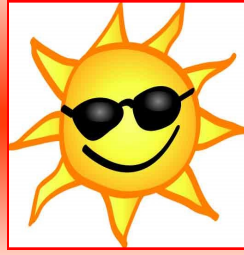


# Family



# Ties

## Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 19 Number 8

Newsletter

August 2016

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine and the Kinship Program has had a very busy summer! To kick off the season AFFM held the 4th annual Mackworth Island Gathering on Saturday June 25th. The weather was gorgeous and the company even better. Families took part in a treasure hunt, games, giveaways and treats. Thank you to board member Tammy Cutchen, AFFM staff members Courtney Leeman and Sandra Snow. Thank you to Tracey Peck-Moad for all your help in the treasure hunt. Thank you Traci Drake and Joanna Spano of The Governor Baxter School for the Deaf for allowing us to hold this event.

On Saturday July 9th Chris and Brandy Bowles and The Red Knight Motorcycle Club Chapter IX hosted the Rock & Ride for Kids event. Families that attended enjoyed games, face painting, bounce houses, music as well as a chicken BBQ, desserts and beverages. Thank you to Chris and Brandy for once again holding this event to support AFFM. Thank you to Searsport Elementary School for allowing this event to be indoors, though the weather didn't cooperate, fun was had by all!

On Friday July 29th Family Fun and Training Day will take place to celebrate and appreciate resource parents in Hancock and Washington counties. While kids will be entertained with "Touch a Truck", games, bounce houses, a magic show and a Police K9 demonstration, parents will take part in a training presented by The Maine Children's Trauma Response Initiative and Allegra Hirsh-Wright, LCSW, RYT Clinical Implementation Coordinator. Thank you to CHCS, DHHS as well as Jim Hatch of AFFM for your hard work and holding this event for families.

AFFM would also like to thank Mary Henderson and Mary Higgins and 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!

AFFM also extends a huge thank you to Tim Jorn of the Portland Sea Dogs for providing Sea Dogs tickets to many games this summer for our families to enjoy. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

In February AFFM began a partnership with MattressFirm to help provide supports to youth in care. AFFM can not thank Meghan Renken of MattressFirm Foster Kids Program and Juan Garcia of Ticket to Dream Foundation, enough for this incredible opportunity and continued partnership. AFFM has been able to support youth in care to attend summer camps; other extra curricular activities, and purchase sporting equipment. A clothing drive had also taken place that will be used towards AFFM's back to school program.

***AFFM could not do the work we do without amazing support from community members and individuals like you! AFFM is very grateful for your support!***

### **Don't forget to register for the New Balance Family 5K!**

**Saturday, August 27, 2016 at the New Balance Factory Store in Skowhegan (12 Walnut Street). Registration begins at 8:00AM**

The proceeds from the New Balance Family 5k will help provide school supplies and holiday gifts to children in foster, adoptive, and kinship care. In 2015, Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc. & The Kinship Program (AFFM) received over 900 requests for holiday gifts and 250 requests for a backpack and school supplies and AFFM anticipates more request this year. With your help, the partnership between AFFM & The Office of Child and Family Services can continue to fill the request and contribute to making a positive difference for families.

**For more information visit [www.affm.net](http://www.affm.net) or AFFM's Facebook page**



### **This Month's Family Ties:**

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# Alumni Transition Grant Program

Maine's Alumni Transition Grant Program (ATGP) supports eligible alumni of Maine's foster care system with higher education up to the age of 27. ATGP was established by state law and began in 2015. This program provides financial support and assists eligible students to complete postsecondary education and training programs.

**Apply now and let us  
help you fund your  
education!**



## Program Basics:

- ATGP is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis, to no more than 40 students at one time.
- ATGP funds are awarded only after all other free financial aid and wages are considered.
- ATGP navigators will be provided to every ATGP recipient.

