

Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 20 Number 12

Newsletter

December 2017

AFFM Year in Review

It's hard to believe but another year has come and gone and AFFM has been very busy!

To kick off the year, AFFM held two events during the week of February vacation. Over 70 attended an event at Jokers in Westbrook with games, free pizza and give aways. Over 80 attend the Bangor Brewer Bowling Lanes for food give aways and bowling.

In April AFFM held the annual spring conference in Bangor. In addition to phenomenal keynote speakers, Dr. Ken Huey and Donna Butts, Executive Director of Generations United, many amazing presenters from Maine rounded out the exciting and informative two-day training event. During Friday's lunch, AFFM and DHHS honored caseworkers, resource parents and other child welfare advocates for their exemplary work on behalf of children and families in Maine.

In May, AFFM Kinship Support Specialist Sheila Peakall, Saco AFFM Regional Program Manager, Meagan Sprague and AFFM's former 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.

AFFM celebrated Foster Care Awareness Month in May with the 16th annual Foster Family Day at the Fort in Prospect at Fort Knox. Nearly 400 individuals attended the event. All in attendance enjoyed a barbeque, giveaways, music performed by the Fahey Sisters, a petting zoo and much more! As always, thank you to The Friends of Fort Knox who allow AFFM to hold this annual event. Thank you to AFFM's amazing board members and team of volunteers who kept things running smoothly! You are all appreciated!

During June and July six families were selected to take advantage of Tamarack Cottage in Rangeley. Thank you Mary Higgins and Mary Henderson for making the cottage available for the 20th straight year!

Throughout the summer over 50 youth in care were supported to attend camps and other extracurricular activities as a result of a partnership with MattressFIRM Foster Kids and the efforts of AFFM's Kinship Specialist Supervisor, Sheila Peakall.

AFFM is beyond grateful for their continued partnership with MattressFIRM. In early June, AFFM's Saco office began collaborating 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 25 beds have been received in total! AFFM does not receive beds on a regular basis and they are limited. AFFM cannot 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!

In July 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. AFFM extends a huge thank you to Ferry Beach Park Association for their incredible generosity. AFFM looks forward to holding this event next year!

Also in July, the 4th annual Rock and Ride for the Kids, a fundraiser for AFFM, hosted by The Maine Red Knights Chapter IX Motor Cycle Club was held. The event was set in motion by adoptive parents, Brandy and Chris Bowles, members of the Red Knights. The event brought in money that supported the purchasing of bikes for several youth in care.

AFFM had a very busy summer filling backpack requests for the Ready Set Go to Learn Program. AFFM was able to fill over 200 backpacks for children living with resource families. Each bag had age appropriate school supplies, clothing, and personal care items. This is never an easy feat and AFFM could not have done it without the amazing support of board members, Tammy Cutchen and Meghan Painton. You are both very appreciated!

In honor of Grandparent's Day in September, AFFM hosted pizza parties at the kinship support groups. Keep an eye out on list serve and the newsletter for celebrations to be held next year.

On November 2nd AFFM co-hosted the annual Adoption Tea at the Blaine House to kick off Adoption Awareness Month. The event began with the reading of the governor's proclamation. Special guest musician, Doug Nye entertained attendees with his humorous and charming songs.

AFFM was fortunate to partner again with the Children's Museum and Theatre of Maine in Portland as well as probate and district court, to celebrate a number of adoptions. Congratulations to all the families who added to or formed a family by adopting! AFFM continues to partner with the Jockey Being Family Foundation to provide each adopted child placed by DHHS with an embroidered backpack with the child's new initials and a tote filled with post adoption materials for the adoptive parents.

December always proves to be a busy time of year for AFFM as the Holiday Gift Giving Program comes to an end. Once again, over 1,000 children were sponsored this holiday season! The Holiday Gift Giving Program is not an easy task to take on. Each day for weeks, one or more staff accommodated families in their quest for the perfect gift. Making sure gifts are where they need to be is not as easy as it sounds, Maine is a large state! However, every year we manage. Thank you to all who made this another successful year! Thank you sincerely to all who contributed to the joy of this special season. AFFM cannot thank The Ogunquit Spirit of Giving Committee enough. AFFM became the sponsoring agency for The Spirit of Giving many years ago and as a result they provide gifts to nearly 600 children! As the program continues to grow each year, AFFM sought out other businesses, individuals and churches to sponsor the additional 400 children in need of gifts! Thank you to all who helped in so many ways!

If your child/children are among the many that received gifts and you would like to extend your words of thanks, please feel free to send notes to AFFM's Saco or Orono offices. AFFM will share with the Spirit of Giving Committee and the sponsors who made the holiday season special.

