



Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine

Volume 14 Number 2

Newsletter

February 2011

An Innovative Program in Foster Care: Extreme Recruitment

Pioneered by a 23-person St. Louis — based agency called the Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition, Extreme Recruitment seeks out the foster children who are the hardest to find homes for — kids older than 10, kids with special needs, sibling groups and African Americans — and not only matches them with permanent adoptive families but also does so in a fraction of the time such matches usually take. Success depends on close coordination of a professional team — one that includes detectives who track down enough potential adoptive relatives to fill a small dance hall. Although half of all foster kids wait in custody for one to five years, Extreme Recruitment aims for a match in 12 to 20 weeks; instead of finding "forever families" for 40% of the children they work with, as the agency did before 2008, Extreme Recruitment finds families for 70%.

Under the Extreme Recruitment model, team members are in constant contact, with weekly 30-minute meetings propelled by checklists of action items. Among the team members are the coalition's not-so-secret weapons: two full-time private investigators employed by the agency who track down dozens of members of a child's biological family. The old assumption was that if a child's parents couldn't care for her, everyone else in the family would have a similarly negative influence — that the apple didn't fall far from the tree. The new conventional wisdom is that having contact with family is critical to a child's identity, and if you haven't found any family members who can be a positive influence, then you haven't looked hard enough.



"There are lots of apples" - Melanie Scheetz, Coalition's Executive Director



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For each child's case, the goal is to find the two individuals who, Scheetz swears, exist in every family: the informant, who knows who lives where, who has been married or divorced or imprisoned and what everyone's phone numbers are; and the family gem, to use Scheetz's term, the cousin or uncle or grandparent who is both emotionally and logistically prepared to open his or her home to a young relative. The sign that he's found the family gem, says Carlos Lopez, one of the coalition's investigators, is when the person opens the door, hears why he's there and immediately says, "I'm so glad you've found me. What do I need to do?"

The program is being watched closely — and in some cases copied — by family-service professionals across the country. Using investigators is "a stroke of genius," says Rana O'Connor, who works for the Maine division of Casey Family Services, which serves 4,000 children in seven states annually. "Detectives have access to information or skills that social workers don't necessarily have." O'Connor plans to hire three full-time private investigators this year and mirror the intense focus and compressed timetable that Extreme Recruitment has developed. All of which means that this big program from a small agency could not only change the way foster care works in America but could also do so very quickly — and if it does, well, won't that be fitting?

**For the complete article and more information on Extreme Recruitment visit
<http://www.foster-adopt.org/>**



Volunteer Host Homes

Can Change the Future of a Teen in
Your Community!



New Beginnings

New Beginnings is searching for Volunteer Host Homes to provide a safe and temporary shelter for youth.

We need homes in Cumberland and York Counties so we can keep youth connected to their communities.

By providing a safe environment, you will help to support youth while they return to school, get additional help they need, and work things out with their families so they can return home.

You don't need to be a parent or a trained professional. You do need to provide a caring, safe, and nurturing environment.

New Beginnings will provide daily stipends, mileage reimbursement, training and 24 hour support.

If you have room in your heart and home, and are interested in hearing more about the becoming a Host Home, please contact New Beginnings:

Marian Carney, Program Director

Jada Caron, Family Services Coordinator

(207) 795-4070

POPOVICH COMEDY PET THEATER



The Collins Center for the Arts has generously offered AFFM half off tickets to Popovich Comedy Pet Theater, March 6, 2011 at 3:00 pm.

The World Famous Popovich Comedy Pet Theater is a perennial favorite at performing arts centers across the US. The show brings a new production featuring Gregory and his cast of jugglers, clowns, 15 house cats, 10 dogs, 4 geese, 8 white doves, and 2 parrots. The Pet Theater is a family-oriented blend of the unique comedy and juggling skills of Gregory Popovich, and the extraordinary talents of his performing pets. They love to show off onstage - performing a variety of stunts and skits! Audiences will be delighted to see this extravaganza of European-style clowning, amazing juggling and balancing acts, and of course, very talented performing pets.

Call the office for more information! Also, don't forget to Check out www.affm.net for more offers!!

