

Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 20 Number 8/9

Newsletter

August/September 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.

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.

Direct Support: 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.

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

AFFM Change in Structure

Dear Friends and Colleagues of AFFM,

I am pleased to announce my retirement November 2017. It has been my sincere pleasure to serve as the Executive Director for the past 20 years. During that time the organization has grown from a one room office to two much larger and strategically located offices. In addition to the expansion of office space the services provided to foster, adoptive and kinship families have grown dramatically and continues to grow. The Board of AFFM has determined that a two tier system of leadership is desirable for AFFM as it moves forward. Jim and Travis will share the leadership of the AFFM offices. I feel confident that under the direction of Jim, Travis, Meagan and the Board of Directors, AFFM will continue to flourish and meet the resource needs of foster, adoptive and kinship families. I will miss my amazing staff, the Board of Directors and all the amazing friends and colleagues I have grown to know and love over my years with AFFM. I look forward to the next phase of my life's journey.

Thank you,
Bette Hoxie

Dear Families and Stakeholders;

I am very humbled and honored to move into the position of Operations Director after Bette retires in November. Bette has been a wonderful mentor to me. I only hope that I can help lead AFFM as well as she has for the past 20 years. For those who do not know, I have been a foster parent for 12 years and adopted two wonderful children from the system. Professionally, I have 23 years of experience working with children and families in Maine's child welfare system. I primarily worked in residential treatment, group home, and in treatment foster care settings. Soon after I received my Master Degree in Business Administration I took a position with Adoptive & Foster Families of Maine in fall of 2012. With funding support from DHHS, I developed AFFM's mentoring program and have worked hard alongside my co-workers to further expand our support groups. Administratively, I have been assisting Bette with preparing reports, completing various surveys, planning appreciation events, and attending stakeholder meetings.

In "my free time", I serve as Chairman for the Council of State Affiliates of the National Foster Care Association (NFPA). This role has given me the opportunity to network and collaborate with other foster care association leaders from other states. Being a part of the Council has opened my eyes to how vastly different other state foster care systems are run and what each state has for strengths and challenges. Even though my new responsibilities will be financial oversight, fundraising, quality assessment/improvement, program development, and general oversight of the organization; I still plan to provide direct support to families.

This will be a transition for all of us at AFFM. However with help of: Travis' co-leadership, Meagan's leadership in Southern Maine, Sheila's expertise in kinship issues, and the rest of our great team; we are dedicated to providing quality services to Maine's adoptive, foster, and kinship families.

Thank you;

Jim Hatch, MBA, Licensed Social Worker

Dear Families and Coworkers,

I am honored to be given the opportunity to be the Director of Services for Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc. I am delighted and look forward to carrying out the long-standing tradition of AFFM's mission and the opportunity to help lead AFFM in providing supports and services to adoptive, foster and kinship families across the state of Maine. In November of 2017, Bette Hoxie will be stepping down as Executive Director and will be leaving a large gap to fill. Bette has created a legacy with AFFM by leading the organization through 20 plus years of excellent service which has positively impacted many families, professionals, and the entire child welfare system. Bette's service will not be an easy task to replicate. However, with the help of Jim Hatch as the Director of Operations, The AFFM Board of Directors, AFFM Staff and their amazing team of volunteers and contributors I plan to work hard and continue the precedence and level of support and services that has been set before me.

Prior to being hired as the Director of Services I worked as the resource training coordinator for Adoptive & Foster Families of Maine Inc. & The Kinship Program for three years and interned for a year as an undergraduate student. During my four years at AFFM I have worked hand and hand with some of the greatest people I have ever had the opportunity to meet and work with. From working one on one with resource families to partnering with a wide array of organizations and professionals who have all provided me with amazing perspectives and information in which I plan to utilize and help AFFM meet the needs of families. As the Resource Training Coordinator I have worked closely with each district DHHS office and the AFFM training staff to coordinate and present the Resource Family Introductory Trainings (RFIT) as well as the Issues Facing Kinship Caregivers Training statewide. I currently serve on the local TFC Collaborative, The Community Partnership for Social Needs, The OCFS training task force, and the Foster Parent Advisory Group. When I am not collaborating with others in meetings and work groups I have enjoyed my true passion of working directly with families to help them problem solve and navigate the child welfare system.

