

Family



Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 16 Number 8

Newsletter

August 2013



Tips for a Stress-Free School Morning Routine



"Where are my shoes?" "I can't find my backpack!" What parent hasn't heard these words? School and work-day mornings can be stressful for everyone, but a rough morning can have a day-long effect on your child. Setting up a morning routine can help alleviate chaos and get your child in the right frame of mind to pay attention and learn more at school.

Organization is key to success in the morning! Make important items easy to locate. If you child can easily find necessary items, the morning "rush" will ease, and self-esteem will soar. Here are five tips that will help with organization and establishing school routines:

1. Nothing calms school year chaos like Calendar Central: a centralized site for all family calendars and schedules. You'll need a family event calendar to track after-school activities, school programs and volunteer work. (organizedhome.com)
2. Avoid bathroom "wars": Multi-child households may need a bathroom schedule so that everyone gets equal time before the mirror. (organizedhome.com)
3. Before school begins, make a practice run to get children to school on time. If they'll walk, help them learn the route they'll take and note the needed time. Car-pooling? Make sure the dry run accounts for early-morning traffic! Bus riders will need to be familiar with the location of the bus stop; print and post the bus schedule to prevent a missed bus. (organizedhome.com)
4. Set aside at least 15-20 minutes to read together at bedtime. This can be done by a parent or an older sibling. This short period of individual attention usually calms a child, and eliminates the "getting up" questions that often follow just going to bed. (www.schoolfamily.com)
5. Make bedtime the same time every night during the school week, even if your child doesn't go to sleep right away. This establishes a bedtime "pattern." (www.schoolfamily.com)

A good morning routine can instill the importance of organization in your child, and help him or her stay organized and focused during the school day.

Ready Set Go 2 Learn

This Month's Family Ties:		Is your child in need of back to school items? A backpack, school supplies, a new outfit for school? The Ready Set Grow to Learn Program is here to help! Ready Set Grow to Learn is a part of Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine and the Kinship Program and the Clothing Garage, and is here to serve youth in care in need of these items. If you are in need please call AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 and we'll be happy to take your request. Make sure to have clothing sizes and specific needs your child may have when calling.
Meet the Staff of AFFM	2	
FAQ	3	
TFC: Spurwink Kinship Corner	4	Interested in helping out with Ready Set Grow to Learn? Call 1-800-833-9786 or email meagan@affm.net or tammycutchen@gmail.com Please note: We can take up to 150 requests, after that all others will be filled to the best of our ability.
Support Group Listings	5	
Upcoming Trainings	6	We'd like to thank LL Bean, The Maine Mall in South Portland, Girl Scout Troop 1404, Meghan Painton, Phil DuBois, Marie Barbieri and many others who have donated time and items to make this possible!
FASD Training	7	



Meet the Staff of AFFM

Q&A with Alexandra Lynds '15: Helping Adopted and Foster Children in Maine

July 1, 2013 by Rebecca Goldfine



Alex Lynds '15 at her office in Old Town

This summer, Alex Lynds '15 has a Strong/Gault Social Advancement Internship Grant from [Bowdoin College's funded internships program](#) to work with [Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine](#). The nonprofit is based in Old Town, Maine, close to Lynds' hometown of Hermon, and serves "the families of one of Maine's most underserved populations: children whose biological parents are unable to raise them," Lynds says.

Lynds recently answered a few questions about her internship.

***Bowdoin Daily Sun:* What does the organization do?**

Alex Lynds: AFFM is truly a lifeline for many adoptive, foster, and kinship families. Kinship families, extended family members raising children without any compensation, are often especially unprepared for the transition to raising a child. Support groups, advice and information, discount cards, and donated clothing and bedding are all available to these families, courtesy of AFFM. Additionally, the organization runs a lending library and works with many summer camps to send as many foster and adopted children as possible to a free summer camp. AFFM also does public outreach, holding yearly conferences and talking to students in schools.