## Who is eligible?

An eligible recipient must have:

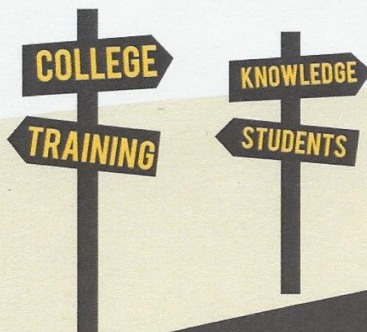
- Aged out of Maine's foster care system at age 18;
- **and** exited Maine's Voluntary Extended Care and Support (V9) Agreement at age 21;
- **and** was enrolled in a postsecondary education program making satisfactory progress when their V9 ended at age 21;
- **and** has not yet attained their 27th Birthday.

## What is a Navigator?

- ATGP Navigators are OCFS Youth Transition Specialists who provide support to students based on the needs that the student identifies.
- Support includes assistance to access both campus-based resources, such as student assistance programs and community-based resources, such as counseling services, when needed.

## Recipients of ATGP funds you agree to:

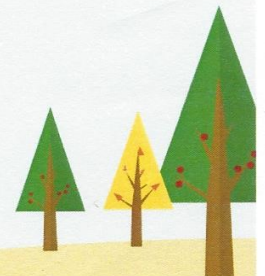
1. Show proof of enrollment in a postsecondary education undergraduate program.
2. Sign relevant release of information.
3. Provide grades and progress reports.
4. Meet with the ATGP Navigator at least 3 times per semester.
5. Provide contact information to the ATGP Navigator.
6. Sign a participant agreement each semester.
7. Complete a renewal application each semester.
8. Complete an exit interview upon graduation.



## For more information contact:

Dulcey Laberge,  
dulcey.laberge@maine.gov  
or 207-624-7928

View more information online!





## Adoption Announcements!

John and Sandi Cadwallader are pleased to announce the adoption of Garrett John & Gabriel John on Oct. 22 2015, they are welcome into the family by 2 sisters, 1 brother, 2 nieces and 2 nephews, we fostered them for nearly 3 years and they definitely become part of the family way before the adoption. They are a true blessing added to this family! Welcome Gabe and Garrett we all love you two very much!

~Dad, Mom, Darcy, Mary & John~

~Sandi, Kylie, Jaxson & Koleman~

It's been over a 3 1/2 year journey for the Flaherty's who legalized the adoption of Michael Flaherty (4), and Payton Marie Flaherty (3) September 17, 2014 and recently legalized Autumn Ann Flaherty (5) and Roxanne rose Flaherty(2) on July 11, 2016!

In the picture Christine is holding Roxy, next it's Payton and Autumn, Christine's husband Edward, their daughter Gabrielle and their son Devin holding Michael.



On 7/1/16 Dawn McGouldrick legalized the adoption of Jules!

Jules is 16 and has been in care almost 10 years. She has grown so much and is a lovely young lady who has been so resilient in her life. Dawn is an inspiration to all families who parent older children.

Jules joins Dawn's adult sons, Roland and Patrick, and their families as well as younger daughter Keyshia. Everyone who has worked with Dawn and Jules has been so excited to see this adoption happen and a forever family formed.



This is Allyson and Cameron, happy to say after 890 days in foster care, they have been adopted as of May 31, 2016. ~ The Sylvester Family

Congratulations

*Have you recently legalized an adoption? Want to share the exciting news with others? AFFM would love to create an adoption announcement in the Family Ties newsletter. Send a write up and photo (if you wish) to [meagan@affm.net](mailto:meagan@affm.net). AFFM looks forward to hearing from you!*

## Holiday Gift Giving Program

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 Committee 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 AFFM has the information the more likely we are to fulfill the children's wishes.



