

Family Ties



Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 21 Number 4

Newsletter

April 2018

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.

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

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: AFFM holds an annual spring training conference in April. 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. Many resource families use the conference to receive training hours needed for re-licensing.

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: AFFM offers support groups in each county to all resource families. The support group meetings allow for families to make connections and form relationships with other families in similar situations. The support group meetings also allow for kids to interact with other kids as child care is provided for most locations with advanced notice. A support group meeting is a great resource for the whole family.

Mentor Service: 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, training, 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. The listing of Lending Library materials can be found on the AFFM website.

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 offers a 24/7 warm-line. Resource families can call anytime when there is an urgent need to talk with our staff. AFFM's e-mail list serve is the fastest way to inform and notify families of topics and information that is important to them.

Kinship Support: AFFM provides specific supports to kinship families who are caring for children in DHHS custody and when there is no DHHS involvement at all.

Welcome Packet: All new resource families of AFFM receive a Welcome Packet that includes a discount card, information about free passes to the children museums, support group listings, pass to the Maine Wildlife Park in Gray, the latest Family Ties newsletter, and AFFM's brochure.

Adoption Announcements!



The month of February will forever be one of the best months. On February 16th, the Moore family officially added Adrianna to their forever family through legal guardianship. The following Friday, February 23rd the Moore's legalized the adoption of Christopher! It has been a long journey of potholes, high mountains, low valleys and winding roads but it was all worth it. The Moore's are officially a family of four kids. Christopher and Adrianna join as siblings Nevaeh and Joseph. Kinship is not an easy task, especially when it makes a sister and brother-in-law, the parents, but it is more than worth it. To be able to call Christopher and Adrianna our children is amazing and it made all the tough times worth it.

~Chris, Nicole, Christopher, Adrianna, Nevaeh, and Joseph Moore

Shawna (6) and Isabella (4) joined the Kelley family on June 13, 2017. This adoption was a celebration of love and joy by their mom Debbie and extended family!



We are so excited to announce we have adopted our sweet Sophia on February 23, 2018. Sophia came to us at 10 weeks old and shared our love for 808 days and now she shares our last name as well! We love you Sophia Rose Shaw!

~Randalyn and Dan Shaw



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.

Did you know that after you've adopted you are still able to access AFFM's support services? Call AFFM today to learn about post adoption support!

Announcements

NEW DISCOUNT IN PENOBSCOT COUNTY!

Foxgreen Farm, LLC
[557 N. Howland Rd.](#)
[Howland](#) 270-2993
www.foxgreen.com

\$7.00 off any vegetable purchase at the farm.
No minimum purchase. Valid 1x per week per family.

New Discounts in Androscoggin County!

Sippy Cup Consignment
20-B Main Street
Lisbon Falls, ME 04252
520-0793

Offering a 10% discount
open 11-6 T-Saturday and 11-2 on Sundays

We Do Windows and More

www.mainewindowcleaners.com

A Complete Interior and Exterior Window Cleaning business

10% discount on windows

info@mainewindowcleaners.com

SAVE THE DATE!

FOSTER FAMILY DAY AT THE FORT!

SATURDAY MAY 19, 2018

740 FORT KNOX RD. PROSPECT, ME.

***KEEP AN EYE OUT ON EMAIL LIST SERVE, WWW.AFFM.NET
AND AFFM'S FACEBOOK PAGE FOR MORE INFORMATION.***

Save the Date for the 24th Maine Child Welfare Conference!

Navigating Pathways for Families in Recovery
Thursday, June 21, 2018
Cross Insurance Center
Bangor, Maine
\$80 Registration Fee Includes Lunch

Featuring a Keynote Address By: Nancy K. Young, PHD, MSW



Meet the Staff of AFFM!

AFFM's Saco office is excited to welcome Hether Anderson! Hether is an adoptive mother of 5 children, biological mother to 6 children, along side her husband, Tim. Hether has been a Resource Trainer for AFFM for the last two years and is adding the Resource Support Coordinator for southern Maine to her title. Hether also supports resource families by running the Naples clothing closet.

Monica Bushey has recently joined AFFM as the Resource Support Coordinator in the Orono office. She has a background in communication and administration. As the Resource Support Coordinator Monica will be working directly with support groups in northern Maine. Monica is a foster/adoptive parent and looking forward to working with other families to help support their needs.

Reba Parsons joins the AFFM Orono staff as the Resource Family Specialist. Reba will be assisting and supporting families in various ways. Reba and her husband are parents to their birth, adoptive and foster children. Reba looks forward to this new chapter in her life and hopes to make a difference to others.



Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, a Phenomenon Fueled by the Opioid Epidemic By: Senator Susan M. Collins

Every child deserves a safe and loving home, a family to provide support, stability, and hugs. When birth parents are unable to care for their children, grandparents, great-grandparents, aunts and uncles, and other family members often step forward. Their answer to this unanticipated challenge is unconditional love.

This challenge has become a crisis due to the epidemic of opioid abuse that is ravaging our country. There were more than 64,000 deaths from drug overdose nationwide in 2016 – numbers that exceed the lives lost to car accidents, breast cancer, or a host of other causes.

The statistics are shocking and heartbreaking. Last year, in addition to a record-high 418 overdose deaths in Maine, nearly 1,000 babies in our State – about eight percent of all births – were born to women addicted to opioids and other drugs. In the United States, a baby is born with an opioid addiction every 25 minutes, more than two per hour.

In this crisis, as in past crises, grandparents are coming to the rescue. Grandparents raising grandkids together with the child's parents can support healthy aging and be a positive experience for all involved. Across the country, however, some 2.6 million children are being raised solely by grandparents. These "custodial grandparents" are called upon for a number of reasons, including alcohol and drug addiction, physical abuse, incarceration, divorce, financial difficulties, military deployment, and even death. In Maine, the number of children being raised solely by their grandparents increased by 24 percent between 2010 and 2015.

Last year, as Chairman of the Senate Aging Committee, I chaired a hearing on the growing phenomenon of grandparents raising grandchildren. The purpose of our hearing was to recognize these "grandfamilies," and to explore what can be done to assist them as they take on this unanticipated challenge motivated by their love of their grandchildren.

A clear message from that hearing was the need for these kinship parents to have greater access to information about the resources available to assist them. As a result, I introduced the *Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act*, bipartisan legislation that would create a federal task force charged with developing and disseminating information designed to help kinship parents. This legislation would assist families with navigating the school system, planning for their families' future, addressing mental health issues for themselves and the children, and building social and support networks.

This vital legislation achieved a major step forward on Feb. 28 when the Senate Health Committee, on which I serve, passed it by a unanimous vote. It is essential that the full Senate swiftly pass this bill so that our grandfamilies can get the help they need.

Among the witnesses at the Aging Committee hearing last year was Bette Hoxie, a custodial grandparent and a board member of the Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine and the Kinship Program, based in Orono. She testified that of the 3,100 families her organization works with statewide, 85 percent are headed by grandparents or great-grandparents, many due to opioid abuse. From health care to clothing and cribs, she told the Committee of the struggles grandparents – including herself – face in the unexpected challenge of raising young children.

At a time in life when most seniors are looking forward to enjoying more leisure time, these grandparents have found themselves as parents once again. They are waking up in the middle of the night to feed babies and planning afternoons around soccer practice, rather than playing golf or volunteering.

Raising a second family also involves costs that they had never anticipated as they budgeted for what was supposed to be their golden years. They are tapping into retirement savings, going back to work, or staying in the workforce longer just to make ends meet. In addition to the financial toll, raising children later in life presents social, emotional, legal, and other challenges.

As we confront the opioid crisis through increased prevention and treatment efforts, we must support the family members who fill the vital role of parenting. Despite the challenges, when asked if they regret taking on the caregiver role, the vast majority of these grandparents say: no. They know they are making a difference. They are providing love, stability, and a home to children who might otherwise have to live with strangers. As one Maine grandparent said in a television interview, "In the end, it's worth it to know that they are happy and safe."

Throughout history, grandparents have stepped in to provide safe and secure homes to their grandchildren, replacing traumatic pasts with loving and hopeful futures. The opioid crisis has called on grandparents in even greater numbers. The *Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act* would help those grandparents who have stepped up to ensure a better life for their children's children.

Article Taken From: <https://www.collins.senate.gov/newsroom/supporting-grandparents-raising-grandchildren-phenomenon-fueled-opioid-epidemic>



Enter to win a week's stay at Tamarack!

The Wilhelm Reich Museum is owned and operated by the Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust. This trust was established by world renowned scientist, Wilhelm Reich, in his last will and testament. The trust maintains the property at Orgonon under the name and style of the Wilhelm Reich Museum. On this land is his cabin, Tamarack. Mr. Reich's will also stated that Tamarack be used as a "summer home children." The trust has chosen a way to fulfill this final wish by making Tamarack available for adoptive, foster, and kinship families for six weeks in the summer! ***This opportunity is available to those that might not have another means of this type of vacation.*** Mary Higgins, trustee, works with AFFM on this opportunity annually.