***BDS:* What are you doing in your internship?**

AL: My daily duties at the office vary greatly from day to day. One day I'll be organizing the library and calling law offices, (trying to find a lawyer to represent one of our families pro bono), and the next day, I'm researching the pros and cons of starting an online support group and assisting families that call our office. One larger project that I have completed already was a review of DHHS case files for a volunteer organization called the Citizen Review Panel, in which I examined whether DHHS was following its policies concerning the medical treatment of children in care. A project that I am looking forward to is the task of designing and sending out a survey on fetal alcohol exposure and the resources that children in care may or may not have available to them.

***BDS:* Can you describe your working environment and the people you work with?**

AL: I work in a slightly unconventional office, as AFFM is both an office, and a library and donation storage area. There's a lot going on in this small space! I work alongside the director, the foster and adoptive specialist, the kinship specialist, the training coordinator, and the administrative assistant. Though each person's role in the organization is different, it is a collaborative environment with many tasks that everyone takes part in.

BDS: What's been your most moving and your most challenging experiences so far?

AL: My most moving experience so far was when I represented AFFM at the YLAT Annual Teen Conference at the University of Maine for teenage foster kids. I had a chance to get to know some of the teens that AFFM works to support and it was really inspiring. Some of the teens I met had been through so much, it really motivated me to do what I can to help. The most challenging experience for me was when I was reviewing case files of children in care for the Citizen Review Panel; I read about some really horrific abuse. I had one case that was so incredibly disturbing that I had to walk away from the documents and find something trivial to work on for the rest of the afternoon because I couldn't take any more that day. Working in this field does a lot of good for kids that really need it, but you encounter some truly heartbreaking stories along the way.

BDS: How does this experience fit into your future aspirations?

AL: This internship is a great experience for me because it's teaching me a lot about psychology-related careers. I am interested in pursuing a career working with women with post-partum depression, and I believe that much of what I am currently learning, such as strategies for combatting compassion fatigue and understanding how Child Protective Services operates, will be useful for me later on.

Frequently Asked Questions



Have you had a question about adoption, foster care, kinship care, guardianship, financial supports, working with the department, etc. that you would like to know the answer to? You're in luck! Each month the Family Ties Newsletter will feature a FAQ section. Send your questions to info@affm.net and we'll answer them the best we can!

This weeks question:

I have been interested in becoming a foster parent for sometime now but am unsure of what the steps are to become licensed. What is the process of becoming a foster parent?

Answer:

It's great that you are considering becoming a foster parent! There is always a need for families for Maine's youth in care. Here is a little more information about the steps to take to becoming a foster parent.

First, a license is required in order to do foster care. To become licensed you will need to contact your local DHHS office (AFFM will be able to provide you with contact information if you are unsure which DHHS to contact), here they will set you up with a home study. This is done in two parts. Usually adults are interviewed first together and then separately, questions that are asked pertain to your family life, family history, illnesses, mental illnesses, substance abuse that may have occurred in the family, and so on. A physical is also required, along with a fire marshal inspection of the home.

Fundamental training is required 24 hours of pre-placement education. This training can be provided in either four all day Saturday 9-4pm events or eight 3 hour events usually held Tuesday and Thursday's from 6-9pm. The training is provided by a foster or adoptive parent who has or does "walk the walk and talk the talk". (Training schedules can be found at www.affm.net under calendar of events.)

When becoming licensed as a foster care provider it is important to always remember that reunification is always the goal, so being able to accept the parents and work towards getting the children back to their families of origin is essential.

For more information feel free to check out our website, <http://www.affm.net/Services.aspx>



Going the distance, changing lives.™

Spurwink Treatment Foster Care is one of a wide range of evidence-based programs offered by Spurwink to serve children, adults and families in Maine who are facing emotional, behavioral and developmental challenges. With a recognition that foster families are at the heart of treatment, Spurwink's Treatment Foster Care Program utilizes a team approach, where each member is essential to the client and family's success.

