

Family



Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 20 Number 10/11

Newsletter

October/November 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

Celebrate Adoption Awareness Month in November

Each November, AFFM has the pleasure of celebrating Adoption Awareness month with the many amazing resource families across the state, as well as the Office of Children and Families Service, the Department of Health and Human Services and private agencies.

November 2nd AFFM will kick off Adoption Awareness month at the Blaine House in Augusta. The event will be filled with guest speakers, entertainment, treats and give aways! November 8th OCFS will hold an awareness event in Augusta at the Hall of Flags. Guest speakers, agencies with information and activities as well as treats and give aways will be a part of this fun filled event.

Also in November, families will be contacted about celebration events to be held following their adoption legalizations.



AFFM looks forward to celebrating adoption awareness month in November with all of you! Keep an eye out on www.affm.net, AFFM's email list serve, and newsletter for more information about each event.

Thank you Mary Lake!

AFFM would like to extend a very sincere thank you to Mary Lake and her husband Ronald. Over many years, Mary shared her homemade Mary Lake dresses and shoulder bags for little girls in care. She is now making wonderful quilts for children. Mary has donated over 100 quilts thus far and has another 18 ready to share sitting next to her grandmother's treadle machine which along with hand sewing is all she uses to create her master pieces! Thank you to Ronald who supports Mary through her endeavors and transports the dresses and quilts to AFFM. To learn more about Mary Lake's story check out Angels on Earth Magazine January 22, 2016 issue.



Changes to the Foster Home Licensing Process

The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is pleased to announce changes to the current structure and oversight of Family Foster Homes in the State of Maine.

On September 5, 2017, DHHS implemented a shared oversight model in which current licensing, regulatory and resource functions will be divided between the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) and Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (MeCDC).

All licensing and regulatory functions related to Family Foster Homes will be under the purview of MeCDC, Children's Licensing and Investigation. These functions include: processing new and renewal applications; ensuring all licensing requirements are substantially met, completion of home inspection; support and technical assistance around rule requirements; response to complaints; and licensing action if necessary. MeCDC, Children's Licensing & Investigation staff will be referred to as the Licensing Specialist and one Licensing Specialist will be assigned to each family. OCFS will continue to provide informational meetings; foster parent training; initial and renewal home studies, placement matches, levels of care assessments; and placement support. OCFS staff will be referred to as the Resource Worker and one Resource Worker will be assigned to each family.

The implementation of a shared oversight model for Family Foster Homes will present opportunities for efficiencies, improved statewide consistency and will allow for increased support & responsiveness to your needs.

If you have urgent questions or concerns regarding the implementation of this model, please contact Children's Licensing Investigation Program Manager Janet Whitten at 287-7068 or Resource Program Manager Hope Tormey at 624-5276.

Resource Parent Care Team Liaisons

The Resource Parent Care Team program supports licensed foster and kinship families with services and supports designed to help families manage the stresses of fostering and maintain placements until permanency occurs. RPCT will also help families successfully navigate the child welfare system and maintain positive and timely communication about children in your care. The program consist of a liaison who is available by phone in every DHHS office and an in-home component to help assess needs, make referrals, coordinate clinical and community support services, as well as providing education on trauma and parenting skills.

District 1:

Megan DuEst	286-2493
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District 2:

Jennifer Panzieri	822-2212
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District 3:

Alyson Holland	795-4650
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District 4:

Vacant

District 5:

Jennifer Bryant	624-5246
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District 6:

Diane Estes	561-4242
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District 7:

Michelle Mitchell	664-1404
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District 8:

Sarah Brown	493-4182
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New Clothing Closet in Naples!



Available by appointment anytime
Children to adult clothing
Children/baby items and toys

Call or send Hether a message to let her know items you may be in need of: 553-0891 or hether@affm.net

Kinship Corner

The Vermont Kin as Parents Conference was held on September 13th. This year's theme was "Fostering Resiliency and Hope". The keynote speaker was Joelle van Lent, PsyD. Additionally, several workshops were available for attendees, on topics such as, "Fostering Resiliency", "Post Permanence Services" and "Healing Opportunities".

Joelle van Lent's workshop on "Fostering Resiliency" was especially captivating. Her focus was less on the direct cause of the child's trauma and more on providing skills to overcome and move beyond in becoming more resilient to any future traumas. She provided evidence suggesting that a child with at least one stable, caring and supportive adult in their life, becomes inherently more resilient. She also spoke about healthy attachments and protective factors that all play a role in resiliency.

