

# Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine

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Newsletter

December 2011

## 10 Cold Weather Safety Tips for Kids

By: Amy Zerello

*The season you either love — or love to hate — is in full swing. Whether you're out and about with your family braving the elements, or getting cozy at home, don't let cold-weather fun snowball into a safety hazard. Keep your kids protected with these tips.*

**Maintain a sunny disposition.** The season's frigid temps shouldn't fool you — snow reflects more than 75% of the sun's damaging ultraviolet rays. Don't stow away the sunscreen during winter; use it to protect kids' faces before they go out to play.

**Keep snug like a bug — but not too snug.** Winter wear should fit kids properly, but gear shouldn't be so tight that it restricts movement. This is particularly true for footwear. Too-tight boots constrict blood flow, causing feet to become even colder. When sizing shoes, allow room for an extra pair of socks.

**Be clever about clothing choices.** When sending kids off to school or out to play, make sure they're dressed warmly in layers that are wind- and waterproof. If possible, opt for wool instead of cotton. This durable and flexible material is an excellent insulator that will help keep kids dryer and warmer than cotton, which is quick to absorb water. Help your little ones stay warm with adequate head, face, hands, and neck protection. You can save time while getting your brood out the door by storing gloves and scarves inside hats.

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**Get around safe and sound.** Driving in winter can be dangerous, so you should make sure you're ready for any situation. Prepare your car for such emergencies by keeping the following must-haves in your trunk: a first-aid kit, blankets, shovel, rock salt, ice scraper, water, and nonperishable snacks.

**Practice safety when playing winter sports.** Always supervise your child's winter activities. Ice skating should only be done on ice that has passed proper inspection. Sledding paths shouldn't be too crowded or too close to roadways. The safest sleds are those that allow for steering, so avoid snow tubes or disk-shaped sleds. If your little ones want to try skiing or snowboarding, consider getting lessons from an instructor. While out on the slopes, they should always wear helmets and gloves with built-in wrist guards, and be accompanied by an adult.



**Serve superior snacks.** Good nutrition can help kids fight off cold and flu season, so strengthen their immune system with a balanced diet. Snack time is a great opportunity to sneak in some extra nutrients; try dried and fresh fruits, sliced raw vegetables, whole-wheat crackers with cheese, and yogurt.

**Keep them hydrated.** Although your kids may not be sweating as much as they do in warm-weather months, they still need to keep hydrated. Smart choices for winter are low-sugar juices that are high in vitamin C, which studies show can lessen the severity and duration of winter colds. Decaffeinated tea and hot cocoa are also wise picks — these comforting hot drinks are a great source of antioxidants, which are believed to strengthen the immune system.

**Make your home a safe haven.** Be prepared for unpredictable weather conditions by stocking up on essentials, such as extra batteries for flashlights, bottled water, first aid staples, and nonperishable food items. Safety kits can help protect your family in extreme situations.

**Get your kids prepared.** Make sure your kids have an extra pair of gloves and tissue packs tucked into their book bags. These necessities will help prevent the spread of germs, and come in handy if a glove goes missing.



**Heat your home safely.** Before temperatures fall below freezing, make sure your home's heating equipment and your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors function properly. If you own a space heater, keep it away from small children or, better yet, don't use one at all. And don't forget to discuss fire safety with your family each winter; the likelihood of indoor fires increases during the colder months, according to the National Fire Protection Association.



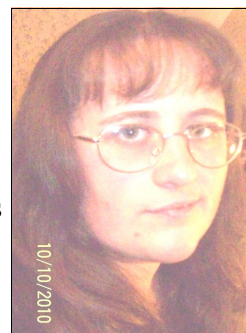
### **Meet the Staff of AFFM!**

Sarah Spade is a volunteer extraordinaire! Sarah has worked at AFFM for the past seven months and in that time has become an asset we shall all miss when she moves on to college in January. Her goal is to achieve a BA in Mental Health and Human Services and find her place in the field of social work.

