

Family



Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 17 Number 8 & 9

Newsletter

August/September 2014

Summer is not over yet! Here are some fun ways to spend time with your family during the last summer months.



- * **Visit a museum** science center or gallery. Along with summer camps and classes, most museums will offer specials and day programs for children throughout the summer. *Call AFFM for a museum pass to the Rockland, Portland, Bangor, or Augusta Children's Museum! (Note: Passes are limited to one family per day.)*
- * **Visit Maine's Wildlife Park** *Call AFFM for a pass today!*
- * **Sign up for a Race!** *Visit www.affm.net and sign up for the 5k New Balance Run in Skowhegan August 23rd*
- * **Have a picnic in the park** local parks are a great place to picnic in the summer. Pack and prepare your favorite sandwiches and snacks to enjoy.
- * **Pizza and Game Night** Instead of ordering pizza, make your own. Pull out some board games and enjoy your homemade pizza.
- * **Find a Drive-in Movie Theater.** Believe it or not, they are still around. Your family will love piling in the car for a unique movie going experience. *Check out the drive-in movie theaters in Saco, Skowhegan, Bridgton, Westbrook, and Madawaska!*
- * **Play a Few Rounds of Mini Golf** *With AFFM's discount card Pirate's Cove Adventures Golf in Bar Harbor, Gifford's Miniature Golf in Skowhegan/Waterville, Steamboat Landing Miniature Golf in Naples, and Shakerland Driving Range and Mini-Golf in Waterboro all offer \$1 off your game!*
- * **Go for a Hike** visit <http://www.trails.com/stateactivity.aspx?area=10046> and explore all that Maine has to offer!
- * **Check out Your Local Library** Many libraries have story times, arts and crafts, and sometimes discounted passes!

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Information/Announcements



CASA recruits, trains and oversees volunteers who help Maine foster children find safe, permanent and loving homes. Because every child deserves a home. Join Maine CASA in Augusta for this four day training, **August 12-15, 2014**. If certified, you can become a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) and be the voice of a child. Please visit our website to learn more: www.CASAofMaine.org and “Like” our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/MaineCASA

Child Behavior Online Study (Ages 0 to 18)

Are you an adoptive or foster parent? If so, you are needed to help us to learn more about the effects of recreational and prescription drug use during pregnancy. This anonymous online research takes approximately 30 minutes and involves answering questions about your child’s history and behavior. Parents with children that were and also were **not** exposed to drugs during early development are needed.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/allparentsurvey>

For further information, please contact Melissa Birkett, PhD, Department of Psychology, Northern Arizona University melissa.birkett@nau.edu or Brian Piper, PhD, Husson University School of Pharmacy, piperbj@husson.edu.



Helping adoptive parents get the money they deserve!

- Did you finalize an adoption in 2011?
- Was the adopted child in the foster care system?
- Do you earn less than \$225,000 per year?

If so, you may qualify to receive a federal income tax credit of \$13,360 for that adoption. The adoption credit is refundable to adoptive families, even if they have no income or pay no taxes. In other words, you may qualify to receive a \$13,360 tax-free refund *per child*.

Adoption Credit for Qualifying Years:

2011	\$13,360
2012*	\$12,650
2013*	\$12,970
2014*	\$13,190

The adoption credit is a one-time credit per qualified adopted child.

*** Adoptions in 2012—2014:**

Adoptions in 2012—2014 are still eligible to apply for the Adoption Tax Credit. However, claiming them from the IRS differs from years past. Please contact our office for a free review of your returns.

Example A

A family adopted 2 qualified children in 2011. This family can claim a maximum of \$13,360 per child for a total refund amount of \$26,720.

Qualifying for the Adoption Credit without Claiming Adoption Related Expenses:

To benefit from the Adoption Tax Credit, the following requirements must be met:

- A family must have adopted a child from the foster care system.
- The adopted child(ren) must have received a monthly post-adoption subsidy from the state after the adoption was finalized.
- A family should have a total modified gross income of under approximately \$225,000 in order to receive an adoption credit. The adoption credit phases out at a specific income level. The exact amount of income varies from year to year.