**AFFM has had the honor of partnering with Jason Corbin for many years through the Ogunquit Spirit of Giving Committee. Recently, Jason's father passed away but his spirit lives on through a place called Mizpah.**

*For those suffering from cancer, it can be an extraordinarily isolating experience. There is a place where survivors, their friends and families, or anyone suffering from grief, can come to reflect, meditate and be at peace with nature. That place is called Mizpah, and this year the sanctuary is adding a series of presentations involving local medical professionals from area hospitals, including Aroostook Medical Center.*

*Mizpah, which in Hebrew means "to help another," was created by Richard Corbin in 1991. In 1969, at age 22, Corbin was diagnosed with Hodgkins Disease and given less than a year to live. He received treatments that were relatively new at the time, and he fought long and hard. Along the way he made a promise to God that if he could be spared for a while longer he would build a place where people who are suffering may come and share their experiences, find peace and enjoy the beauty of the world around them.*

*Corbin was able to make that dream a reality with the creation of Mizpah, a 15-acre property in Grand Isle. It is open to the public at no charge from May through October and receives approximately 4,500 visitors every year. The property offers nature walks, flower gardens, a fishing pond and many special areas. Corbin died in 2015 at the age of 71. Mizpah is now run by his two brothers Roger and Mike, and has become a nonprofit organization with a seven-member board of directors. The mission remains — to be a place to gather, help, support and to comfort each other.*

***For more information visit: [mizpah.us](http://mizpah.us) . Thank you Jason for all your support and dedication towards AFFM and Maine's youth in care throughout the years.***

## Reunification Heroes!

National Reunification Month is celebrated in June each year and recognizes the people and efforts happening around the country that make it possible for families to stay together. For Reunification Month each year, The American Bar Associations ask for nominations for parents, professionals, and youth who were described as heroes for demonstrating the compassion and perseverance, despite the challenges, to keep families together.

AFFM is excited to announce Teresa and Todd Potter have been chosen as Reunification Heroes! Congratulations! To read the Potter's story visit: <http://files.ctctcdn.com/51cf6590101/cb77d8ae-fcd4-4668-a70f-644cdeea699b.pdf>

## Kinship Corner

AFFM is pleased to once again hold a pizza party in honor of Grandparent's Day on September 11, 2016. AFFM will hold pizza parties in 4 locations across the state. The events are at no cost to you and are for you and your children.

***Events are open to the first 20 families who respond before August 22, 2016.***

The parties will be held from 11 A M -1 P M at Uno's in Portland, Pizza Hut in Augusta, UNO's in Bangor and Pizza Hut in Presque Isle. As time and funds allow we will expand these events annually. There will be prizes for adults and goodie bags for the children.

Please respond as soon as possible as registrations are limited. For those who cannot attend we honor you as well. Kinship care isn't easy but the love and dedication you all put into it is admirable and definitely appreciated! The children in your homes are blessed to have such strong and passionate extended family members to love and protect them.

We look forward to celebrating with you!



# Tedford Housing's 29th Annual Meeting and Awards Event



Presented to  
Tammy Cutchen,  
Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.  
in recognition of her exemplary support of



Craig A. McQueen  
Craig McQueen, President

ON THIS DATE  
June 16, 2016

Craig Phillips  
Craig Phillips, Executive Director

On Thursday, June 16th AFFM's board member Tammy Cutchen was presented with the Tedford Home Award for her amazing support towards the midcoast community. The Tedford Home Award is given annually to one or more organizations who have worked closely with Tedford Housing to help meet its mission of ending homelessness. Each year, during the back to school program Tammy as well as AFFM board member, Meghan Painton provide backpacks, clothing and school supplies to the Tedford community. AFFM is proud Tammy and Meghan are a part of our team! Nice work and as always thank you for all you do!



## A Moment to Honor and Recognize Gene and Debbie Irish!

When I started as a new caseworker fresh out of college, over 20 years ago, I first met Debbie Irish. Debbie and Gene had a house full of children back in the day when that was allowed. They did therapeutic foster care, before it was called that, using their innate skills, common sense and compassion. Debbie Irish taught me many things as a new caseworker that I couldn't have learned anywhere else. I sat and talked with her, spent time in their home, visited with the many children, and ate meals there on more than one occasion. I learned by listening and watching her talk to the youth in her home. I learned from her valuable experiences that she had before I ever came along. I learned by showing up early and talking with her before the kids got home from school. We developed a relationship of mutual trust and respect that got us through some tough times. Debbie and Gene are amazing foster parents and while I'm sad that they are finally "retiring", I am grateful for the time I was able to spend with them and the gifts of knowledge I received.