There is still time to sign up for Great Skates!
February 22nd 11am-1pm Call the office and
don't miss out on free skating and pizza!!



Upcoming NAMI Training

NAMI PORTLAND is hosting a Family-to-Family Course on Tuesday evenings January 18 to March 29, 2011 from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. For more information and to register email Creighton Taylor at creighton-taylor@maine.rr.com, and/or phone Alyce Woodall at 899-0465 or Creighton Taylor at 712-8496.

Tamarack Vacation

The Wilhelm Reich Museum is owned and operated by The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust. This Trust was established by world renowned scientist, Wilhelm Reich, in his Last Will and Testament. The Trust maintains the property at Orgonon under the name and style of the Wilhelm Reich Museum. On this land is his cabin, Tamarack. Mr. Reich's Will also stated that Tamarack be used as a "summer home for children." The Trust has chosen a way to fulfill this final wish by making Tamarack available for adoptive, foster, and kinship families for five weeks in the summer! This opportunity is available to those that might not have another means of this type of vacation. Mary Higgins, trustee, works with AFFM on this opportunity annually.

The cabin is located on the grounds of Orgonon, formerly the home, laboratory, and research center of Wilhelm Reich. Orgonon is located just off of the Dodge Pond Road in Rangeley. Tamarack is about 75 yards away from Dodge Pond. Because the pond is a natural nesting place for loons, power boats, jet skis, and recreational vehicles (i.e. four wheelers) are all strictly prohibited. Rowboats and canoes are permitted. At the foot of the path leading to the pond is a floating platform, a great spot for shore fishing, sunbathing, and jumping in the water. The water is deep and the area is quite rocky. Children will require careful supervision and non-swimmers will require life jackets.

Tamarack is a large, charming, 3 bedroom, 1 bath cabin with a comfortable interior. Tamarack has a complete kitchen with a full size refrigerator and gas stove, and a beautiful living room with a stone fireplace. The camp does not have a phone or television.

Families need to provide their own food and bedding. The Tamarack vacation opportunity is designed for the families who otherwise might not be able to afford a vacation, so there are certain eligibility requirements that apply. **To be eligible, you must not own or have access to a summer camp, time-share, or RV. Also, if you have been a Tamarack winner in 2009 and 2010, we ask that you not apply.**



Many families dearly want to utilize Tamarack. It is necessary that any winners who cannot attend please notify AFFM at least one week in advance. It is important to have time to find an alternate family and give them time to prepare for their vacation, so this beautiful cabin can be enjoyed throughout the heart of the summer.

"2011 Weeklong Summer Vacation at Tamarack".."ENTRY FORM"

Name(s): _____ Phone: _____ E-Mail (not required) _____

Address: _____ # of Children: _____

Please circle the weeks below that your family would be able to attend. Put a star() by the week(s) that are your family's top choice(s).*

June 4-11

June 11-18

June 18-25

June 25-July 2

July 2-9

Mail entries to: **Adoptive & Foster Families of Maine, 294 Center St. Suite 1, Old Town, ME 04468**

Entries must be received by **March 31, 2011**. Winners will be notified by **April 7th 2011**

Mary Lake



Mary Lake Dresses have arrived!! Call the office if you would like to receive a dress! Sizes range from 4 to 8. As always, thank you to Mary Lake for her commitment to Maine's youth in care!

Dresses

2011 Discount Card Stickers are Available!!!

It's that time of year again to renew your discount card by calling the office and requesting the 2011 discount card sticker! AFFM is always looking for businesses to add to the discount card program and wants to know if there are businesses in your area willing to participate. Give the office a call with suggestions! 1-800-833-9786

Upcoming Trainings

Spectrum Disorders and Behavioral Strategies

Presented by: Craig MacDonald, LCSW

Date: March 23rd

Snow Date: March 30th

Time: 6:30-8:30pm

Location: Community Health and Counseling Services 42 Cedar Street Bangor, Maine

New Resources available for training hours!!! "Hey Josh, How do I Deal with Being Labeled?" comes from the motivational speaker Josh Shipp. His story is inspiring and life changing to teens all over the US. The packet includes a DVD and booklet for teens and a comprehensive guide for adults. Call AFFM to request the material today!