Sarah and Steven, her husband of 13 years, are parents to three beautiful daughters. Sarah is active in her community and enjoys helping others. She volunteered over 50 hours in one year at one of her daughter's previous schools, helping the children improve their reading skills and helping the teachers prepare materials. She was nominated as "class mother" of her daughter's class.

Sarah is a licensed foster parent and has provided care to two special needs children in the past and looks forward to more opportunities to make a difference for children and their families. Sarah spent half of her childhood in foster care and hopes to provide the same type of loving family for which she was blessed to have been a part of with Brenda & Gary Crouse and Judi M. during her time in foster care.

At AFFM Sarah is always busy, doing everything from soliciting donations, to contacting businesses for our discount program, to running errands. However, her real skill has been in providing exit interviews to families no longer providing foster care. Her unbiased and easy style has made families feel comfortable and appreciated. Sarah will be an asset in whatever task she takes on!



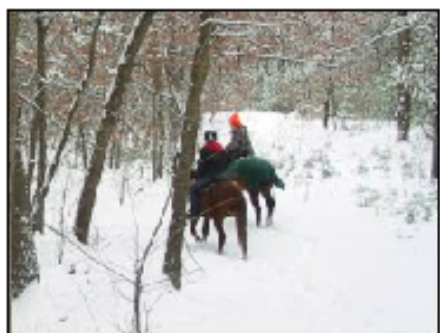


Squeaky Wheel Adventures is a tripping camp for Maine kids in foster care, other out-of-home care and children that have been adopted.

## **Winter Trip - December 2011** **Slides & Trails**

Be one of the first to travel in Squeaky Wheel Adventures awesome new 12 bunk bus! We will start our trip by traveling to North Conway, NH where we will dive into a tropical adventure at Kahuna Laguna, northern New England's first indoor water park. Who says you can't go to a water park in the winter? From water slides to wave pools we will spend the afternoon getting wet and having fun. Afterwards we will make our way to a nearby parking location (our home for the night in the bus) where we will cook dinner and play games before going to bed.

After breakfast we will travel to Holderness, NH where we will snowshoe West Rattlesnake Mountain. The trip up West Rattlesnake by way of the Old Bridle Path is one of the best snowshoes trails in New Hampshire's Lakes Region. At 0.9 mile one way, this short and easy journey will reward you with its beautiful views. Once you're up at the 1,260-foot



summit, the views south and west of Big Squam Lake and the surrounding mountains are nothing short of spectacular. When we are finished we will continue on to Manchester, NH where we will spend our second night. Before going to bed we will enjoy a night swim at the Manchester YMCA pool.

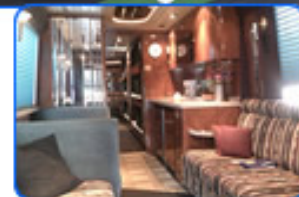
On day three we will spend a couple of hours in the morning "giving back" a little bit by offering our help at the New Horizons Food Pantry. Christmas week is notoriously busy for Food Pantries and they are very excited to have our help. To complete our trip we will visit

Lucky 7 Stable in Londonderry, NH for a winter horseback trail ride.

**December 28th - 30th**

**Price - \$365**

This trip is limited to 12 campers. Registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis to Maine children in foster care, other out-of-home care and adopted between the ages of 10 to 17 (age exception made case by case). Trip fees can often be paid in full, or in-part, by DHHS allocated camp funding. Please contact your caseworker ASAP and let them know you are interested. There may also be post adoption funds available. There are multiple pick-up locations for this trip.



For more information and to check availability visit [www.SqueakyWheelAdventures.org/2012winter/](http://www.SqueakyWheelAdventures.org/2012winter/) or call 207.266.4360.



## **Senate Education Committee Passes Bill that Assists Foster Children**

In what is widely seen as a major step forward in improving education for foster care children in America, an amendment to the No Child Left Behind education bill passed in a 15-7 vote by the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee on October 20, 2011.

The amendment requires school districts to assist foster children to stay in their current school despite being placed in foster families outside the district. It is not uncommon for children in foster care to change schools as many as a dozen times in their school careers. The need for this legislation stems from the disruptive effect this has on their educational outcomes. Some states, like California, already mandate that foster children remain in their home schools.

