

Happy Summer!

Family Ties



Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 20 Number 6/7

Newsletter

June/July 2017

Our Mission

AFFM's mission is to provide the training, guidance, knowledge and resources needed to handle the complex issues encountered by resource families as they open their hearts and homes to children in need.

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc. (AFFM) provides support services for adoptive, foster parents and kinship providers. The services are for all adoptive and foster families who are licensed by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or have DHHS approval to adopt. AFFM provides services to kinship families not in the formal system. Child welfare is dependent upon a myriad of state and federal laws, rules and regulations. Decisions concerning families and innocent children are rarely easy, and are usually fraught with highly emotional issues. AFFM is dedicated to assisting families to help children find the security they deserve. Every situation in fostering, adoption and kinship is unique. AFFM helps prepare families for the challenges they will face, and is a resource that is easily accessible. AFFM is available 24/7.

AFFM believes that Maine's children have the right to be a permanent member of a stable, healthy family. For adoptive, foster and kinship caregivers to provide the best parenting and in a quality home environment, they need to add to their own strengths through training and the unconditional support of AFFM. AFFM believes that when decisions are made that affect the rest of a child's life, there is no room for politics or personalities. AFFM believes that families who are willing to open their hearts and homes to provide for Maine's children, must have total support. We believe that access to services to enhance their abilities and that help them to develop new skills is imperative.

How AFFM Does It: AFFM is supported by donations, grants, a contract with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The association maintains 501 C-3 tax-exempt status.

Training Programs: AFFM holds an annual spring training conference. The conference provides training designed specifically for families looking for unique and advanced learning opportunities. It is also an opportunity to network with families and other providers from across the state. AFFM offers numerous training programs. AFFM works collaboratively with DHHS and other agencies to sponsor workshops and trainings that are designed to meet the needs of adoptive, foster and kinship families.

Allegation Support: AFFM provides an Allegation Support Team. Nearly every foster parent will experience an allegation at least once during their foster parenting career. Allegation Support Team members are trained to offer non-judgmental listening, a place to vent and an explanation of the DHHS investigation process. Team members can also help when preparing to meet with DHHS staff. The Allegation Support Team maintains confidentiality consistent with Maine Law.

Support Groups and Mentoring: AFFM works to promote existing support groups as well as training to help form new support groups. AFFM's Resource Family Mentor Service is a support to help new resource families get accustomed to their new role. New foster and kinship families receive direct support, encouragement, and guidance from their more experienced peers.

Liaison Services: AFFM Staff is available to attend meetings with foster, kinship and adoptive parents. It is often useful to have someone who is not personally caught up in the issues to provide neutral clarity after a meeting.

Lending Library: The library is a huge resource. Books, videos and DVD's on a wide range of topics related to issues of foster care, kinship and adoption are available. The library has items of interest to all ages from very young children to grandparents.

AFFM is a phone call or a "click" away, at 1-800-833-9786 or on the web at www.affm.net

AFFM Spring Training Conference

AFFM held the 20th Annual Spring Training Conference, “Improving Communication Today; Offering Hope for Tomorrow” on April 21-22nd in Bangor at the Hilton Garden Inn. Over 250 were in attendance! Donna Butts, Executive Director of Generations United and Dr. Ken Huey delivered heartfelt and powerful keynotes on Friday and Saturday.

Awards were presented during Friday’s lunch. **Award winners included:** Guardian Ad Litem of the Year - Joseph P. Belisle, Esq. Private Agency Worker of the Year - Blake Hatt, Child Protective Worker of the Year - Steven Moodie, Permanency Worker of the Year— Marie Miller, Kinship Advocate of the Year—Janalee Moquin, Child Behavioral Health Advocate of the Year— Cheryl Hathaway, Resource Family Advocate of the Year— Linda Brissette, Community Partner of the Year— Lots of Tots Child Care. **Champions of Fostering Maine’s Future:** District 1— Dana and Connie Pelkey, District 2— David and Eric Stearns District 3— Greg and Deb Hallowell District 4— Joseph and Rani Allard, District 5— Brian and Lynette Fortie, District 6— Jason and Jackie Dorr, District 7— Andrew and Lisa Seeley and District 8— Roger and Debbie Flwelling. The Resource Worker of the Year award was presented in honor of Louise Hamilton who passed away last year. Lewiston DHHS accepted the award on Louise’s behalf.

A very special Life Time Achievement award was presented to AFFM’s Executive Director Bette Hoxie as she plans to retire in November. Bette will be missed immensely, however we know she will continue to share her compassion and wisdom and continue to advocate for families in her next adventures.