Spurwink foster parents bring experience, passion and creativity to the team; Spurwink provides weekly contact with case managers who come to know the foster family and child's needs. In addition, 24/7 on call and crisis support is available, and up to 14 days of paid respite per child, per year. Spurwink has an exclusive online training library which our foster parents can access anytime, anywhere to learn new skills and earn credit towards relicensing. In addition, Spurwink hosts workshops and offers opportunities for recreation. Spurwink's dedicated Treatment Foster Care Support Specialists spend time each week with clients, providing skilled support, supervising visits, or parent education.

We serve a broad area, covering 11 counties in Maine. Licensed foster parents as well as individuals exploring foster care are invited to join our Treatment Foster Care team by contacting Rana O'Connor at 871-1200 or roconnor@spurwink.org. More information and an information request form can be found at our website: www.spurwink.org/fostercare. Classes for prospective foster parents begin October 12.

Adoption Announcement!

Congratulations to Stacie and David Nielsen on the adoption of their little one, Shannon Bayleigh Nielsen. She's 3 1/3 and the light of their lives. Shannon is welcomed by 2 older brothers Chris (22) and Mike (21), both adore their new baby sister! Adoption was finalized on July 17th.



Kinship Corner

Celebrate Grandparents Day Sunday September 8, 2013 at Gray Maine Wildlife Park!

On September 8th from 9:30AM to 4:30PM Gray Maine's Wildlife Park will provide free admission for Grandparents accompanied by their grandchildren; regular entrance fees for all other family members. In need of a wildlife park pass? Give AFFM a call at 1-800-833-9786 we'd be happy to send one your way!

It's hard to believe but it's that time of year again, Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine and the Kinship Connects Program is gearing up for the Holiday Gift Giving Program! Kinship families are invited to add their children's names, gender, clothing size and age to a wish list for holiday gifts. Once again, the amazing people from the Ogunquit Spirit of Giving Project will work to provide holiday presents to kids in AFFM programs. Give the office a call at 1-800-833-9786 and have your child's information and gift wish ready. We ask that you keep requests to under \$50.00 per child. The sooner we get the information the more likely we are to fulfill the children's wishes. We look forward to hearing from you!

Resource Family Support Groups Throughout Maine

Bangor: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets from 6:00-8:00pm the 3rd Monday of every month at 26 Downeast Circle (between Davis Road and Mt. Dessert Drive), Bangor. For more information please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 Please RSVP. Childcare is provided. Please call AFFM to reserve a spot for childcare.

Biddeford: Foster/Adoptive Support. Meets from 9:30-11:00 am the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month. For more information please contact Meredith Crain at 283-4314. Please call before you come.

Caribou: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship parent support. Meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month at 5:30PM at Caribou Adult Education Building on Bennett Drive in between Caribou Rec and the gas station. Childcare is provided. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 to RSVP and to reserve a spot for childcare.

Dover-Foxcroft: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets every 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6PM-7:30PM at Mayo Regional Hospital, Borestone and Sebec conference room. Childcare is provided. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 to RSVP and to reserve a spot for childcare.

Ellsworth: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month from 5:30pm-7:00pm at United Baptist Church, 28 Hancock Street, Ellsworth. Childcare is provided. Please contact Linda Levesque, Downeast Health Services, at 667-5304 or email llevesque@downeasthealth.org to reserve childcare. *Thanks to a local grant awarded to Downeast Health Services, AFFM is able to provide mileage more than 30 miles from home.*

Sherman: Adoptive/Kinship support. Meets the 1st Monday of the month at 7 Cow Team Road in Sherman. Please contact Debbie Irish at 365-7133 for more information. This group does not meet during the summer.

Houlton: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship support. Meets every 2nd Thursday of the month from 5:30pm-7:30pm at Houlton CHCS 2 Water Street. Childcare is provided. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 to RSVP and to reserve a spot for childcare.

