

Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine

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Newsletter

February 2012

Keep Your Home Heated Safely This Winter

Heating equipment, especially portable and space heaters, fireplaces and wood stoves, require careful use and proper maintenance. The Home Safety Council offers the following tips to help families prevent fire and burn-related injuries during the winter months

Portable Space Heaters

- Make sure your heater has been tested for safety. Look on the bottom for a label such as ETL, UL or CSA.
- Space heaters need to have plenty of space around them.
- Place space heaters at least three feet away from anything that can burn - including furniture, people, pets and curtains.
- There should always be an adult in the room when a space heater is on. Turn off space heaters before leaving a room or going to sleep.
- Supervise children and pets at all times when a portable space heater is in use.
- Never use space heaters to dry clothing or blankets.

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Fireplaces and Wood Stoves

- Burn only seasoned hardwood like oak, ash or maple. Do not burn trash, cardboard boxes or Christmas trees because these items burn unevenly, may contain poisons or cause a home fire.

- Have a professional chimney sweep inspect chimneys every year. They will fix any cracks, blockages and leaks and clean out any build-up in the chimney that could start a fire.
- Creosote logs can be used to help reduce the build-up of creosote in fireplaces. Check labels to make sure the log has been tested and approved by UL. Even if you use creosote logs, fireplaces should still be inspected by a professional each year.
- Use sturdy screens or glass doors to keep embers inside fireplaces.
- Install at least one smoke alarm on every level of your home and inside or near sleeping areas.
- Keep young children away from working wood stoves and heaters to avoid contact burn injuries.
- Open flues before fireplaces are used.

Confidentiality Reminder

This is a reminder that specific information related to children in foster care is confidential and should not be shared with others who are not a part of the team that supports that child. Confidentiality

requirements are guided by Title 22, Sec. 4008 and 4008-A and under Licensing Rules, Chapter 16, 9. A. (17), which are available on the state web site: www.maine.gov .

Thank you for all you do for the children of Maine as we start this new year of 2012.

Meet the Staff of AFFM!

Meagan Stearns came to AFFM as a student intern. While doing her internship she assumed the responsibilities of the Seasonal Activities Coordinator. Upon her graduation from UMO School of Social Work she moved into the position of Kinship Specialist and is currently serving the office as the Community Resource Development Coordinator. She quickly learned the ins and outs of this small office and works tirelessly to keep the **Family Ties** newsletter up-to-date and in the hands of the 4000 plus readers monthly. Meagan also represents AFFM on a number of committees and though a somewhat quiet individual Meagan is well informed and provides thoughtful assessments and feed back to the AFFM staff and management.

Meagan is also responsible for the organizing of four rather major annual events. Meagan did a huge amount of the conference planning and organizing for the last spring annual training conference, the Foster Day at the Fort event in May, the tea at the Blaine House during Adoption Awareness Month and the amazing event at the Hall of Flags also in honor of Adoption Awareness month. Meagan is currently assisting the Director with plans for the New England Foster Care Association (NEFCA) conference which will be hosted by AFFM in collaboration, DHHS, FFTA and NEFCA. Meagan in her spare time spends many hours traveling to Southern Maine to visit several family members and friends. It is not unusual for Meagan to combine her visits to friends and family with assisting families who are in need of items to be delivered from the AFFM Resource Center.

Meagan is an avid reader, she likes to cook, and she also loves to travel. Meagan is also responsible for the AFFM website and the massive number of list serve notices that go out from AFFM almost daily.

Meagan is very familiar with the issues of foster care and adoption. Her parents provided foster care and adopted two sons. She is also a member of an extended blended family with nine siblings so she has a very real understanding of kinship care and the need for and continuity in relationships.



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 2010 and 2011, 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.

"2012 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 2-9

June 9-16

June 16-23

June 23-30

June 30 –July 7

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

Entries must be received by March 30, 2012. Winners will be notified by April 6, 2012

Adoption Announcements!

Tammy and Kevin Smart are proud to announce the adoption of Lily Ann, age 2 and Carmen Marie, age 2 1/2 on December 28, 2011. They are welcomed by siblings Andrew, Ashley, Ryan and Kristina.

Tammy and Jeff Wyman are proud to announce the addition of Andrius and Madelynn on December 12, 2011. They are welcomed by siblings Logan, Heidi and Ashley.

Malinda Danico is thrilled to announce the adoption of Richard Anthony Danico on December 6, 2011!

Christie and Aaron Weed are excited to announce the adoption of 2 year old son, Jason Lee Weed on December 19, 2011

Congratulations to Holly Shafer on the adoption of 3 year old grandson Tristan on December 28, 2011!

Suellen Glover is overjoyed to announce the adoption of daughter Ella Glover on December 20, 2011! Ella is welcomed by 10 year old brother Brandon.

Congratulations DanaRae Pelletier on the adoption of Delila Rayne and James Dominic on December 28, 2011. The two are welcomed by a large extended family!



Adoptive and Foster and Kinship Families,

Come Join us at Great Skates

February 22nd
11am-1pm

Included: Admission and Skate rentals, 1 slice of pizza/drink per child

For more information and registration call
Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine @ 1-800-833-9786
OR (207) 827-2331

Find out about more events by liking AFFM on Facebook!