In addition to the Holiday Gift Giving Program, AFFM held the annual holiday parties in Bangor and Portland. At each party Mr. and Mrs. Claus handed age appropriate books and stuffed animals to the children in attendance. Thank you Mr. and Mrs. Claus for taking time from your busy schedules to join us!

None of these activities and events could take place without AFFM's dedicated staff and board members.

AFFM is so fortunate to have active board members who help out with the mission of AFFM in so many ways. We at AFFM extend a very special thank you to our Board of Directors; without their expertise and careful planning this association would not exist.

On November 17th AFFM's Executive Director Bette Hoxie retired after 20 years of service! 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. Thank you Bette for all you've done for AFFM and the families served!

Jim Hatch is AFFM's Director of Operations. Jim's responsibilities include but are not limited to financial oversight, fundraising, quality assessment/improvement, program development, and general oversight of the organization. Jim will also continue to provide direct support to families. Jim is constantly busy on numerous committees throughout the year. He serves as the Chairman for the Council of State Affiliates of the National Foster Care Association (NFPA). This role provides Jim with the opportunity to network and collaborate with other foster care association leaders from other states. Jim also continues to expand AFFM's Mentor Service. The Service, in partnership with DHHS is successfully implemented in each of the DHHS Districts. Jim provides mentor training and supports the mentors to all Districts north of Lewiston.

Travis Bryant is AFFM's Director of Services. Travis, alongside Jim, will take lead as the director of AFFM. Travis time and time again proves to be a diligent staff member and is always available with creative ways to make the best use of sometimes minimal resources and staff time. Travis is instrumental in developing and executing the annual spring conference. Travis works collaboratively with DHHS to provide training consistent with the needs of the families and DHHS staff. As the Director of Services for AFFM, Travis will still be available to provide direct support to families.

Hether Anderson, Pat Tavernakis, Joy Young and Ann Stephenson all do an incredible job at assisting in the delivery of the Resource Family Introductory Training as well as the Kinship Training across the state. AFFM is grateful for all of your hard work and support you bring to AFFM and families.

Sheila Peakall is AFFM's Kinship Specialist Supervisor in the Orono office. Sheila works with countless kinship families. There has been a huge increase in the number of kinship families and we are fortunate to have Sheila conscientiously and tirelessly working to answer questions on a myriad of topics. Sheila also facilitates the Kinship Support group meeting in Bangor and takes part in the Kinship Network Meetings.

Sandra Snow is AFFM's Kinship Specialist in the Saco office. Though Sandra's hours are minimal during the school year, she still manages to accomplish so much for our families. If a donation is needed in southern Maine, Sandra is on top of it! Sandra also facilitates the monthly support group meeting held in Saco.

Carey Cole joined the Saco office this April as the Resource Support Coordinator for southern Maine. Carey comes to the position with a wealth of knowledge and compassion for the work AFFM does. Carey has been instrumental in maintaining and expanding support groups in southern Maine as well as assisting in providing training at each group. Carey has been an amazing addition to the AFFM Team!

Lauri Legere joined the Orono office this April as the Resource Support Coordinator. Lauri has done a wonderful job at maintaining and expanding support groups in Northern Maine. Lauri has proven to be dedicated and goes above and beyond to make sure a family's needs are met. Lauri continuously works hard to make sure support groups are running smoothly and is there to provide any resources needed. AFFM is pleased to have Lauri on board!

Holly White, AFFM's newest staff is the friendly voice you hear when you call into AFFM. Holly was the go to girl when it came to the Holiday Gift Giving Program. As we know this is not a small task to take on but Holly managed to stay organized and have a positive attitude through the whole process. AFFM is thankful to have Holly on our team!

AFFM is pleased that Pam Healy of the National Able Network has continued to volunteer in our Orono office. Pam assist with answering phones, the lending library and the many other day to day office tasks.

Paul Leonard is Jim's assistant and is responsible for the monthly and quarterly reports required by the contract. Paul does an incredible job of gathering all the information needed for the reports and makes sure all services are reflected.

Meagan Sprague is the Regional Program Manager for AFFM's Saco office. Meagan represents AFFM on several foster care related committees, attends family team meetings when requested and is available to assist with all aspects relating to foster, adoptive and kinship families in southern Maine. Meagan also continues to produce AFFM's Family Ties newsletter.

Courtney Leeman is Saco AFFM's right hand woman! Courtney assists Meagan and Carey in the day to day operations of the office and is always available to help out. Courtney has also been instrumental in writing and receiving grants to expand on the services AFFM provides to families. Courtney recently earned her Master's in Social Work from the University of New England!