The amendment to No Child Left Behind mandates that children in foster care should be “immediately enrolled” in a new school “even if the child is unable to produce records normally required for enrollment.” This addresses a major issue that has been a stumbling block for children in the foster care system: lost or missing documentation that causes long delays when they must change school districts.



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### **Information Regarding Treatment Foster Care**

**The Federal Government is reviewing Treatment Foster Care to determine the appropriate use of Medicaid to fund this service and many others. AFFM and FFTA are working collaboratively with DHHS to find alternatives to preserve the much needed services of Treatment Foster Care.**

**We remain hopeful due to the positive and collaborative communication we are having with the current administration. We are fully aware that changes will take place regarding how Treatment Foster Care is delivered. Every effort is being made to serve our states children during these federal and state budget challenges.  
If you have questions please contact your agencies administration.**



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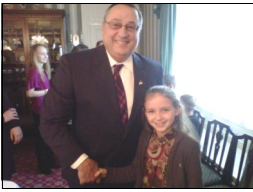
## **Host Homes Wanted**

Teens in your community are in need of a safe and temporary home. Learn how you can make a difference.

**For more information please call 795-4070 or**

**e-mail [jada@newbeginmaine.org](mailto:jada@newbeginmaine.org)**

***National Adoption Awareness Month was this November and AFFM was thrilled to take part celebrating in statewide events***



On November 1st AFFM kicked off Adoption Awareness Month by co-hosting a tea at the Blaine House with Governor LePage and the First Lady! The event began with a meet and greet, where guests enjoyed tea, snacks and had a chance to meet the Governor who later presented a proclamation declaring November Adoption Awareness Month. Susan Harris, Adoption Subsidy Director at DHHS, was also recognized for the incredible work she does with Maine's Resource Families. Sue will be retiring this year and will certainly be missed!

On November 7th the Bangor Children's Museum as well as Portland Children's Museum held adoption legalizations. In Bangor, 7 adoptions were legalized and 19 were done in Portland! This was an amazing event where families were able to celebrate a formal event in an informal setting. Legalizations continued to happen all during the month of November statewide!



On November 15th, AFFM, with the support of DHHS, hosted an event at the Hall of Flags. Agencies and families gathered at the State House to recognize adoptive families. Casey Family Services, KidsPeace, Woodford's Family Services, Maine Parent Federation, Community Care, The Heart Gallery and Catholic Charities of Maine showed their support for adoption in Maine. Ashley Anderson, a youth advocate, shared the story of her life with attendees and did an amazing job! Fred Saul and members of Pizza Hut from all over Maine, were there to accept the Adoption Advocate Award for their partnership with the Hearth Gallery. The event ended with an unforgettable performance by Matthew and Jason Tardy, from "TWO", who put on a juggling act like no other.

**Thank you to all those who made the adoption events possible and thank you for supporting Maine's youth in care!**

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***New Addition to the Discount Card Program!***

***B&M Automotive is offering a 10% off discount to members of AFFM's discount card program!***

***Located at 23 Bomarc Ind. Park  
Bangor, Maine 04401***

***Call 207-941-8800 to set up an appointment today for quality professional service at reasonable rates.***

***"No Repair too big or too small".***

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# Kinship

## Corner



The holiday parties have come and gone and AFFM would like to thank all those who made the events a success this year. Thank you to the Ramada Inn in Bangor for once again hosting, the pool is always a highlight of the event! Thank you Rosemary Bingaman for providing sugar cookies for decorating.

Thank you Portland YMCA for another great year and Domino's for providing pizza for all who attended.

Thank you Joe & Mary Brooks for again, bringing huge smiles to the faces of the youth as well as the adults.