The silent auction, as always was a huge success! All funds raised will be used towards youth attending summer camps, holiday gifts, back to school items and more. Thank you to Meghan Painton for holding down the resource room! Thank you to AFFM’s Board Member’s for all your contributions. Thank you to all those who helped make the conference such a success. We look forward to seeing you all again next year!



Foster Family Day at the Fort 2017

Thank you to all who attended and made this year’s Foster Family Day at the Fort a success! The sun was shining for the close to 400 in attendance! All enjoyed a barbeque, games, bounce house, live music and an amazing petting zoo! Thank you to the following businesses and individuals for another great year:

- Friends of Fort Knox
- Pony X-Press Zoo of Waterville
- Poland Springs
- Coca Cola Company
- Staff and Board of AFFM
- Spurwink
- Community Care

- Gloria Flewelling and Frances Thibodeau
- Lighthouse Radio Network
- Winterport Baptist Church
- Ed and Barbara Ford
- Sandra Snow and family
- Belfast Dunkin Donuts
- The Fahey Sisters
- Donna from Holden Dysarts

- Frito Lays
- Old Town Hannaford
- LaBree’s Bakery
- Governor’s Old Town
- Dennis Paper
- Bangor Wal-Mart
- Old Town Dunkin Donuts
- Reba Parsons
- Pepsi
- Tom and Pat Locke
- Joe Joe Hoxie and Oliva Legere



Meet the Staff of AFFM!



Lauri recently accepted the position of Resource Support Coordinator for the Orono office. Lauri is very excited to start working with the support groups, families and local communities to provide resources & training. Lauri has been a foster/adoptive parent for 20 years and will be finalizing a fifth adoption in June 2017! Lauri currently lives in Old Town and has 10 children & 3 grandsons. Lauri and her husband Jeff have received the Angels of Adoption Award in Oct 2015 where they spent several days in Washington, DC with adoptive families from other states. They had a wonderful opportunity to meet with the House of Representatives and lobby for the needs of Foster and Adoptive children. Lauri looks forward to working with the current and future foster, adoptive & kinship families of AFFM. Send Lauri an email at lauri@affm.net to say hello!

Carey started as the Resource Support Coordinator in April and works out of the Saco office. She became involved with AFFM after becoming a kinship foster parent for her then 3-year-old nephew. She also has 3 biological children; ages 8-15. Carey understands the challenges that many kinship families face, including the impact on biological children living within the home. For many years, Carey has volunteered time to help families in need. She is focused on further expanding our current resources and discounts for AFFM families. Additionally, she is eager to assist with support groups, trainings and other activities to increase participation and attendance. Carey can be reached at carey@affm.net, send Carey an email and welcome her aboard!



AFFM is so pleased to have Lauri and Carey on our team!

Join AFFM at Ferry Beach Park!

When: Friday July 14, 2017 from 12pm-3pm

Where: Ferry Beach Park 5 Morris Ave. Saco

(Not to be confused with Ferry Beach State Park)

Enjoy the beautiful beaches and scenery, giveaways and much more! Activities will be scheduled throughout the day, treats and beverages will be provided. This event is open to all resource parents, DHHS staff, private agencies and all advocates of Maine's youth in care.

This is a FREE event, rain or shine!

RSVP: Meagan Sprague by emailing meagan@affm.net or call 207-827-2331



When You Thought I Wasn't Looking

When you thought I wasn't looking

You hung my first painting on the refrigerator

And I wanted to paint another

When you thought I wasn't looking

You fed a stray cat

And I thought it was good to be kind to animals

When you thought I wasn't looking

You baked a birthday cake just for me

And I knew that little things were special things.

When you thought I wasn't looking

You said a prayer

And I believed there was a God that I could always talk to

When you thought I wasn't looking

You kissed me good night

And I felt loved

When you thought I wasn't looking

I saw tears come from your eyes

And learned that sometimes things hurt

But that it's alright to cry

When you thought I wasn't looking

I looked at you and wanted to say,

"Thank you for all the things I saw when you thought I wasn't looking"

New Discounts!

**Maine Family Snow Tube Park
at Lost Valley**
200 Lost Valley Rd.
Auburn, ME 04210
\$5 off per person



Aero Air Park
40 East Ave.
Lewiston, ME 04240
\$5 off per **BIG** jumper (over 46")
\$2 off per little jumper (under 46")

The Fashion Gods and More
111 Ossipee Trail
Standish, ME
648-4338
15% off purchase



If you have a suggestion for a business or organization that AFFM can approach to participate in the discount card program, please contact us. You can also print off and send this completed [business application form](#) to 34 Main St. Orono, ME 04473

Adoption Announcements!