Process of Claiming the Adoption Credit:

The IRS requires certain documents to review and approve the credit reimbursement. We request that you provide us with the following documents:

- Adoption Order or Final Judgment of Adoption for each qualifying child;
- A signed post-adoption subsidy agreement issued by the state or other certified document that you receive or have received confirming assistance from the state; and
- Copy of your 2011 Federal Tax Return. If you did not file taxes in 2011, our office will prepare an original tax return to request the adoption credit for all qualifying adoptions.

We welcome your questions!

Adoption Announcements!



On June 17th the Smith family adopted 7 year old Joshua Brayden Smith. Josh is an amazing boy and a wonderful addition to our family. We are truly blessed.

Proud parents Stephanie and Michael Pereira are thrilled to announce the adoption of their 4 year old son Douglas on July 3, 2014!



New Additions to AFFM's Lending Library!



AFFM has recently purchased a DVD and a Caregiver's Guide to Caring for Drug Exposed Infants. The set was developed by the Pediatric Interim Care Center. If you are parenting a newborn with drug exposure or have been asked to do so upon birth of an infant feel free to call the office to borrow the video and corresponding guide.

Also recently added:

Assessment of Parenting Competency in Mothers with Mental Illness – Teresa Ostler

With this much-needed resource, psychologists, social workers and child welfare professionals will conduct accurate assessments, build stronger mother-child relationships and facilitate family preservation whenever possible.

Children of Methamphetamine-involved Families "The Case of Rural Illinois" – Wendy Haight, Teresa Ostler, James Black and Linda Kingery

Methamphetamine not only destroys the lives of those who become addicted to it, but affects all corners of society, including the most innocent: children. This important book examines the case of rural Illinois, where in the mid-1990s methamphetamine production and misuse became a significant problem and, as a result, child welfare professionals saw an influx onto their caseloads of children whose parents were involved with the drug.

Adoption & Prenatal Alcohol and Drug Exposure – Richard Barth, Madelyn Freundlich and David Brodzinsky

As professionals have become aware of the impact of prenatal substance exposure on children in the adoption process or who are available for adoption, there is a heightened need for understanding a range of issues connected with prenatal alcohol and drug exposure. This book addresses many of these issues, providing important information

DVD – Hope for Healing the Neurological Connection – Therapeutic Parenting

The 21st Annual International Conference on Attachment and Bonding: San Antonio, TX Sept 23-26, 2009

Keeping Foster Children Safe Online – John Degarmo

Positive Strategies to prevent cyberbullying, inappropriate contact, and other digital dangers

A Different Home, A New Foster Child's Story – John and Kelly Degarmo (Children's book)

In a different home, Jessie tells us her story of being placed in foster care. At first she is worried and has lots of questions. The new home is not like her old home – she has a different bedroom, different clothes and there's different food for breakfast. She also misses her family. When Jim and Debbie, her foster parents, answer her questions she begins to feel better and see that this different home is kind of nice.

If you are interested in checking out material from AFFM's Lending Library give the office a call at 1-800-833-9786 or email info@affm.net with your request. Material can also be found at <http://affm.net/Services/LendingLibrary.aspx>



State-Wide Resource Family Support Groups



State-Wide Resource Family Support Groups

At times meetings are cancelled due to weather and other unforeseen circumstances, cancellation notices are sent out via the AFFM email list serve. Families are urged to call or email info@affm.net to be added to this service. The email list serve also provides information about available donated goods, social family activities, training events, DHHS and legislative updates, and more.

Augusta – Kinship only: 3rd Wednesday of the month from 6:00 - 8:00 pm, The Buker Community Center, 22 Armory Drive, Augusta. Free on-site childcare available. For more information, please call Maine Kids-Kin at 207-941-2347 or 1-866-298-0896.

Bangor: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets from 6:00-8:00 PM on the 3rd Monday of every month at 26 Downeast Circle (between Davis Road and Mt. Dessert Drive), Bangor. Onsite Child care available with advanced notice. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email: info@affm.net to RSVP. Please call before you come.

Bangor –Kinship only: 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:00 - 8:00 pm, Families And Children Together, 304 Hancock Street, Suite 2B. Free on-site childcare available. For more information, please call Maine Kids-Kin at 207-941-2347 or 1-866-298-0896.