Lewiston: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets the 4th Tuesday of the month 7:00pm-9:00pm at B Street Community Center 57 Birch Street Lewiston, ME. Call Deb Hallowell at 783-3291 or 344-5101 or Lisa Cates at 336-3760.

Machias: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets every 1st Friday of the month 5:30PM-7:00PM at Rose M. Gaffney Elementary School 15 Rose Gaffney Road, Machias. Childcare is provided. Please contact Mindy Kane, Community Health and Counseling Services, at 263-2014 or email MKane@chcs-me.org to reserve a spot for childcare. *Thanks to a local grant awarded to CHCS, AFFM is able to provide mileage more than 30 miles from home.*

Rockland: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets every 3rd Monday of the month 5:30PM-7:00PM at Knox Center (Pen Bay Healthcare) 6 White Street, Rockland. Childcare is provided. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 to RSVP and to reserve a spot for childcare.

Skowhegan: The group meets 5:30-8:00PM every second Wednesday of the month located at Skowhegan Federated Church 13 Island Avenue in Skowhegan. Childcare is provided. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 to RSVP and to reserve a spot for childcare.

South Paris: Kinship Support. Meets 9:00AM-10:00AM every second Saturday of the month, unless noted. Meets at Deering Memorial Church, 39 Main Street, South Paris. Please RSVP to Shelley Newcomb at comb2599@roadrunner.com

South Portland: Kinship support. Meets at 4:30PM-6:30PM at 62 Darling Ave, South Portland. This group will meet every 2nd Tuesday of the month. Please contact Meagan Stearns at meagan@affm.net or call (207) 478-8025 to reserve childcare.

Turner/Hartford: **NEW** Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets every second Friday of the month 5:30-7:30PM at "A Bend in the Road" 235 Berry Road, Hartford. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 to RSVP.

Westbrook: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets 10:00AM-12PM at the Westbrook-Warren Congregational Church at 810 Main Street. Meets every 1st Wednesday of the month. Childcare is provided. Please contact Meagan Stearns at meagan@affm.net or call (207) 478-8025 to RSVP and reserve childcare.

York: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. This group will meet every 2nd Thursday of the month 5:30PM-6:30PM at York Hospital. Please use the Hancock Entrance, group will be held in Ellis Conference Room (on your immediate left). Please RSVP to Meagan Stearns at meagan@affm.net or call (207) 478-8025.

Upcoming Trainings

The State of Foster Care: Meet District 6

Maybe you have had questions about DHHS process or maybe recent changes have left you unsure of who to call and when. Join us and meet staff from the Bangor DHHS office. DHHS will spend some time sharing with participants about the current state of foster care and then we will have some time for questions. We apologize but this will not be a time for questions that are case specific.

SORRY, NO CHILDCARE AVAILABLE
2 Credit Hours Available to Resource Parents
Please RSVP by September 18, 2013
to Margaret Warman at 1-800-833-9786
or email: margaret@affm.net

When: September 23, 2013
Time: 10:00AM-12:00PM
Location: Bangor DHHS 396 Griffin Road

Interested in having a training on a specific topic? Are there barriers that prevent you from attending trainings? Send Margaret an email at margaret@affm.net and let us know how to improve the Resource Parent Training Collaborative.

Introducing the Southern Maine Resource Parent Training Collaborative! **Responding to Attachment and Trauma Behaviors: Strategies for Foster Parents**

Presented By: Emily Shandorf, LCSW and Dory Hacker, LCSW

This dynamic, informative, and interactive training is designed to provide the opportunity for foster parents to learn and practice specific skills and strategies that are helpful when their foster children display highly emotional or behavioral responses to their environment. This training will include a brief review of the attachment cycle and biology of trauma and related concepts in order to provide a context for the training of practical skills including: Self-awareness, body cues, preventive strategies, as well as calming strategies for escalated situations. The trainers will present effective easy-to-use tools to utilize in the moment in order to step out of the trauma response. These tools enable the foster parent to step into their wiser mind which will promote a sense of safety and connection with their youth and enhance the overall relationship.