AFFM is fortunate to have such a knowledgeable and gifted staff who have a wide range of skills and expertise from both personal and educational enrichment.

Thank you to all who have assisted in so many ways throughout this past year. We at AFFM look forward to continuing to grow with you as we work together to improve the quality of life for Maine's resource families and the children in their care.

Have a happy and safe New Year!

Adoption Announcements!

On Monday, September 25th, we adopted our little Serenity Skye Madeline Parker!! After 1241 days in foster care, 798 days spent in our home, she is finally in her forever home. It has been a long, tough, and sometimes heart-breaking road but oh so worth it! She is our missing puzzle piece. I would say it was meant to be but I don't want to minimize the struggles she has had to endure before coming to us. I do believe though that we were here waiting for her all this time. We would like to thank all of Serenity's helpers: Permanency Caseworker Anna Makoujy, and Guardian Ad Litem Sandra Romano-Shain, HCI Visit supervisor Tabettha Boissonneault, Adoption Caseworker Adrienne Trombley, and Assistant Attorney General Martha Hallisey-Swift.

Thank you, Melissa and Mike Parker



Mark and Michelle Belanger are excited to announce the adoption of their son Oliver on August 28th at the Biddeford District Court. The family is so happy!



Ruth and Richard Butters would like to thank everyone who supported them in adopting their great grandchildren Andrew, Thalia and Chardonnay on October 5, 2017!



Holly & Bob Henderson/McDonald would like to share the joy of the adoption of their niece Katy into their family as of August 21st 2017! And would like to thank everyone for their guidance and support!



Congratulations

The Schweit's are excited to announce the adoption of Violet May on July 10, 2017



Adoption Announcements Continued!

Matthew and Tonya Huot would like to share the adoption of their little princess. Skylar Nicole Huot officially became theirs on October 10, 2017. The family is so blessed to have her in their family and love her so very much. Skylar completes their family.

#TeamSkylar



Marjorie and Peter Nadeau are excited to announce the adoption of their grandson Devon on October 18, 2017!



Amy Massicotte wishes to thank all the individuals who helped make the adoption of her grandchildren: Lily, Parker and Jordyn happen on October 18, 2017!



Richard and Karen Butler announce the official addition of Kristen Tiana Butler, 11, and Christopher Randolph Butler, 7, to their family. Kristen and Christopher now have two young adult siblings, Shelley and Kevin. The adoption became official November 1, 2017 at the Presque Isle District Court.



Linda and Mike Miranda are happy to announce the adoption of Emma Lynn Miranda! Emma was adopted on October 24th 2017. Linda and Mike are so happy to officially welcome her to their family!



Adoption Announcements Continued!



Naliyah Rayne Legere adopted November 2, 2017

“My mom and dad are proud to say I am here to stay, it’s my adoption day!”

Jeff and Lauri Legere and her 9 siblings couldn’t be happier!



It is with great joy that we announce the adoption of our beautiful daughter, Maeve on September 15th! She has brought an incredible amount of joy to our family, extended family and friends these past 2 years and we all are looking forward to a life of amazing accomplishments from her! She joins her parents Jen and Jay, siblings Logan, Patrick, Ryan and Hope and we were blessed to have her foster sister and baby brother there to attend the celebration. A gift you are from heaven above, a perfect example of God’s precious love, you are such a gift to all of us! We will love you always!
~ Jen and Jay Duffy

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



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 5:00-6:30 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: 4th Tuesday of the month from 5:30 – 7:00pm at St Paul's Episcopal Church, 25 Pleasant St. Meetings are not held during summer.

Caribou — A/F/K: 4th Monday of the month from 10:00am-noon at Caribou CHCS, 7 Hatch Drive #120. No RSVP needed.

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: 3rd Monday of the month from 10:00am – noon at Houlton CHCS, 2 Water Street. No RSVP needed.

Lewiston – A/F/K/CC: 4th Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at 200 Main Street Lewiston. (Lewiston DHHS)

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 – 7:30pm 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: 1st Wednesday of the month from 5:30PM-7:00PM @ 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

Phone: 1-800-833-9786 or (207) 827-2331
After Hour Emergency Support: (207) 745-4159
Fax: (207) 889-6978
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

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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

Locations: 34 Main Street, Orono, Maine

& 333 Lincoln Street, Saco, Maine

Phone: 1-800-833-9786

Email: info@affm.net

After Hour Emergency Support: 207-478-7976

Website: www.affm.net

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