The cabin is located on the grounds of Orgonon, formerly the home, laboratory, and research center of Wilhelm Reich. Orgonon is located just off of the Dodge Pond Road in Rangeley. Tamarack is about 75 yards away from Dodge Pond. The pond is a natural nesting place for loons, therefore, power boats, jet skis, and recreational vehicles (i.e. four wheelers) are all strictly prohibited. Rowboats and canoes are permitted. At the foot of the path leading to the pond is a floating platform, a great spot for shore fishing, sunbathing, and jumping in the water. The water is deep and the area is quite rocky. Children will require careful supervision and non-swimmers will require life jackets.

Tamarack is a large, charming, 3 bedroom, 1 bath cabin with a comfortable interior. Tamarack has a complete kitchen with a full size refrigerator and gas stove, and a beautiful living room with a stone fireplace. The camp does not have a phone but is now equipped with a television. Families need to provide their own food and bedding.

Eligibility Requirements: You must not own or have access to a summer camp, time-share, or RV. Also, if you have been a Tamarack winner in 2016 and 2017, we ask that you not apply. Many families want to utilize Tamarack. It is necessary that any winners who cannot attend please notify AFFM at least one week in advance.



"2018 Weeklong Summer Vacation at Tamarack Entry Form"

Name(s): _____ Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____ # of Children: _____

Please circle the weeks below that your family would be able to attend:

May 26-June 2 June 2-9 June 9-16 June 16-23 June 23-June 30 June 30-July 7

Mail Entries to: Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine 34 Main Street, Orono, ME 04473

Entries must be received by April 30, 2018. The drawing will be held May 3, 2018 and winners will be notified by phone or email by May 10, 2018.

Camp to Belong Maine

Camp to Belong Maine provides Maine siblings who have been separated by foster care/adoption and other out-of-home care, a camp week in August each summer to reconnect, strengthen their sibling bonds and to just have fun. Many siblings who have attended, and their caregivers (foster, adoptive, kinship, guardianship care) have expressed how amazing their time was at camp and the positive impact it had on their sibling relationships. CTB-Maine opened in 2004, and to date we have hosted over 600 campers and over 300 volunteer counselors.

Due to an unfortunate series of events in early 2016 our camp week was in jeopardy. However, efforts by a few determined CTB-Maine supporters and with the support of CTB-Massachusetts we were able to provide 27 Maine siblings an unforgettable week of camp. In 2017 we were not able to offer a camp week due to a lack of funding. For the past year individuals dedicated to CTB-Maine have been diligently working on our reorganization with our goal to offer a camp week as soon as finances allow. We have a new board of directors, and remain in good standing as a federal and state recognized 501 (c) (3) nonprofit charitable organization. We are actively fundraising, seeking business and corporate sponsors/donors and submitting grant funding applications. Donations are being received and sponsors are stepping up to support us. We are still in need of more funding to achieve our goal and to become sustainable.

We had two fundraising events in March 2018; March 20th from 5 to 9 at the Flatbread Company, 72 Commercial St., Old Port, Portland, and March 27th from 4 to 9 at Elsmere BBQ & Wood Grill, 448 Cottage Rd, South Portland 4 to 9 PM. *A percentage of sales at each event were donated to Camp To Belong Maine. Both events held silent auctions, and raffles with an abundance of items available.*

For more information or to donate, like us and share on Facebook, visit us at www.camptobelongme.org email us at camptobelongme@gmail.com or call 207-653-3025 to find out how you can get involved!

With much appreciation for your support of separated siblings,

Tim Swift
CTBM Board Vice President



Support Group Updates

New Richmond Support Group Facilitator!

Patty Riddle has joyfully accepted the duties of the new Richmond Support Group facilitator! Patty has a wealth of knowledge and long history of working with families and children as a foster/adoptive parent. Patty is also a mentor to new families with AFFM! Please welcome Patty to the Richmond Support Group held on the 4th Tuesday of each month 5:30-7:00PM at the Umberhine Public Library.

Facilitator for the Dover-Foxcroft Support Group needed

AFFM is currently seeking a support group facilitator for the Dover-Foxcroft support group.

We are looking for an experienced foster/adoptive/kinship parent to facilitate the support group held every 2nd Tuesday of the month at 6:00pm at Mayo Regional Hospital.

The facilitator will coordinate with AFFM for snacks, child care and the needs of the group.

A stipend is available.

Please contact Monica Bushey at monica@affm.net or [207-817-6061](tel:207-817-6061) for more information.



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 6:00 – 7:30pm 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).

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).

Richmond— A/F/K/CC: 4th Tuesday of the month from 5:30PM-7:00PM at Isaac F. Umberhine Public Library (86 Main St.)

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).

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

Wells— A/F/K/CC: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at Wells Congregational Church (1695 Post Road, Wells).

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

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SERVICES. PLEASE DIRECT

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

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OLD TOWN, ME

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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

Website: www.affm.net

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