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The Michigan Citizen, 1055 Trumbull, Detroit, MI 48216 (313) 963-8282

Mon, 28 Nov, 2011

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Local child rights activist lauds Michigan adoption law



Saba Gebrai wit Kinita McDaniels Park West Foundation youth COURTESY PHOTOS

Published

• Sun, Nov 27, 2011

By Kojo Sankofa
[Special to the Michigan Citizen](#)

DETROIT — Ethiopian-born child rights advocate Saba Gebrai has lauded state legislature for the new law extending care to Michigan foster youth.

The law, signed Nov. 22, encourages adoption, foster care, mentoring, tutoring and respice care.

Saba Gebrai is the director for the Blue Babies Park West Foundation, an organization in Detroit committed to supporting and uplifting youth in the social welfare system eager to improve themselves, as well as those who are in foster care.

Blue Babies is made up of former and current foster care youth who believe in themselves and in service of their peers and communities, daily transforming lives through youth-led, creative solutions.

Gebrai pointed out that November is National Adoption month, therefore it is significant that the adoption law has been signed to extend care to Michigan youth in foster care.

So far there have been over 2000 adoptions and it is expected that the signing of this new law will encourage more qualified persons and families to adopt and support youth in foster care.

Approximately 107,000 children throughout America await the chance to be taken home with adoptive parents. According to recent Children's Bureau statistics, the prospects for finding loving families and stable surroundings are often poor, particularly for Black youth.

Gebrai explained that there is a stigma attached to foster care, thus Blue Babies, which represents youth who are supported by the state is set to restore the dignity and empower youth



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who become destitute through no fault of theirs.

Gebrai says she gravitated to social work naturally, acknowledging her background that instilled in her what it takes to be of service to her community. "This is my calling, it has been my passion to work with young adults who are deprived and poor," she said. "We don't have a wrap around the problem but we keep pushing on."

She says she has always believed it takes a village to raise a child and further asserted that "we accept that some people are not as important and as an African I found out that Africans go through that kind of treatment and that motivates me to create an environment that will enable each child know that they are important."

Blue Babies Park West Foundation is involved with Child Welfare, working to create families for children and young adults who do not have families. The foundation also serves as a resource center for Child Welfare issues and does referrals in cases that require special needs.

Thousands of children all over Michigan and the world are growing up without a parent or family. This has inspired the Be1andBlue campaign that helps youth to formally connect to caring people, families, organizations, businesses and faith communities everywhere.

Gebrai explained that extended community support is particularly important to Black youth, who are often adopted at lower rates than their white peers.

A look at five states that include cities with large Black populations shows that seldom were more than half of adopted youth from Black communities. From 2009 to 2010, of Michigan's 2,597 adopted, just 30.8 percent were Black; of Louisiana's 641, 47.1 percent were Black; of Illinois' 1,214, 51.9 percent were Black; of Georgia's 1,196, 0.7 percent were Black. Only in the District of Columbia were Black adopted youth the overwhelming majority, but D.C.'s 94.6 percent came from a total of just 129 children.

On Global Dignity Day, Oct. 20, Blue Babies of Park West Foundation Launched the Be1andBlue campaign to promote and support Life with Dignity for all Children in Michigan and around the world.

For Saba Gebrai, who has committed and dedicated her entire life to working with youth in foster care, she is excited about the new law to extend care to Michigan youth in foster care. She views it as a breakthrough and an achievement that will go a long way in empowering many young adults who need the help of the entire society.

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