Kinship based conferences provide a valuable resource for these types of families. As a kinship caregiver myself, and as AFFM's Resource Support Coordinator, I was delighted at the opportunity to attend. Knowledge gained through listening to other's first hand experiences is immeasurable.

Carey Cole
Resource Support Coordinator
Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine Inc.
333 Lincoln St. Saco, Me. 04072

Holiday Parties

Date: Sunday November 26, 2017

Time: 1:00PM-4:00PM

Northern Location: Bangor Ramada Inn (347 Odlin Road, Bangor)

Enjoy arts and crafts, a potluck and swimming! Don't forget your bathing suits! Visit with Mr. and Mrs. Claus!

If you plan to bring food please let us know when you RSVP.

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

Please provide children's ages with your RSVP. All children in attendance will receive an age appropriate book from Santa!



Date: Sunday December 3, 2017

Time: 11:00AM-1:00PM

Southern Location: Portland YMCA (70 Forest Ave, Portland)

Enjoy arts and crafts, pizza and swimming! Don't forget your bathing suits! Visit with Mr. and Mrs. Claus!

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

Please provide children's ages with your RSVP. All children in attendance will receive an age appropriate book from Santa!

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.



NEW Training: Being an "Askable" Parent

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc. & The Kinship Program have teamed up with Maine Family Planning, The Youth Leadership Advisory Team and The Office of Child and Family Services to provide a training to help parents talk with teens about some of those "uncomfortable" topics. The training title, Being an "Askable" Parent, is designed to demonstrate effective communication strategies for responding to questions from teens and provide tools for supporting youth in care on healthy sexual development. This training will provide five hours of re-licensing credits for those who hold a foster care license. At the training, the team will provide a lunch and onsite childcare. The training will be provided in four locations across the state. The first two locations have been Identified, Presque Isle on October 14th and Orono on November 7th. The last two locations will be in the Augusta and Portland areas, however, the dates are TBA. *For more information about training please check out AFFM's Website www.affm.net or contact Travis@affm.net or call 207-817-6064.*

A Retirement Party for Bette!



After 20 years of service, Bette Hoxie, Executive Director of Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine and the Kinship Program will be retiring in November. Throughout the 20 years with AFFM, Bette has touched the lives of many families. On **Friday October 27th from 11-2pm** the **AFFM Orono office** will be hosting a gathering to honor Bette. Community members are invited to stop by and wish Bette well on her retirement.

Light refreshments will be provided. AFFM looks forward to celebrating with you!

12th Annual 2017 Festival of Fostering Trees!

The *Festival of “Fostering” Trees* is back for another year continuing our *mission* of raising awareness and funds to support Maine youth involved in the foster care system, while joining the *entire* community together by providing a beautiful festival of decorated Christmas trees *for you to enjoy and hopefully win!*



Where & When is the Festival of “Fostering” Trees (FOFT)?

Where: Foster’s Clambake 5 Axholme Road York, ME

When: Thursday November 30th, Friday December 1st, Saturday

December 2nd & Sunday December 3rd open daily from 10:00am – 8:00pm

Calls to all winners will be placed on Monday December 4th from 6:00pm-9:00pm

Pick-up of ALL trees will be Tuesday, December 5th between 8:00am-Noon – **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Tree Set-up Days & Times:

Saturday November 25th & Sunday November 26th – 10:00am-6:00pm – **NO EXCEPTIONS!**

Admission is “FREE”: Voluntary donations of non-perishable food items and/or a monetary donation can be made at the door for the York Food Pantry. Come and enjoy the amazing “*Spirit of the Season*” without spending a penny - purchasing raffle tickets is optional.

Raffle Tickets: 25 raffle tickets for only \$5.00, available to purchase at the Festival.

How can I participate? Donate a decorated artificial Christmas tree, any size, style or fashion, traditional or non-traditional, (be creative) using any type of materials and the tree will be raffled off at the end of the festival. All trees will be set-up and decorated by the participants. *Please write your confirmation # on your tree box.* Extension cords are provided.

Can I donate something else instead of a tree? Monetary donations & gift certificates are great ways to participate in the Festival & *ALL* items will be used appropriately.

