

# Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 16 Number 10 & 11

Newsletter

October & November 2013

## THIS NOVEMBER CELEBRATE ADOPTION AWARENESS MONTH AND PRACTICE THESE TIPS FOR USING POSITIVE ADOPTION LANGUAGE



<b><i>Don't Use:</i></b>	<b><i>Because:</i></b>	<b><i>Instead Say:</i></b>	<b><i>For Example:</i></b>
Real, natural parent or brother/sister	Implies that adoptive relationships are artificial, tentative	Birth or biological parent or brother/sister	"The four boys are brothers; two have the same birth parents and are biological siblings." NOT "Only two are real brothers"
Own Child	Suggests that adoptive relationships are less important than biological relationships	Birth child, child by birth	"She has one child by birth and two by adoption." NOT "One of three children is her own, the others are adopted."
Taken away, given up	Denotes that children are stolen or forgotten rather than adopted legally and with forethought	Termination of parental rights	"Following the termination of his birth parents' parental rights, he was adopted by his foster parents."
Surrendered, relinquished, gave away put up	Does not accurately describe the birth parent's decision-making process and responsible choice	Made an adoption plan, chose adoption	"She chose adoption for her baby." NOT "She put her baby up for adoption."
To Keep	Children are not possessions and birth parents always "keep" feelings for their children	To parent	"She chose to parent her baby." NOT "She chose to keep her baby."
Adoptive child, adoptive parent/mom/dad	In most contexts, qualifiers are not needed. Adoption creates a full, permanent relationship	Son, daughter, parent, mother, father, mom, dad	"This is my son." NOT "This is my adoptive son." However, at a support group, it would be appropriate to say, "I am an adoptive parent."
Hard to place, special needs child	Labels the child and unfairly places blame on him or her for needing an adoptive family	Child who has special needs, waiting child	"She has special needs and is waiting for the right family." NOT "She is hard to place because she is a special needs child"
The child hasn't found a family, the child moved	Children are not responsible for their own recruitment efforts nor their moves through placement	The agency, caseworker, recruitment efforts	"The caseworker's recruitment efforts have not yet located an appropriate family."
Available, unwanted	Waiting children are wanted—the right family just has not been found—and they are not available to whomever is interested	In need of a family, waiting	"He is waiting for a forever family." NOT "He is available for adoption."

## New Support Services for Families with Youth Involved with Department of Corrections

Through a federal grant awarded to the DOC in partnership with Thrive, a pilot project is helping Maine's Juvenile Justice System to become more trauma informed in its work with youth and families. The goal of the project is to provide the necessary supports to youth (ages 12-20, with serious emotional disturbance) and their family early on in an effort to eliminate future instances of criminal activity. The program is simple: soon after the youth gets involved in the system, the youth and their family is offered the support of a Community Outreach Specialist (COS) who is a parent or family member who has had similar experiences. If eligible, and if it is voluntarily agreed upon by the caregiver and the youth, the COS provides support without judgment and helps the caregiver/family navigate the juvenile justice and mental health service delivery systems. The COS helps to empower the parent/caregiver and make referrals for trauma informed treatment or Wraparound. The Wraparound team works collaboratively with the youth, the family, and other service providers to achieve mutually agreed upon goals. A Family Support Partner and/or a specially trained Youth Peer Mentor are available to help provide support. The youth mentor might be able to reach the youth on a more personal level by sharing lessons learned from his or her own life experiences.

This is a pilot project and is available through the Department of Corrections, Juvenile Services, in Region 1 (York and Cumberland Counties) and Region 2 (Penobscot, Piscataquis, Hancock, Aroostook and Washington Counties). It is also an evolving project in which improvements are made from time to time based on the feedback of those directly involved in the services. As a member of the dedicated team carrying out this project, I am looking for feedback from you. If you have a youth who is currently involved in the juvenile justice system, please feel free to contact me. I want to know the positives as well as the challenges your family faces as you work within the Juvenile Justice system. Your feedback will be shared with the implementation team to help accentuate what is working well and to help fix what isn't. You can contact me by calling 1-800-833-9786 or via email [jim@affm.net](mailto:jim@affm.net). I look forward to hearing from you.