***We look forward to seeing you again next year!  
Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year from AFFM!***



## ***DECEMBER KINSHIP MEETINGS***

*When you go to a group meeting you get a chance to connect with other grandfamilies by sharing stories and information, offering support and listening to each other. Some group meetings provide childcare, giving the children an opportunity to meet and socialize with other children in similar situations. Please contact us if you would like to receive a phone call reminder for your local group meeting.*

### **AUGUSTA**

Group Meeting - Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:00 pm, The Children's Center, 1 Alden Avenue. Jan Bisbee, Maine Kids-Kin's Lead Family Service Advocate, will be at this meeting to answer your questions. *Please contact Meaghan at F.A.C.T. at 941-2347 to reserve childcare.*

### **BANGOR**

Group Meeting – Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm, Families And Children Together office, 304 Hancock Street. *Please contact Meaghan at F.A.C.T. at 941-2347 to reserve childcare.*

Group Meeting – Tuesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm, Families And Children Together office, 304 Hancock Street. *Please contact Meaghan at F.A.C.T. at 941-2347 to reserve childcare.*

### **Belfast**

Group Meeting - Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am meeting at the Belfast Free Library on High St. in the first floor conference room (*on the right as you enter the library.*) Parking available on Spring and Miller Streets.

### **DOVER-FOXCROFT**

Group Meeting – *There will be no Dover-Foxcroft Grandfamily Group in December.*

### **LEWISTON**

Group Meeting – Wednesday, December 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm, in the LePage Center at St. Mary's Regional Medical Center (entrance on Campus Avenue.)

### **PORTLAND**

Group Meeting – Wednesday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm, The Family Workshop, 215 Congress Street. *Please contact Nancy at F.A.C.T. to reserve childcare at 591-6278.*

Group Meeting – Wednesday, December 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm, The Family Workshop, 215 Congress Street. *Please contact Nancy at F.A.C.T. to reserve childcare at 591-6278.*

### **WATERVILLE**

The Grandest Parents of All - Thursday, December 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm at Educare, 56 Drummond Ave. Childcare and dinner for the whole family served. *For more information and to register, contact Samantha Thibodeau at The Children's Center at 626-3497.*

### **WESTBROOK**

Group Meeting – Tuesday, December 27<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am, Maine Kids-Kin, 869 Main Street, Suite 900. *Please contact Cathy at F.A.C.T. To register at 591-6278.*

## Featured Treatment Foster Care Agency of the Month:

\*Each month AFFM will be offering Treatment Foster Care Agencies a chance to be featured in the Family Ties Newsletter. This is a great opportunity to get the word out to families about your agencies. Agencies will be featured at a first come, first serve basis. Please email agency information to [meagan@affm.net](mailto:meagan@affm.net)



*Building care and understanding in the communities we serve*

Community Care offers our Treatment Foster Parents a family-centered approach to service provision that responds not only to the individual needs of our foster children, but also to the unique strengths and needs of each of the foster families we serve. Our Intensive Case Management Model is designed so that case managers have smaller caseloads. This allows for flexibility in assisting children in meeting their treatment goals while respecting and responding to the support needs and desires of the foster parents. Case managers coach foster parents in positive parenting strategies, assist in crisis prevention and management, collaborate on foster parent documentation, and facilitate healthy connections with birth families. We are always looking for qualified licensed foster care providers or families who have work experience with children with special needs and meet the requirements for a Specialized Foster Care License. We are currently recruiting families in Penobscot, Piscataquis, Hancock, Washington, Waldo, Somerset, Kennebec, Franklin, and Androscoggin counties. Community Care also offers Targeted Case Management and In-Home Support Services to kinship, adoptive and foster families.

For more information, please visit our website at [comcareme.org](http://comcareme.org) or contact Lauren Bustard at 570-7187 or [lbustard@comcareme.org](mailto:lbustard@comcareme.org)

## 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](mailto:bdodson@caseyfamilyservices.org)

207.973.2491

866.662.2739 Toll Free

##### In Portland contact: Heather Dunbar

[hdunbar@caseyfamilyservices.org](mailto: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 through 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.



THE DIRECT SERVICE AGENCY OF  
THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

#### 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.
- Maine Care accepted.

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](http://www.affm.net)  
E-Mail: [info@affm.net](mailto:info@affm.net)

Affiliated With:  
The North American Council on Adoptable Children  
National Foster Parent Association

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# Happy Holidays!