Rebecca Bolstridge  
Program Administrator  
District 8

Gene and Debbie Irish became licensed foster parents on November 17, 1989. I became their licensing work in 1995 and I've had the pleasure of getting to know them over these past 20 plus years. Gene and Debbie cared for many children in their home as foster and adoptive parents. They warmly welcomed others into their home when they hosted foster/adoptive family Christmas parties as well as monthly support group meetings (which are ongoing). They recruited other families in their area and created a network of Southern Aroostook families who also fostered and adopted children in need. Their home is always filled with the aroma of wonderful home cooked foods and Debbie's craft areas are always filled with works in progress that she donates to needy families. She and a group of friends make beautiful quilts and pajamas to give out to other resource families or needy families they see in their community.

I have fond memories of gathering with Gene and Debbie and other Southern Aroostook families at those Christmas parties with my husband and young son. We've shared many stories together about our sons and I always welcomed Debbie's advice. Many years ago, I commented on Debbie's beautiful flower garden and she offered me some plants that she guaranteed I couldn't kill. They are still thriving Deb in front of my house! I will truly miss working with you as a licensed home but know that you will continue to have a strong presence and positive influence in the foster/adoptive community. My best and beloved wishes to your family.

Linda Polchies,  
Licensing Worker  
District 8

You have parented an army and mentored many more!

As foster parent, adoptive parent, kinship provider, group leader and friend

You rise above the many and score!

With patience, kindness, skill and grace you made a home for those in need.

You did all this with loving spirit while setting a course to help your special family succeed

You have shared your many talents, sewing, crafting, quilting, cooking, preserving, gardening and such

All these things and more we appreciate so much!

We will miss knowing that other children won't have you as their foster parent but the examples you have set are now mirrored by your peers

And as such, thanks to you will continue through the years!

On a very personal note, I am so pleased to call you friend and look forward to continued visits and opportunities to share.

Enjoy your retirement, Debbie!

Much love,

Bette



# Former Foster Youth Need You

**You can help former foster youth get and keep health insurance!**

## Why are you important?

Our health care system is very fragmented. Some young people may not know what the options are and where to find help. Some people who are eligible for a program may be told they aren't eligible.

## Here's how you can help:

**If a young adult aged out of the Maine Foster Care System and is not 26 yet, that person is eligible for MaineCare insurance, regardless of income or assets. Here are talking points:**

- Are you under 26?
- Do you have MaineCare?
- If no, did you have it since you aged out?
- If you are under 26, but have not had MaineCare insurance since aging off the foster system, let me help you go to a DHHS office to enroll, or I'll help you call the CAHC HelpLine at 1-800-965-7476.
- If you are under 26, had MaineCare insurance and then lost it, let me help you go to a DHHS office to reenroll, or I'll help you call the CAHC HelpLine at 1-800-965-7476.

**If any young person 26 or older is uninsured, offer to help them call the CAHC HelpLine to discover possible options.**

## What does the CAHC HelpLine do?

- Listen to your situation, explain and screen for eligibility for many programs
- Troubleshoot and solve problems

MaineCare is free or very low-cost health insurance for eligible Maine residents. MaineCare insurance includes well and sick care office visits, hospital care, emergency care, lab and x-rays, prescription drugs, substance abuse and mental health services, family planning, specialist care, and much more.



**Consumers for  
Affordable  
Health Care**

Consumer Assistance HelpLine:  
**1-800-965-7476**  
[www.maine cahc.org](http://www.maine cahc.org)

**PO Box 2490  
Augusta, ME  
04338-2490**



# **Adoptive & Foster Families of Maine, Inc.**

## **& The Kinship Program**

### **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 and Facebook. Families are urged to call or email [info@affm.net](mailto:info@affm.net) to be added to this service. For more Information and to RSVP for the support groups please call AFFM @ 1-800-833-9786 or 827-2331. AFFM asks families to RSVP 3-4 days in advance so the facilitator and childcare provider can plan accordingly.

**Key:** A= Adoptive, F=Foster, K= Kinship, CC= Child care is available upon request

**Augusta** – Kinship only: 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 5:30 – 8:00 pm at the Buker Community Center (22 Armory Drive Augusta) call Jan Partridge at 207-495-3864.

