Michigan DHHS



Michele has a special and unique ability to bring cross system professionals together with youth and families to build momentum for change and improvements in child welfare. I've had the privilege of working with her on **race equity issues in 2013**, **cross-system trauma work** in 2015, and on the **Children's Assurance of Quality Foster Care bill** in 2016, which was eventually enacted into law in 2018. Michele was a huge supporter of the **Young Adult Voluntary Foster Care Program** that extended financial and service supports for older youth to age 21, and her support and advocacy for the **Michigan Youth Opportunities**

Initiative has helped countless older youth finish educational goals and gain essential living skills for lifelong success.

For over a decade, Michele has partnered with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services to improve the lives of youth transitioning from foster care. Michele has been a critical partner to the child welfare team in bringing youth voice to the attention of policy makers through events such as **KidSpeak®** and **FamilySpeak**. Her outreach and advocacy for improved outcomes for youth experiencing foster care frequently brings multiple agencies and stakeholders together to create opportunities for conversation and change.

On behalf of Children's Services Agency, I congratulate Michele on receiving the NFYI Fostering Exemplary Change Award. As a colleague and a friend, I sincerely admire her tireless advocacy and success - she is most deserving of this honor.

### Sen. Jim Runestad, R-White Lake, District 15



Michelle Corey's advocacy and passion for **child welfare** has been instrumental in the passage of solid reforms for youth in foster care which are empowering children and families.

### **Trent Lott, Legislative Aide to state Rep. Frank Liberati**

I've worked with Michele specifically on **kinship care issues**, directly related to lot of work she's done with foster care. Her knowledge in being able to understand the scope of child welfare in the state is immensely helpful to how to support kids, caregivers and families as children are leaving their parents' homes, formally and informally. She's been immensely helpful in trying to figure out how systems work and don't work and seeing what we can do to start remediating these issues now.

When we were trying to create the **Kinship Care Council**, she was able to bridge the gap between the policy wonkiness I was trying to project, and where (Children's Trust Fund Executive Director) Suzanne Greenberg was in her real life application of where the Children's Trust Fund was. Michele acted as that translator. Her background knowledge of the policy side and application side of the issue bridged the divide between the two. If she wasn't in that meeting, I don't think it would have gone as well as it did.

Michele has been critical in helping my understanding of various issues in the child welfare system. Having that perspective and contextual knowledge has really been enormously helpful.

### **Karie Ward, Director, Fostering Success Michigan**



Michele and Michigan's Children have been instrumental partners in moving the needle for change for youth with experience in foster care in Michigan. Michele brings energy, passion, and tenacity to this work and is one of our greatest Champions in advocacy. Michele was a key player in the development and administration of the [Fostering Success Michigan](#) Policy Action Network, which works with a variety of partners across the state to identify and advocate for positive changes in policy to increase postsecondary access and success for young people with experience in foster care. We LOVE Michele and Michigan's Children!

### **Khadija Walker-Fobbs, Executive Director, The New Foster Care**



Michele has been a wonderful and strong advocate for youth who are coming from a foster care experience. She has spent many years putting together and working with partners around KidSpeak® forums and allowing youth voice to be heard around policymakers and influence-makers. She is strong in her stance and always willing to come to the table with others to make an impact and be the change agent. I have the highest regard for Michele and so happy to seeing her receive this honor and congratulation.

I've known Michele for probably 10 years and first connected with her through her work with the Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative. Michele also participates in our **policy action network** with **The New Foster Care and Fostering Success Michigan**. That has been a wonderful platform to have Michele Corey and other thought-leaders talk through how things are shifting for kids in care. She's been crucial to that work.

A lot of people assume what's best for kids. Michele's always willing to listen and not assume. She truly is willing to listen to those walking through that experience. That willingness to listen is a special quality lot of people don't possess.

**Alicia Guevara-Warren, Kids Count Project Director, Michigan League for Public Policy**



Michele has been a friend and mentor for many years. She's a leader in incorporating youth voice and in making sure policymakers hear that voice. Michele's work on the **Kids Count in Michigan project** has helped us advocate for the thousands of children involved in the foster system, and her dedication to improving outcomes for kids and families is an inspiration to all of us who work on behalf of Michigan's families.