Jim Hatch, Family Resource Specialist

## Thank You!

AFFM would like to extend a huge thank you to the following businesses and individuals for their continuous support throughout the year:

LL Bean and Land's End for their incredible donation of backpacks; Stephanie Millette for allowing AFFM to hold a school drive at The Maine Mall with the help of Girl Scout Troop 1414; Phil DuBois, Tammy Cutchen, Meghan Painton, Misty Leask for donating their time and efforts towards the Ready, Set, Go to Learn Program. Sarah Glynn Little and the Lewiston-Auburn Kiwanis Club for their generous donation towards school supplies to benefit youth in care in Androscoggin County.

Eastern Maine Healthcare for once again making Hamden's Children's Day Parade a blast! Skowhegan DHHS and New Balance for once again hosting the 5k Road Race to benefit AFFM and the Kinship Program.

**AFFM appreciates all that you do and can not thank you enough for the amazing support!**

## News

### **National Adoption and Child Welfare Organizations, Respond to "Re-homing" Reports, Call on Congress and Public Officials to Protect Children, Support Adoptive Families**

The term "re-homing" is described when parents privately transfer custody of their adopted children. Children are placed with unapproved, unlicensed strangers. A huge reason parents are "re-homing" their adopted children is because they are unable to deal with the issues and behaviors their children are presenting and they are not receiving the proper support needed to care for these youth. Adoptive families need a continuum of support – from information about core adoption issues, to training on special needs, to clinical services that address mental health and behavior challenges. National Adoption and Child Welfare Organizations are coming together and calling on Congress to implement changes to ensure adopted children and their parents get the services they need to keep their families safe and stable. We can't think of a more critical time to pass legislation that extends greater federal support for post-adoption services for children and their families. More information about "Re-homing" and the actions being taken towards prevention can be found through [www.voice-for-adoption.org](http://www.voice-for-adoption.org), [www.cwla.org](http://www.cwla.org), [www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org) and [adoptioninstitute.org](http://adoptioninstitute.org)

**AFFM would like to extend our heartfelt and deepest sympathies to the Gilks family for their loss of David Gilks. David, who was loved by many and touched many lives, passed away September 6, 2013.**

**David and Jodi were loving foster parents and had a passion for making a positive impact on the foster youth they parented.**

**David used his personal life experiences as a measure of how to advocate and protect abused and neglected children.**

**Our thoughts are with the family.**

## **8th Annual Festival of Fostering Trees!**

### **\*\*\*NEW LOCATION - FOSTER'S CLAMBAKE!!!\*\*\***

**Come stroll through our magical enchanted forest of beautifully decorated Christmas trees with over 100 trees for your viewing pleasure, no two are alike! All proceeds help youth who are involved in the Maine Foster Care System!!!!**

### **\*\*FREE ADMISSION\*\***

**Voluntary donation for the York Food Pantry or Toys for Tots!**

**\*\*25 RAFFLE TICKETS FOR ONLY \$5.00\*\***

### **\*\*LOCATION, DATES & TIMES\*\***

### **\*\*\*NEW LOCATION & OPEN AN EXTRA DAY!!!\*\*\***

**FOSTER'S CLAMBAKE - 5 Axholme Road York, ME**

**Thursday - December 5<sup>th</sup> - 10:00am-8:00pm**

**Friday - December 6<sup>th</sup> - 10:00am-8:00pm**

**Saturday - December 7<sup>th</sup> - 10:00am-8:00pm**

**\*\*Please note: Axholme Rd. will be CLOSED to vehicles approx. 3pm-5pm for the Parade!!!**

**Sunday - December 8<sup>th</sup> - 10:00am-4:00pm**

**Sunday-Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>-Raffle @ 4:15pm, Calls placed to all winners 6:00pm-9:00pm**

**Monday-December 9<sup>th</sup> - Pick up of all trees - 8:00am-11:00am**

**Food Provided by Foster's Marketplace Café**

**FMI Call Janalee @ 351-1988 or 423-4281**

**Email @ [janaleemoquin8@yahoo.com](mailto:janaleemoquin8@yahoo.com)**





## Resource Family Support Groups Throughout Maine

**Bangor:** Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets from 6:00-8:00pm the 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**Belfast:** Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets the 4th Friday of the month at the Calvary Chapel Church in Belfast 147 Waldo Ave. in the Wentworth Building. Contact BraveFamilies@gmail.com to RSVP.

**Biddeford:** Foster/Adoptive Support. Meets from 9:30-11:00 am the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Ellsworth Elementary/Middle School 20 Forest Ave. in Ellsworth. Child care is provided. Please contact Mindy Kane, Community Health and Counseling Services (CHCS), 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 reimbursement for families traveling more than 30 miles from home.*

**Sherman:** Adoptive/Kinship support. Meets the 1<sup>st</sup> 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 Hollowell 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.