Growing up I was fortunate to have parents who opened their hearts and home for children and young adults in care. It was through their kindness, patience, and love that helped open my eyes and my heart towards helping resource families. Through my lived experiences I have witnessed firsthand the need for family supports and services. I started my journey towards helping resource families by receiving my Associate's in Liberal Studies from Eastern Maine Community College. I then obtained my Bachelor's in Mental Health and Human Services from the University of Maine at Augusta and now I am getting ready to enter my final year of my Masters in Social Work at the University of New England. I look forward to bringing both my personal and professional experiences to my new position as the Director of Services and dedicating my efforts to helping AFFM support resource families.

Sincerely,

Travis Bryant
Director of Services

Thank you, Ferry Beach Park Association!



Chef Carey Cole!

On Friday July 14th AFFM hosted a Luau Family Fun Event at Ferry Beach Park in Saco and nearly 100 were in attendance! Families enjoyed games, give aways, a BBQ, Face painting and the beach. Thank you to all who came out to celebrate with us. A huge thank you to Ferry Beach Park Association for allowing us to hold our event at such a beautiful location. A special thank you to Glen Sanokklis and Mark for your generous hospitality and assisting with anything we needed you for. Thank you to Roberta Altamari and the youth camps at Ferry Beach for taking the time to put together goodie bags for all the children in attendance. Thank you Stephanie Schrader for creating works of arts on the children's faces! We look forward to holding this event next year!



Kinship Corner

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc. and the Kinship Program, (AFFM) celebrates and applauds grandparents who open their hearts and homes to parent their grandchildren every day all year long.

AFFM is a non-profit organization that partners with DHHS to provide support, training, education, listening support, referrals and materials goods to resource parents (foster, adoptive and kinship). The services are also available to families who are not involved with DHHS.

If you or someone you know is parenting one or more of a relative's children, AFFM has special resources to help you meet the needs of the children. The people you talk to when you call have "walked the walk and talked the talk". Our trained staff is sensitive to the complexities of families who have members that struggle and have found parenting overwhelming and need the support of extended family members to aid them until they are able to handle whatever keeps them from successfully providing for their children.

Parenting a second and or third generation of children requires more of everything from the caregiver. AFFM can help you navigate the systems you may encounter as you travel this often twisting and sometimes seemingly endless road. The systems you may encounter may include: child protection, education, special education, corrections and the court system.

Call toll free 1-800-833-9786 or locally 207-827-2331. We are a state-wide non-profit association and our services are free to those who provide kinship care either in the formal or informal system. You may also email us at info@affm.net or visit our website www.affm.net

****AFFM will host pizza parties throughout the state to celebrate Grandparent's Day on Sunday September 10, 2017! Keep an eye out for more information on AFFM's Facebook page, website and email list serve.***

In Loving Memory of Debbie Irish

Debbie (Rush) Irish of Crystal, Maine passed away unexpectedly on Saturday, June 17, 2017 at the age of 66. She was born on January 14, 1951, the daughter of George and Mary Rush of Benedicta. Gentle, quiet, and kind, she held a tremendous gift for giving. She has touched the lives of many people and has left this world a better place because of who she was. In 1989 she began her life's work as a steadfast and unconditionally loving foster parent to 84 children. She spent countless hours sewing and crocheting thousands of quilts, afghans, pajamas, hats, mittens, and other items that she donated to organizations that distributed them to children in need. She volunteered with Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine in addition to running support groups for other foster parents in her area. Her legacy is that she gave what she could give to fill the lives of children with a little more love. She enjoyed spending time with her family, in her gardens, picking berries and fiddleheads, cooking, baking, and making candy. She and her husband always grew an abundance of vegetables that they would generously share with family and friends (particularly with one niece who was known to raid the pea patch, frequently.) Debbie will be truly missed by her husband Gene Irish; her children: Gene, his wife Debbie and their son Cameron; Sarah and her children Siera and Jacob and grandchild Melonie, Becky; Jenny and her children Brady and Cheyenne; Jake, his wife Deseray and their daughter Piper; Chris, his wife Elizabeth and their children Nolan and Wesley; and Devin. Also missing Debbie are her remaining siblings: Reni and her husband Peter Qualey; Betty and her partner Mickey Cleaves; and Matthew and his wife Leann. Finally, she is survived by her nieces, nephews and extended family. She is predeceased by her parents, her sister Shirly, and by her brothers Raphael and Billy.