Mark and Penni Theriault and their children Abby and Jason want to announce the adoption of Zoey Grace Newell Theriault!

**WE LOVE HER TO THE MOON
AND BACK!**

William and Suzanne Bissonnette are excited to announce the adoption of their daughter, Saphyre, on March 2nd. Brandon has been waiting a long time to be a big brother. Congratulations!



On March 23, 2017 Brian and Ashley Kneeland welcomed Autumn, Rikki-Lynn, Thomas and Desiray Kneeland to the 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. AFFM looks forward to hearing from you!

Kinship



Corner

On May 10th AFFM Kinship Support Specialist Sheila Peakall, Saco AFFM Regional Manager Meagan Sprague and AFFM's Executive Director Bette Hoxie had the honor of attending The 5th National GrandRally: Building a Community of Hope for Grandparents and other Relatives Raising Children.

The Grandrally brings grandparents and other relatives raising children from across the country to Washington D.C. to elevate the critical role caregivers play in providing safe, loving and permanent families for children whose parents cannot raise them. Speakers from all over the country came to share their powerful stories on how their lives have been affected by kinship care. Bette Hoxie was among the incredible speakers and delivered a moving speech on her role as a caregiver and the effects the opioid epidemic has had on Maine's families.

After the Grandrally attendees visited the offices of senators and representatives to be heard on the hopes they have for their children and the challenges they face. Sheila, Meagan, Bette, kinship provider Jan Strout, and Jan's granddaughter all had the privilege of sitting down with Senator Susan Collins and a representative from Senator Angus King's office to discuss the concerns relating to Maine Kinship families.

Exciting news was shared to folks during the Grandrally, Senators Susan Collins and Bob Casey, Democrat of Pennsylvania, have introduced the Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act. The Act would create a federal task force to develop and disseminate information designed to help grandparents raising their grandchildren navigate the school systems, plan for their families' future, address mental health issues for themselves and their grandchildren, and build social and support networks. More information about the Grandrally can be found at <https://grandrally2017.org/>



Ready Set Go to Learn

Ready, Set, Go to Learn provides a new backpack, grade-appropriate school supplies, personal care items, and two new school outfits to children in need grades K to 12th. If you feel your child will be in need this upcoming school year, please call AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or send Meagan Sprague an email at meagan@affm.net and we'll be happy to take your request. Please make sure to have clothing sizes and specific needs your child may have when calling.

Interested in helping out with the Ready Set Go to Learn Program?
Do you have time to volunteer to fill backpack requests or collect school items?
Call 1-800-833-9786 or email meagan@affm.net



**Please have your request in no later than July 21, 2017*



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 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/CC: 3rd 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: 1st Wednesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Magic Years Center (25 Industrial Drive).

Bangor – Kinship only/CC. Facilitated by AFFM staff. 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30 PM Location: Redeemer Lutheran Church, 540 Essex St. Bangor

Belfast— F/A/K/CC: 2nd Monday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at U. Maine Hutchinson Center (rooms 133 & 129) 80 Belmont Ave.

Berwick— F/A/K/CC: 3rd Wednesday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at Berwick Town Hall (11 Sullivan St.)

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

Bridgton – A/F/K/CC: 3rd 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: 1st 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: 1st Thursday of the month from 5:30-7:00 PM at the Lincoln County Assembly of God Church (672 Main St.)

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

Ellsworth – A/F/K/CC: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 5:30 – 7:30 pm at Moore Community Center (133 State St.) RSVP Mindy Kane, CHCS 263-2014 or 461-8878

Farmington – A/F/K/CC: every 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6 – 7:30 pm @ Roberts Learning Center (room 107, 203 & 207), UMF.

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

Lewiston – A/F/K/CC: every 4th 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).

Machias – A/F/K/CC: 3rd Thursday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm @ University of Maine Machias Torrey Hall Rooms 228 & 230

Norridgewock— A/F/K/CC: 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at First Congregational Church (36 River Road).

Orono – A/F/K/CC: 3rd Monday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at the Orono United Methodist Church (36 Oak Street).

Portland— A/F/K/CC: 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm 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: 4th Monday of the month at 6:00PM-7:30PM @ the Rockland Public Library (80 Union St)

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

Sanford— A/F/K/CC: 3rd Wednesday of the month from 5:30PM-8PM at Curtis Lake Church (38 Westview Drive).

Sherman – A/F/K: 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 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 Olson Road).

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.
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On the Web: www.affm.net
E-Mail: 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

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

COMMENTS TO: EDITOR, FAMIY 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

Locations: 34 Main Street, Orono, Maine

& 333 Lincoln Street, Saco, Maine

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