## More on Placements

AFFM has defined the roles of Resource Parents in the past but since new resource families are being added to our mailing list daily, it makes sense to keep you up-to-date as well as inform you of services provided by this office.

As you may know the term Resource Parent is multifaceted. As a Resource parent, one of the first rewards is to work as closely as possible to aid birth parents in a healthy and promising reunification with their child/children. Taking part in a Family Share meeting and learning what the strengths of the birth family are is imperative. Having that special time to learn what the working techniques of the parent /child relationship are; is beneficial to a happier integration for the child within your home and the ultimate goal of reunification. No one knows the child better than a parent or long term caregiver. Having the parent share what the child likes to eat, special bedtime routines, favorite clothes, toys etc. will help ease the transition and open communication between you and the parents as well as the foster child. Visits are easier and more comfortable in the least restrictive places. Often visits are in your home or at the birth parents'. Whichever or wherever it takes place it should be a time of positive sharing and non-judgmental relationship building. It is the hope and the policy of DHHS that a quick and healthy return to birth family will be the outcome. When a birth parent does not achieve reunification in a timely way a relative such as a grandparent, aunt, uncle or older sibling may be sought and a child may make yet another transition. Once again the assistance the Resource Parent provides in the transition is crucial to a healthy and happy outcome.

When reunification cannot be achieved a child may be legally freed for adoption. Sometimes it is at this juncture that a relative is introduced or it could be that there is no relative and the Resource Parents may be asked to consider adopting the child. If that is your wish another huge task will be asked of you. Although the child sometimes resides with a Resource family for an extended period of time and it may feel like the child is completely settled, when the actual topic of adoption is broached behaviors and reactions may be quite different than a family may have anticipated. If the child is not currently in counseling, this may be a good time to have the child begin to share with an adoption savvy therapist. If you are not involved in a support group, this may be a good time for you to begin to participate. Just as it was important for the birth parent to be connected to you during the reunification process; it is equally important for you to have someone in addition to the adoption worker to share your joys and challenges.

Not all Resource Parents will opt to adopt. That is an okay thing. Some families have a real gift for providing temporary care to a youth. All kinds of Resource Parents are needed. The role changes a bit for families who are not going to adopt. The new role includes assisting the child and the child's adoption team in helping the child to make the transition to the adoptive family and/or to another form of permanency. The role of the Resource Parent is exciting and very valuable at every stage of the process. Sometimes the process will feel like a roller coaster ride with highs and lows, sadness and joy.

AFFM wishes you every success in this journey and encourages you to call and share your story and to take advantage of the supports in place through this association.

## Announcements

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc. & The Kinship Program is excited to announce the opening of a satellite office in Biddeford! AFFM is thrilled to be expanding more services and support to southern Maine. Though the location is small, clothing, small material goods, passes, etc. will be readily available at the new office! We are located at 25 Pool Street in Biddeford, stop on by or send Meagan an email at [meagan@affm.net](mailto:meagan@affm.net) or call 478-8025 for support or just to say hello!



Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine Inc. & The Kinship Program, was honored to receive the Giraffe Award on October 3, 2013 presented by the Maine's Children Alliance. The Giraffe Award is given to individuals and organizations who "stick their necks out" for kids. AFFM is privileged to work with the amazing resource families of Maine and appreciate how much they "stick their necks out" to keep youth in care safe.

In August, at the NACAC conference in Toronto, Ontario AFFM was honored again with the NACAC Parent Group of the Year Award for the wonderful work done on behalf of foster, adoptive and kinship families.



## Save the Dates!

On April 25th and April 26th 2014 join Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc. & The Kinship Program for the Annual Spring Training Conference:

*The Power of Family; It's More Than Surviving it's Thriving*

Held at the Hilton Garden Inn  
Bangor, Maine

**Keynote Speaker: Judge Britt Hammond**

Judge Britt Hammond will talk about ways to support adoptive, foster and kinship Families in the court and in general. Judge Hammond is a dynamic presenter and adds his personal knowledge as a foster parent to his wisdom of the legal system. Helen Ramaglia is a former youth from foster and kinship care/ Helen is also a foster, adoptive and kinship parent and a now nationally known author and presenter. AFFM is pleased to bring these two presenters to Maine to share their amazing stories and expertise.