Casey Family Services Announces Openings

Services for Families Formed through Adoption and Guardianship in Maine

Now accepting referrals for Targeted Case Management and Outpatient Counseling

In Bangor contact: Bonny Dodson

bdodson@caseyfamilyservices.org

207.973.2491

866.662.2739 Toll Free

In Portland contact: Heather Dunbar

hdunbar@caseyfamilyservices.org

207.772.4110

800.559.1115 Toll Free

Casey Family Services has over 10 years of experience working with post adoptive and guardianship families. Our Masters-level staff have advanced training and experience in adoption, guardianship and trauma-related issues.

Targeted Case Management

- Offered to children adopted from the child welfare system or in permanency guardianship through the Maine court system.
- Assessment, service planning, connections to community supports, and oversight of service delivery for children with an emphasis on supporting the whole family.
- Children must be enrolled in Maine Care.

Outpatient Counseling

- For children adopted through Maine's child welfare system, in a guardianship situation, or in a family with a plan to adopt.
- Casey's clinicians are trained in parent-child therapy as well as trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy, an effective treatment for children who have experienced abuse, neglect, or loss.
- MaineCare accepted.



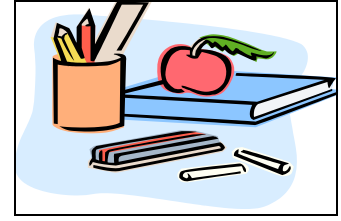
THE DIRECT SERVICE AGENCY OF
THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

College Bound Program for Youth in Foster Care!

College Bound at USM is a new program that supports youth who are or have been involved in the child welfare system in achieving academic success in high school.

College Bound is for youth in York or Cumberland County who aspire to go to college and:

- are in foster care
- are in kinship care
- are reunifying with family
- have been adopted out of foster care/kinship care



USM's College Bound program will support youth in Cumberland and York counties in gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to graduate from high school and enroll, persist, and graduate from college. Meeting weekly with their College Bound advisor, each student will develop and implement a personalized College Success Plan. The Plan will address academic tutoring, study skills, test preparation, college and career exploration, financial literacy, college savings plans, and leadership skill development.

A College and Career Day is being planned, where approximately 160 youth (ages 12-18) in foster care in Cumberland and York counties will have the opportunity to attend at the University of Southern Maine, participating in workshops on college and career exploration, financial literacy, FAFSA preparation and leadership development. College Bound students will assist in planning and implementing these college/career days in collaboration with students in/from foster care currently attending SMCC and USM.

Due to changes in placement and schools, youth in foster care are at a high risk for missing career and college exploration activities, because these activities are offered at different times of the year in different schools. Foster youth also report that no one expects them to go to college and they lack college access information that recognizes and responds appropriately to their foster care experiences and realities, rather than assuming a middle class background. The planned College and Career Day will insure that a high percentage of the youth in care aged 12-18 in the two counties served will have the opportunity to learn with and from their peers about colleges, careers and finance.

The College Bound program will also explore the barriers to college access encountered by Maine youth and contribute to strengthening emerging collaborations between educational institutions, service providers and others who work with youth in foster care.

If you have a youth that you would like to refer please contact:

Shannon Heath, Coordinator
College Bound at USM
7 College Avenue
University of Southern Maine
Gorham, ME 04038
207-780-5203
sheath@usm.maine.edu



Call the office today or email info@affm.net to request the Wildlife Park Pass today. Last year AFFM provided 133 families with the Gray's Wildlife Park Pass. (State Park Passes coming soon for licensed foster homes!)

AFFM was able to provide eight children passes to attend Disney on Ice performance at Portland's Cumberland County Civic Center for Sunday February 13th. Call the office or email info@affm.net to see what other events we may be able to provide passes for!

Kinship

Corner

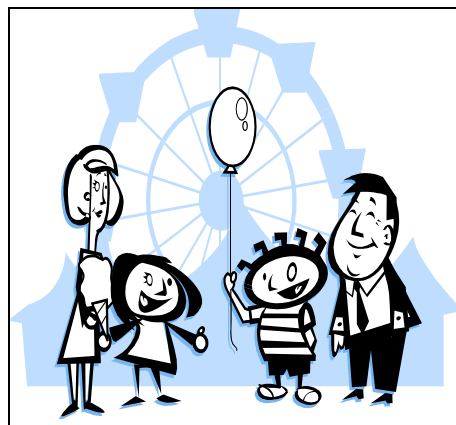


It's never too early to start thinking about Summer and it's almost that time of year for AFFM's Summer Campership Program to kick off!