Belfast: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. A faith based support group that meets on the 3rd Friday of the month at the Calvary Chapel Church in Belfast 147 Waldo Ave. in the rear entrance of the Wentworth Building. Contact: BraveFamilies@gmail.com to RSVP and visit www.facebook.com/bravefamilies for more information. 10:00 AM prayer & Devotion (optional), 10:30 AM coffee/social, 10:45-12 PM support group. Sorry child care is not available at this time.

Bridgton- Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets every 1st and 3rd Monday of the month at 6:30PM-8:00PM at the Community Center (Behind Reny's), 15 Depot Street Bridgton. Childcare is not provided at this time. Please RSVP to Vanessa at 647-2317 or AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 before you come.

Caribou: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship parent support. Meets every 1st Thursday of the month at 5:30PM at Caribou Adult Education Building on Bennett Drive in between Caribou Rec and the gas station. Child care is not provided at this time. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email: info@affm.net to RSVP.

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. Onsite Child care available with advanced notice. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email: info@affm.net to RSVP. Please call before you come.

Ellsworth: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month from 5:30pm-7:30pm at Ellsworth Elementary/Middle School 20 Forest Ave. in Ellsworth. Onsite Child care available with advanced notice. Please contact Mindy Kane, Community Health and Counseling Services (CHCS), at 263-2014 or 461-8878 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.

Farmington: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets every 3rd Wednesday of the month from 6:00pm-7:30pm at Roberts Learning Center University of Maine at Farmington. Sorry no child care is provided at this time. Please RSVP to AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email info@affm.net. Please call before you come.

Houlton: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship support. Meets every every 2nd Thursday of the month from 5:30pm-7:30pm at Houlton CHCS 2 Water Street. Onsite Child care available with advanced notice. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email: info@affm.net to RSVP. Please call before you come.

Lewiston: The Tri-County Adoptive Foster & Kinship Assoc. meets on the 4th Tuesday of the month 6pm-8pm at the B Street Community Center 57 Birch Street Lewiston. The group offers training, as well as local support & resources. On-site childcare is provided with advanced notice. Call Denise Gove at 782-1138 or email her at drsgove@aol.com or contact David Nielson at 409-3609 to RSVP.

Machias: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets every 1st Friday of the month 5:30PM-7:30PM at Rose M. Gaffney Elementary School 15 Rose Gaffney Road, Machias. Onsite Child care available with advanced notice. Please contact Mindy Kane, Community Health and Counseling Services, at 263-2014 or 461-8878 or email MKane@chcs-me.org to RSVP. 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 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.

Skowhegan: The group meets 5:30-8:00PM every second Wednesday of the month located at Skowhegan Federated Church 13 Island Avenue in Skowhegan. Onsite Child care available with advanced notice. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email: info@affm.net to RSVP. Please call before you come.

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: Foster/Adoptive/Kinship support. Meets 5:30PM-7:30PM. This group will meet every 2nd Tuesday of the month. Please contact Meagan Stearns at meagan@affm.net or call 1-800-833-9786 or email: info@affm.net to RSVP and for location information. Please call before you come.

Waterboro: Massabesic area foster and adoptive support group. Meets every 4th Thursday of the month at 6:30pm. Meets at Waterboro Town Hall 24 Townhouse Road, East Waterboro. Please contact Brigid at Brigid.MAAFFSG@gmail.com.

RSVP to a Support Group

It is very important for you to notify the support group facilitator before every support group meeting. Please let the support group facilitators know at least 3 days in advance (if possible) that you plan to attend a meeting. (We understand that unexpected changes happen). Notifying the leader of your support group, helps in the following ways:

- Helps ensure that there are enough childcare providers available.
- It helps invited speakers/guests preplan their agenda.
- Helps us decide the quantity of snacks, drinks, and handouts.
- Helps to ensure that we have a meeting space that meets everyone's needs
- Helps us to know who we should contact of an unexpected cancellation.

The contact for each support group is listed on the Support group listing. The listing is sent out in the AFFM welcome packet, it is printed in the Family Ties Newsletter, and can be found on-line on the Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine website at <http://affm.net/SupportGroups.aspx>

Interested in Starting a Support Group in Oxford, Sagadahoc, Lincoln, or Knox County?

Do you know of a location that would offer a free space for one evening a month for 2 hours? Please call AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email Sheila at sheila@affm.net or Chelsea at csloat22@hotmail.com for more information. AFFM needs to hear from **at least 6** adoptive, foster, or kinship caregivers-before we can start the group in any proposed location.