Thank You!

AFFM would like to thank the following individuals and businesses for their amazing support:

Tania Bachelder from Auburn Middle School provided backpacks for kids coming into care. Each backpack included a blanket, book, toothpaste, water bottle and new headphones!

As always, thank you to Mary Henderson and Mary Higgins for once again working with AFFM to provide families with a week stay at Tamarack.

Thank you to Sam Stoddard and her daughter. In lieu of gifts for her third birthday, Avi collected new books and pajamas for kids in care!

Red Knights Maine Chapter IX and Chris and Brandy Bowles for hosting the 4th annual Rock and Ride for the Kids

Thank you to LL Bean and Tim Jorn for providing Portland Sea Dogs tickets to AFFM, 28 families were able to attend a game this summer!



Adoption Announcements!

Daniel and Monica Jones have adopted their daughter Jasmine Renee' Jones from foster care after she was in care for 1677 days!



Girard and Janice and Lisa Pinkham are excited to announce the adoption of Cameron on May 4, 2017



The Pileski's are proud to announce the adoption of their grandsons, Stephen and Michael on July 10, 2017 at the Bangor District court. They would like to thank all of the people who helped to make this possible.



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!

2017 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.



HEAD START...DID YOU KNOW?

Head Start is the most important social and educational investment in children, families, and communities. It provides a window of opportunity to more than 32 million low-income and other vulnerable children and their families across the United States. Launched in 1965 as an 8 week pilot summer program that would serve a “couple thousand” children, Head Start currently serves over 1 million children and families a year! The program was designed to help break the cycle of poverty by providing comprehensive programming that would help families meet their emotional, social, health, nutritional and educational needs and helps them improve their lives. This would ensure that children are ready to enter kindergarten socially, developmentally and behaviorally. In Maine, eleven agencies throughout the state are responsible for administering head start programs in their respective counties.

What does Head Start offer?

Early learning: Through individualized learning experiences children will build relationships with adults, play, and be provided with planned and spontaneous instruction. This will help children grow socially, emotionally and cognitively.

Health: All children receive health and development screenings, nutritious meals, oral health and mental health support. Programs connect families with medical, dental, and mental health services to ensure that children are receiving the services they need.

Family well-being: Parents and families are supported in achieving their own goals, such as housing stability, continued education, and financial security. Programs support and strengthen parent-child relationships and engage families around children’s learning and development.

Head Start offers so much more for both children and families and is recognized for high quality educational and comprehensive programming that is proven to impact your child’s ability to succeed in school. Even if you may be above the income guidelines, there are certain categories that are eligible for Head Start programs, regardless of income; children in foster care is one of them. To learn more about the Head Start advantage and the opportunities that our programs provide, call your local Head State Agency today!

Head Start Programs By County

Androscoggin	Promise Early Learning	207-795-4040
Aroostook	Aroostook County Action Program	207-768-3045
Cumberland	The Opportunity Alliance	207-523-5049
Franklin	Community Concepts, Inc.	207-739-6536
Hancock	Child and Family Opportunities, Inc.	207-667-2995
Kennebec (Northern)	Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (Albion, Benton, Clinton, Oakland, Unity Plantation, Waterville, Winslow)	207-859-1500
Kennebec (Southern)	Southern Kennebec Child Development Corp.	207-582-3110
Knox	Penquis	1-800-215-4942
Lincoln	Midcoast Maine Community Action	207-442-7963
Oxford	Community Concepts, Inc.	207-739-6536
Penobscot	Penquis	1-800-215-4942
Piscataquis	Penquis	1-800-215-4942
Sagadahoc	Midcoast Maine Community Action	207-442-7963
Somerset	Kennebec Valley Community Action Program	207-859-1500
Waldo	Waldo Community Action Program	207-338-3827
Washington	Child and Family Opportunities, Inc.	207-667-2995
York	York County Community Action Corporation Children’s Services	207-324-5762



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 5:30-7:00pm at 9 Field Street, Belfast (Room 330).

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 Center (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 345 Clarks Pond Pkwy South 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).

South Paris— A/F/K/CC: 1st Thursday of the month from 6:00-7:30PM at the University of Maine Cooperative Extension (9 Olson Road).

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.
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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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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

Phone: 1-800-833-9786

Email: info@affm.net

After Hour Emergency Support: 207-745-4159

Website: www.affm.net

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