SORRY, NO CHILDCARE AVAILABLE
4 Credit Hours Available to Resource Parents
Please RSVP by September 20, 2013
to Meagan Stearns at 207-478-8025
or email: meagan@affm.net

When: September 28th, 2013
Time: 8AM-12PM
Location: 62 Darling Ave, South Portland (Spurwink Office)

Interested in having a training on a specific topic? Are there barriers that prevent you from attending trainings? Send Meagan an email at meagan@affm.net and let us know how to improve the Resource Parent Training Collaborative.

Would You Like to be Added to AFFM's List Serve?

AFFM'S LIST SERVE IS THE FASTEST WAY TO RECEIVE UPDATED INFORMATION MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU!

What you may see on the list serve: Monthly newsletter, DHHS updates, legislative updates, donated items, training opportunities, free social events.

The Advantages of Adding your Email: Never miss out on great opportunities, keep informed of new developments important to you, receive consistent support, help AFFM support even more families in need. *(Please Note: You may receive multiple emails per day, Even though AFFM does its best to filter content, emails may not always pertain to you.)*

For Those Who Don't Have a Computer, you Don't Have to Miss Out! Consider asking a friend or relative to receive emails for you, consider using your local library, use your work email account.

It's Simple to Sign up! Call 1-800-833-9786 or email info@affm.net to add your email address to the list serve!

AFFM understands and accepts the responsibility of caring for Resource Families private information. This information will not be shared.



Identification and Management of FASD through the Life Span Presented By: Dr. Paula Lockhart, MD

Dr. Paula Lockhart, MD, is a child and adolescent psychiatrist with over 24 years of experience treating children and adolescents. She has been the administrative director of three child psychiatry programs and has lectured widely on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum disorders in the US and in countries outside of the US. Dr. Lockhart moved to Maine 4 years ago and continues to treat children. She is currently on staff at Penobscot Pediatrics. Dr. Lockhart will share information on identifying FASD. Caregivers will come away from this conference better prepared to care for children with FASD with practical information. This presentation will include a look at FASD by life span.

When: September 27, 2013

Time: 9:00AM-4:00PM Registration Starts at 8:00AM

Location: Jeff's Catering 15 Littlefield Way, Brewer Maine

Cost: \$20 to cover food and handouts

Please Fill Out and Return Registration Form Below to RSVP

Registration Form

Name: _____ **Phone:** _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Make Checks Payable To: AFFM

Mail Registration Form and Payment To:

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

294 Center Street, Suite 1

Old Town, Maine 04468

Registration and Payment Due By: September 20, 2013 Space is Limited. For more information call 1-800-833-9786 or email margaret@affm.net

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

FAMILY TIES THE NEWSLETTER OF ADOPTIVE & FOSTER FAMILIES OF MAINE, INC PUBLISHED WITH
SUPPORT FROM THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES. PLEASE DIRECT COM-
MENTS TO: EDITOR, FAMIY TIES, AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

NON-PROFIT

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

OLD TOWN, ME

PERMIT NO. 65

IMMEDIATE OPENINGS: Job Corps Now Enrolling!

Job Corps is seeking new applicants, including foster care youth, for its national career training and education program at 125 campuses across the country. Residential and nonresidential slots are available for the self-paced federal program.

This is an ideal opportunity for eligible low-income individuals to gain education, career training, and employability skills. If you know of a young person age 16 through 24 who may be a good fit for Job Corps, learn more via Job Corps' website or Facebook page, or call (800) 733-JOBS [5627].



Website: <http://recruiting.jobcorps.gov/en/home.aspx>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/doljobcorps>