AFFM support groups are intended to be a discussion and informational sharing platform.

Participants' questions and concerns are addressed by the participants and AFFM staff. At the participant's request, AFFM will bring in a special speaker to discuss an issue more in detail or offer a training event in the area to address the topic of concern. AFFM offers childcare at all AFFM facilitated support group meeting locations with advanced notice.

Have you Heard of Seeds of Independence?



Seeds of Independence is a mentor and volunteer-based nonprofit organization committed to helping at risk youth in Maine reach their full potential as independent, productive members of society. The organization combats juvenile delinquency and positively affects the school dropout rate in our state by operating numerous programs aimed at mentoring at risk youth. Seeds of Independence is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

The organization was built on three effective and previously independent programs, Rebound, Jump Start, and a Service Learning trip in the Dominican Republic. Additional programs have been added over the last 3 years including, Beyond Long Creek Youth Center, Teen Parenting Group, and School Peer Mentors.

29 Burbank Street
Brunswick, Maine 04011
Phone: (207) 865-9267
info@seedsofindependence.org

AFFM has reached their limit of state park passes. Passes will be available again next summer. This year we were able to send out roughly 600 passes to licensed homes state wide! Make sure to call early next year to receive your pass!



Congratulations to resource parents Kim and Larry Warren for receiving a full scholarship from FFTA to attend a child welfare conference in Florida! The Warrens have been foster parents for many years and have had several placements and have adopted as well.

New Discount Added to the Discount Card Program!

Kitty Korner Thrift Shop

84 Main Street
Lisbon Falls, Maine
353-8300 or 576-5922
Open Wed-Sun 10-6pm Closed Mon-Tues.
25% off Storewide
<https://www.facebook.com/KittyKornerThriftShop>

Visit : <http://www.affm.net/Services/DiscountCardProgram.aspx> for the completed discount card list. Have a business in mind that may be willing to give a discount to families? Send AFFM an email at info@affm.net or call 827-2331

Kinship Corner

Celebrate Grandparent's Day on September 7, 2014!

Visit the Maine Wildlife Park, free admissions for grandparents accompanied by their grandchildren! Let AFFM know how you plan to celebrate!



It's hard to believe but it's that time of year again, Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine and the Kinship Program is gearing up for the Holiday Gift Giving Program! Resource 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!

Foster Care Implementation Committee



Child and Family Services
An Office of the
Department of Health and Human Services

Paul R. LePage, Governor

Mary C. Mayhew, Commissioner

Department of Health and Human Services
Child and Family Services
2 Anthony Avenue
11 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0011
Tel.: (207) 624-7900; Fax: (207) 287-5282
TTY Users: Dial 711 (Maine Relay)

July 8, 2014

Dear Foster Parent:

The foster care implementation committee has reconvened and is meeting regularly. This group seeks to provide increased, consistent and timely communication to all involved in the foster care program. It is our goal to provide information to you at least once a month.

Since November 2011, OCFS staff met with kinship and foster care families, youth and agencies. OCFS staff value your thoughts, ideas and concerns, and we appreciate all the information that you have provided. We recognize that there have been challenges in completing this process. We know that families who provide foster care need supports and deserve to be reimbursed in a prompt and fair manner.

Foster care implementation will follow four tenets:

1. Every child who enters foster care will have a safe placement.
2. Transition supports will be available for all youth in care.
3. Resource families will be engaged during the time that youth are either in residential care or are hospitalized, allowing for a timely transition back to a community/least restrictive setting.
4. All families, including Kinship families, need supports and reasonable compensation for the care they provide to youth.

The committee recognizes the overarching need for careful regard and sequencing of steps in implementing improved services to meet the needs of children in care, while actively supporting the families who provide foster and kinship care for these children.

If you would like to provide information for the committee to consider, please email us at FosterCareComments.DHHS@maine.gov.

Sincerely,

Therese Cahill Low

Director, Office of Child and Family Services

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

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E-Mail: info@affm.net

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

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

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AFFM would like to thank The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust for the generous use of the Tamarack Cottage this summer. Thank you for allowing families to break away from their hectic lives and enjoy time together at this beautiful location!

Keep an eye out in the February Family Ties Newsletter for your chance to win a week stay at Tamarack!