If you are a kinship provider (raising a relative's child in your home) and are interested in having your child/children attend summer camp give the office a call at 1-800-833-9786 Please be prepared to provide information about your child's interest, special needs and/or medical needs so we can find a camp that is best suited for him/her.

Adoption Announcement

*Coco and Norman Pacholski are proud to announce the adoption of
Brookie Pacholski on December 1, 2010
Congratulations!!!*



*Thank You To: Bed Bath and Beyond, Border's
Book Store and Toys for Tots*

*Blankets and pillows, gadgets and notions, waste baskets, bath décor and so much more!
Bed Bath and Beyond is making life easier for friends of AFFM this year.*

Border's has provided us with wonderful classic children's books and some for adults too! Bookmarks, T-shirts, chap-stick, lip gloss, nail polish, bracelets, puzzles and oh so much more! Come to AFFM or call us at 1-800-833-9786 and see what we can find for you as we explore all the wonderful things that are yours if you need!



Our friends at Toys for Tots cannot be left out as we extend thanks! This group provided us with lots of gifts during the holiday season. We have leftover items of stocking stuffer variety that will make great prizes and goodie bags for children attending a birthday party. We also have lots of puzzles, play dough, board games

Do you have a child approaching a birthday? Give us a call and we will see if again we can fill a need. Toys and puzzles, snow pants and jackets, hats and mittens we have in assortments. We can't promise to fill an extensive or pricey wish list but we can provide items for fun and to beat the weather as long as sizes and supplies last. You will never know unless you call or stop by to see if there are items here to fill your need. We look forward to serving you.

Look forward to expanded resources as we begin partnerships with Walden Book Store and the Pottery Barn coming soon!

Your friends at AFFM and the wonderful partners who provide resources for us to share!



New Beginnings Host Home Program

Provides homeless and at-risk youth with short term housing in volunteer host homes as close to their communities as possible until a plan for stability is in place

Provides short term shelter for youth, ages 12-20 and involved with juvenile corrections. Youth are from Cumberland and York County.

Utilizes youth's natural supports as homes or volunteers willing to provide safe shelter in their homes.

New Beginnings will provide Host Homes with daily stipends, mileage reimbursement, ongoing training, and 24 hour support.

Youth remain close to their communities so they can maintain a connection with their schools, providers, and other acquired resources.

Youth work with JCCO, providers, and parents to plan for permanency.

New Beginnings can provide family mediation and/or refer for other services if needed.

Marian Carney, Program Director
Jada Caron, Family Services Coordinator
(207) 795-4070



As in previous years AFFM wishes to acknowledge those who go above and beyond their jobs for the families we serve.

AFFM is now accepting nominations for individuals who have been exceptional advocates in the following categories:

- ** Adoption Casework ** Regional Program Administrator ** Guardian Ad-Litem**
**** Children's Services Caseworker** Child Protective Caseworker** Private Agency Director**
**** Kinship worker ** Legislative / Senate Members ** Community Organizations**

AFFM asks you to take a moment and think of someone that has gone above and beyond for Maine's youth in care and send a nomination in for one of the above categories to:

*Barbara Ford, AFFM President
223-4472
fstrdad@aol.com*

Please have all nominations in by March 1, 2011

This years title:

"Changing Time, Improving Hearts and Minds"

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.
294 Center Street, Unit 1 — Old Town, ME 04468

Phone: 1-800-833-9786 or (207) 827-2331

Fax: (207) 827-1974

On the Web: www.affm.net

E-Mail: info@affm.net

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National Foster Parent Association

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PLEASE DIRECT COMMENTS TO: EDITOR, FAMILY TIES, AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

*Brochure & Registration
Coming Soon!*

Save the date

April 29 & 30, 2011

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine

Annual Conference

"Changing Times, Improving

Hearts and Minds"

Black Bear Inn, Orono, Maine