**Augusta** – A/F/K/CC: 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Magic Years Center (25 Industrial Drive).

**Bangor** – Kinship only/CC: 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 6—8 pm.304 Hancock St. Suite 2B. 1-866-298-0896.

**Biddeford** – Kinship only/CC: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 10:00 – 11:30 @ J Richard Martin Community Center, 189 Alfred St.

**Bridgton** – A/F/K: 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at the Community Care (Behind Reny's) 15 Depot St. RSVP Vanessa Jones 647-2317

**Brunswick** – A/F/K/CC: Last Tuesday of the month from 5:30 – 7:00 pm at St Paul's Episcopal Church, 25 Pleasant St. Meetings are not held during Summer.

**Caribou** – A/F/K: 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month from 5:30 at Caribou Adult Education Building on Bennett Drive in between Caribou Rec and the gas station.

**Damariscotta**— F/A/K: 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month from 5:30-7:00 PM at the Skidompha Library (184 Main St).

**Dover-Foxcroft** – A/F/K/CC: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Mayo Regional Hospital, Borestone & Sebec rm.

**Ellsworth** – A/F/K/CC: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 5:00 – 7:00 pm at Ellsworth Elementary Middle School, 20 Forest Ave.

**Farmington** – A/F/K/CC: every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 6 – 7:30 pm @ Roberts Learning Center (room 201 & 205), UMF.

**Houlton** – A/F/K/CC: every 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month from 5:30 – 7:30 pm at Houlton CHCS, 2 Water Street.

**Lewiston** – A/F/K/CC: every 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at 200 Main Street Lewiston.

**Lincoln** – A/F/K/CC: 1st Thursday of the month from 6:00–7:30PM at the Community Evangel Temple, 124 River Rd.

**Lincolntonville**— F/A/K/CC: 2nd Monday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at the Lincolntonville Central School (523 Hope Rd.)

**Machias** – A/F/K/CC: 4th Thursday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm @ Rose M Gaffney Elementary School, 15 Rose Gaffney Rd

**Orono** – A/F/K/CC: 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at AFFM (34 Main Street Orono).

**Portland**—A/F/K/CC: 2nd Tuesday of the month from 5:30-7:30pm at 901 Washington Ave. Portland.

**Presque Isle** – A/F/K/CC: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:30 – 7:30 pm at the Wesleyan Church (387 Centerline Rd.)

**Rockland**—A/F/K/CC: 3rd Monday of the month at 6:00PM-7:30PM at the Knox Center-Pen Bay Healthcare (6 White Street)

**Saco**—A/F/K/CC: 4th Wednesday of the month from 5:30PM-7:00PM at AFFM's Saco office (333 Lincoln Street).

**Sherman** – A/F/K: 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 in the summer.

**South Paris**— A/F/K/CC: 1st Thursday of the month from 5:30-7:00PM at the University of Maine Cooperative Extension (9 Olsson Road).

**Skowhegan**— A/F/K/CC: 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at New Horizon Church (31 East Madison Road).

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.  
34 Main Street, Orono, ME 04473

Phone: 1-800-833-9786 or (207) 827-2331  
After Hour Emergency Support: (207) 745-4159  
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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  
Generations United

Partnering With: Department of Health and Human Services

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

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**Adoptive & Foster  
Families of Maine, Inc.**  
& The Kinship Program

***New Resource Families Welcome! You are now receiving the Family Ties newsletter as part of your complimentary membership to AFFM! Learn more about AFFM and services offered by calling 1-800-833-9786 or visit [www.affm.net](http://www.affm.net)***

**Locations:** 34 Main Street, Orono, Maine

& 333 Lincoln Street, Saco, Maine

**Phone:** 1-800-833-9786

**Email:** [info@affm.net](mailto:info@affm.net)

**After Hour Emergency Support:** 207-745-4159

**Website:** [www.affm.net](http://www.affm.net)

**Like us on Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Adoptive-and-Foster-Families-of-Maine-Inc/>

Scan to sign up for our email