**Mark your calendars now and line up child care early.**

### Community Conversation

Take part in an opportunity to share ideas and strategies for achieving permanency for youth in foster care. The Community Conversation will bring together a panel of youth, foster, adoptive or kinship parents and a case worker and a mental health provider. Stories will be shared about what has worked and what has not.

**When: November 6, 2013**

**Time: 9:00AM-2:00PM**

**Location: First Church of Nazarene 31 East Madison Road Skowhegan**

**Please RSVP: Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc. at 1-800-833-9786**

# Kinship Corner

*Don't miss out on this year's kinship holiday parties! Call AFFM today to sign up. Please let us know the age and gender of the children who will be attending with you so they can receive an age appropriate book from Santa and Mrs. Claus!*

### Portland Kinship Holiday Party

**December 1, 2013**

**Time: 11:00AM-1:00PM**

**Location: Portland YMCA**

**70 Forest Ave, Portland**

**Come and Enjoy arts and crafts, dominos pizza and swimming!**

**RSVP: Meagan at 478-8025 or meagan@affm.net**

### Bangor Kinship Holiday Party

**November 24, 2013**

**Time: 1:00PM-4:00PM**

**Location: Bangor Ramada Inn 357 Odlin Road, Bangor**

**Remember to bring your bathing suits and a dish to share for the potluck!**

**RSVP: 1-800-833-9786 or info@affm.net**

**(Please let us know what you are bring for food when you RSVP)**





# Celebrate National Adoption Awareness Month!



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Invite another adoptive family over for dinner	2 Attend a support group this month and share your adoption story
3 Spread the word about adoption!	4 Adoption Legalizations all over the state!!	5 Learn about positive adoption language	6 Join the Community Conversation in Skowhegan to discuss permanency for older youth in care	7 Blaine House Tea 2-3:30PM RSVP: 1-800-833-9786	8 Write thank you notes to the individuals who helped with your adoption	9 Cook your favorite meal with your family
10 Volunteer to help out with adoption events in your area	11 Take a family photo to share with everyone in the family	12 Bundle up and take a walk together as a family	13 Become a mentor for an adoptive family	14 Offer to read a story about adoption to your child's class	15 Write a letter to the editor about your adoption experience	16 Create a scrapbook/ Lifebook of your family
17 Have an adoption get together!	18 Create a holiday ornament for a gift for a newly adoptive family	19 Visit a place that your family loves and spend a day	20 Call AFFM and ask about how to become a foster parent	21 Oxford Hills Adoption Legalizations!  York County Adoption Legalizations!	22 Ask your library to feature books on adoption in honor of Adoption Awareness month	23. <b>National Adoption Day!</b>
24 Kinship Holiday Party Ramada Inn Bangor 1-4pm 1-800-833-9786	25 Write to your local and state representatives about adoption issues concerning you	26 Donate items to an adoption, foster care, or child welfare organization	27 Create a new adoption tradition!	28. Happy Thanksgiving! Give thanks for your family!	29 Write a note to your child letting him know how grateful you are that he or she is a part of your family	30 Watch a movie that portrays adoption in a positive light

I didn't give you the gift of life,  
But in my heart I know.  
The love I feel is deep and real,  
As if it had been so.  
For us to have each other  
Is like a dream come true!  
No, I didn't give you  
The gift of life,  
Life gave me the gift of you.

~Unknown

*Not flesh of my flesh.  
Not bone of my bone.  
But still miraculously my own.  
And never forget for a minute.  
You were not born under my heart.  
You were born in it.*

~Unknown

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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, FAMILY TIES, AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

NON-PROFIT

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

OLD TOWN, ME

PERMIT NO. 65



Longing for a child to love, I'd wish upon the stars above.  
In my heart I always knew, A part of me was meant for you.  
I think how happy we will be, Once I adopt you, and you adopt me.  
I dream of all the joy you'll bring, Imagining even the littlest things.  
The way it will feel to hold you tight, And tuck you in every night.  
The drawings on the refrigerator door, And childhood toys across the floor,  
The favorite stories read again and again, And hours of games with make-believe friends.  
The day you took my outstretched hand, A journey ended, but our lives began.  
Still mesmerized by your sweet face, Still warmed inside by our first embrace.  
I promised to give you a happy home, And a loving family all your own.  
A house you've now made complete, With laughter, smiles and tiny feet.  
A parent is one who guides the way, Know I will be there everyday.  
Rest easy as each night you sleep, A lifetime of love is yours to keep.  
Longing for a child to love, I'd wish upon the stars above.  
In my heart I always knew, A part of me belonged to you.

*Teri Harrison*