Who receives the proceeds? The Festival of “Fostering” Trees (FOFT) serves as the signature fundraising event for *A Place Called H.O.M.E. (LC3) – Having Opportunities Means Everything*, which exists to serve the multifaceted and critical needs of older youth (16-26) who are aging out or have aged out of Maine’s foster care system and find themselves in need of a support system.

How can I enter a tree? Email your **COMPLETED** Entry Form to janalemoquin8@yahoo.com or mail to P.O. Box 72 York, ME 03909 by **Monday November 13th** call/text 423-4281 FMI.

NOTE NEW INFO: All Entries must include a tree (or be in the shape of a tree) in excellent condition, with lights, a tree topper, tree skirt & decorated on all sides!!!

Adoption Announcements!



Eric and Danielle Fenton are excited to announce the adoption of Dorothy Anne Fenton on July 6th, 2017!



Jeff & Lauri Legere from Old Town legalized the adoption of Karlee Greyce Legere on June 7th, 2017. Karlee is loved and lavished by attention from her 10 siblings & 3 nephews. The Legere family wants to thank everyone who helped and supported them through Karlee's amazing journey!



Marc & Robin Bates are excited to share with the AFFM community the adoption of their youngest child Jewel C. Bates on June 16, 2017! She joins her brother Itzhak and sister Elena both who were adopted last year from foster care.

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!

THANK YOU!

AFFM would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Domino's in Biddeford and Bangor for providing pizza for a celebration honoring grandparents this September! AFFM would like to thank all kinship caregivers who are supporting loved ones in their home.



AFFM is beyond grateful for their continued partnership with MattressFIRM. In early June, AFFM's Saco office began a collaboration with MattressFIRM in Biddeford to provide kids coming into care with a new twin bed. This partnership since then has expanded to AFFM's Orono office and 20 beds have been received in total! Please note, AFFM does not receive beds on a regular basis and they are limited. AFFM can not say thank you enough to the amazing folks at MattressFIRM who are making this happen and providing kids in care with a good night sleep!

MATTRESSFIRM

Better Together Initiative

Interested in volunteering? The Better Together Initiative is the place to do just that! Provide youth with the opportunity to connect with a safe, caring, invested community member who will support a youth's specific interests. Youth connect with a community member who's interested in spending time experiencing something that the youth is passionate about. It's really as simple as that, enjoying and experiencing fun stuff together. A Better Together Initiative is one of the many initiative's **A Place Called H.O.M.E.** provides. **To learn more about A Place Called H.O.M.E visit: <http://aplacecalledhome.family/>**

Meet AFFM's Newest Staff Member!

Holly White recently accepted the position of the Administrative Assistant for the Orono office. Holly is ecstatic about joining the AFFM team and helping families in gaining knowledge about all of our resources. She is currently working on the Holiday Gift Program and encourages everyone to make their request as early as possible. Holly was adopted by her grandparents at 3 years old and understands the value of AFFM and how they provide resources to families of different aspects of adoption, foster, and kinship. Chances are, if you are calling you will be greeted by Holly and she will transfer you to the best suitable person to assist in the area you need.



Feel free to send Holly a greeting by email at holly@affm.net welcoming her!



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 6:00PM– 7:30PM at Magic Years Center (25 Industrial Drive).

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

Belfast— F/A/K/CC: 2nd Monday of the month from 5:30PM-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 6:30PM – 8:30PM 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 5:30PM – 7:00PM at St Paul's Episcopal Church, 25 Pleasant St. Meetings are not held during summer.

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

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

Ellsworth – A/F/K/CC: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 5:30PM– 7:30PM 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 6PM– 7:30PM @ Roberts Learning Center (room 107, 203 & 207) UMF.

Lewiston – A/F/K/CC: every 4th Tuesday of the month from 6:00PM – 8:00PM 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 – 7:30PM @ 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 6:00PM – 8:00PM at the Orono United Methodist Church (36 Oak Street).

Portland— A/F/K/CC: 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:00PM-7:30PM at 345 Clarks Pond Pkwy South Portland

Presque Isle – A/F/K/CC: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:00PM– 7:30PM at the Wesleyan Church (387 Centerline Rd.)

Rockland—A/F/K/CC: 1st Wednesday of the month from 6PM-7:30PM @ Grace Bible Fellowship (30 Sherer Lane).

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.
34 Main Street, Orono, ME 04473

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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

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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