Upcoming Trainings

Allegation Prevention and protocol Training

This workshop will assist families in asking “the right questions” prior to placement, provide helpful hints on what and when to document events, provide creative ways to prioritize and/or reduce conflicts between adults and children, provide a basic understanding of confidentiality rules, and the respecting and valuing of privacy. The training will also share the process of investigating an allegation in a foster home and what families can anticipate in terms of the process. (Nearly all-foster families undergo an investigation at sometime during their foster parenting career)

This workshop is co-presented by Jane Drake, LSW. Program Manager of Out of Home Investigations and Customer Support Unit at DHHS and Bette Hoxie, Executive Director, Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine.

Who should attend? Foster Parents, Kinship Providers and Pre-adoptive Parents, case workers and private agency case managers

Where: FACT 304 Hancock Street Suite 2 B Bangor, Maine

When: March 5, 2012 Snow Date: March 12, 2012

Time: 6:00-8:00pm

To register please call 1-800-833-9786



Save the Dates:

AFFM will be providing 3 one day long training events in April in York,
Aroostook and Hancock County.

York County Training: Ogunquit, Maine **April 27, 2012** Permanency Planning
Sue Badeau

Aroostook and Hancock County Dates: TBA

*Keep an eye out for more information in later Family Ties Newsletters and on AFFM's website,
www.affm.net and Facebook page*

2012 New England Foster Care Association (NEFCA) Conference *Peacing Together the Fabric of Lives*

October 11, 2012 - October 14, 2012

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, South Portland, Maine

Hosted by

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc. (AFFM)

&

Foster Family Treatment Association (FFTA)

&

NEFCA Planning Committee

Research Survey for Adoptive Parents

A Note to all Adoptive Parents

We are seeking adoptive parents to participate in a new research study examining the challenges adoptive families face and the ongoing resources available to them. Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine (AFFM) has generously offered to publicize our study and later share some of our findings. It is our hope that many of you will offer your valuable perspective and be part of this study. The survey can be taken in one of two ways: either online through Survey Monkey at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/adoptivefamilies> or by calling AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 and requesting a printed version of the study and stamped envelope be mailed to your home. This survey is designed to be anonymous, and so we are asking that you do not include any identifying information either online or in the printed version.

Participation in the study will in no way impact your relationship with AFFM.

*We are requesting that all participants complete their surveys by **Feb. 20th**.*

Thank you in advance for your participation,

Sincerely Yours,

*Bruce Davis and Judy Torkildsen Salmons
Graduate students in the USM School of Social Work*

Congratulations to Sindy and Andy St. Laurent on the birth of their granddaughter, Jameson Everleigh Mikah Roberts, Jem. Proud parents, Jesse and Brandy Roberts reside in Florida. Jesse, part of the Search and Rescue Team in the Navy is currently stationed for his fourth tour of duty in Afghanistan. Jem was born on Friday January 20th, 2012 at 8 lbs 2 ounces 21 inches!



***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**

Kinship



Corner

With the fresh snowfall what better time than now to start thinking about warm weather and Summer? AFFM's Summer Campership Program will be kicking off before you know it!

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.

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather does it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love." Rebecca- age 8

Policy on Children Requiring Hospitalization

The Department is responsible for the medical care and safety of a child in foster care. A Department Representative is required to be present with a child who is receiving emergency room services. No minor child in foster care should be left unattended while waiting for mental health or medical assessment in a hospital setting. Only if the child is admitted may staff or other designated adult leave. Follow-up contact must be made within 24 hours after admission.

In addition, Hospital staff are not to be asked to supervise visits by birth parents or other family members as that is a responsibility of the Department. Hospital Staff should be fully informed of the legal status of the child and of any visit restrictions, safety concerns or other relevant issues.

After Admission, when a child in foster care is hospitalized for medical reasons the assigned caseworker shall coordinate with the child's caregiver to ensure the child has adult contact at least every two days. When a child is hospitalized for mental health needs and it is expected to be a long term hospitalization, contact should be made by the caregiver or caseworker bi-weekly.

A Family Team Meeting should be held to facilitate discharge planning for a child in custody if there are any concerns for after care or placement decisions.



WinterKids is providing Maine 5th, 6th and 7th graders with a WinterKids passport which entitles the student free and discounted tickets, lessons and rentals at 50 outdoor recreation areas all over Maine during the 2011-2012 season. For more info. you can visit WinterKids website at winterkids.org or call 871-5700



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.



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
E-Mail: info@affm.net

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

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AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

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AFFM is looking for Additions to Discount card Program and Complimentary Passes to Seasonal Activities

Do you know of a business in your area that you think might provide a discount to Resource Families? Perhaps you have a favorite hair dresser, a mechanic that does dependable work on your vehicle, or you may know of a second hand clothing store or a furniture store, a museum, children's activity center or a favorite restaurant. If any these ideas bring a business to mind please share the name of the business and a contact person with AFFM and we will work to see if a discount can be established. In this stressful economic climate any savings will be a good thing!

Additionally, as most of our readers know, AFFM negotiates with entertainment programs throughout the state to provide complimentary or reduced entrance fees for the families we serve to such things as Disney on Ice, state fairs, Sesame Street Live etc. We'd love to add to those opportunities. Again, we ask if you have a favorite entertainment program please share the name the location and if possible a contact person and AFFM will attempt to work with the providers to make tickets available.

It is the hope of AFFM to make entertainment and family activities available to all who'd like to be involved throughout the state. Getting this type of project to become a state-wide reality will take some creative thinking and assistance from all who believe that AFFM should expand upon this project.

We look forward to your responses. Please call 1-800-833-9786 or email info@affm.net

Let's beat the winter blues!
