

# Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 21 Number 12

Newsletter

December 2018

## AFFM Year in Review

It's hard to believe in just weeks it'll be 2019! Here are just a few things throughout the year that have kept AFFM very busy:

To kick off 2018, AFFM held two events during the week of February vacation. Over 80 people attended an event at Jokers in Westbrook with games, free pizza and give aways. Over 70 people attended the Bangor Brewer Bowling Lanes for food give aways and bowling.

In March, AFFM's Saco office was excited to move to a much larger space! AFFM Saco is still located at 333 Lincoln Street, however is now able to accommodate more resources and staff!

In April, AFFM held the 21st Annual Spring Conference in South Portland. On Friday, Marcus Stallworth, LMSW delivered a humorous yet informative keynote on youth in care and the impact of social media. Sue Badeau, shared her wisdom as Saturday morning's keynote on her incredible experience as a foster/adoptive/kinship parent to 22 children. Later on that day Sue provided a workshop on the importance of self care. Throughout the two days many amazing presenters from Maine rounded out the exciting and informative training event. Join AFFM for next year's conference in Bangor at the Hilton Garden Inn on April 12th, and 13th, 2019.

AFFM celebrated Foster Care Awareness Month in May with the 17<sup>th</sup> 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 21 years!

Also in June, AFFM's Saco office hosted a Family Fun Event at Ferry Beach Park in Saco and nearly 100 people were in attendance! Despite it being a very hot day, families came and enjoyed games, resources, a BBQ, face painting (thank you Tammy Cutchen and Rana O'Connor of Spurlink) and a

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

Throughout the summer over 37 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 Sheila Peakall. Thank you Sheila!

In July a special ride was held by the Raiders MC Motorcycle Group to bring awareness to Maine's youth in care as well as raise funds to help support AFFM's programs. The ride raised \$1,000 and we are very grateful!

In August AFFM held a Family Fun Day at Mantle Lake Park in Presque Isle. Thank you all who came out to celebrate with us!

AFFM finished out the busy summer by filling backpack requests for the Ready Set Go to Learn Program. AFFM was able to fill over 400 backpacks for children living with resource families statewide. 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, Meghan Painton as well as the individuals and businesses that donated their time and efforts towards this program. You are all appreciated!

In honor of Grandparent's Day in September, AFFM hosted pizza parties at the Saco office as well as Cascade Park in Bangor. Keep an eye out on list serve and the newsletter for celebrations to be held next year.

On November 15th 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 musicians, Aaron and Parker Shaw shared their special talent and sang beautiful songs to round out the event.

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.

Thank you to The Maine Red Knights Chapter IX Motorcycle Club for hosting their annual Thanksgiving dinner at Traci's Diner in Belfast. This generous event supports local families as well as collects funds for AFFM to use towards our Holiday Gift Giving Program, Ready Set Go to Learn Back to School Program and other services, as well as provide bikes to youth in care.

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. 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, board members, interns and volunteers.

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.

Travis Bryant has recently been appointed AFFM's Executive Director. Travis is very busy taking part in many committees as well as working collaboratively with the Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) to ensure AFFM is able to meet the needs of resource families and DHHS staff. Even as Executive Director, Travis is still available to provide direct support to families.

Jim Hatch continues his role as 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 continues 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.

Thank you to all of the mentors who volunteer their time to help support newly licensed families. You are very much appreciated!

Hether Anderson, Pat Tavernakis, Joy Young, Mindy Kane, Bette Hoxie, 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.

Hether Anderson joined the Saco AFFM office in March as the Resource Support Coordinator for southern Maine. Along with assisting with trainings in districts 1 and 2, Hether also coordinates support groups in southern Maine. Thank you Hether for your dedication!

Thank you to all of the southern Maine facilitators and childcare providers for the amazing work you do in making sure support groups run smoothly.

Monica Bushey is the Training Coordinator in AFFM's Orono office. Monica oversees the RFIT and Kinship trainings as well as the trainers statewide. Along with the busy task of making sure trainings are provided statewide, Monica also undertakes most of the spring conference planning, which is not an easy task! AFFM is thankful for Monica's dedication and undeniable good work!

Reba Parsons is Orono's Resource Family Specialist. Reba assists Jim in putting together the monthly and quarterly reports required by the contract. Reba does an amazing job making sure all services provided by AFFM are highlighted. Reba also assists in making sure your calls and questions are answered. Thank you Reba for all you do!

Brigid Torberg is the newest staff of AFFM's Saco office. Brigid is Saco's Resource Family Specialist and one of the friendly voices you hear when you call. Brigid is an adoptive parent and understands the complex issues most families will face. Stop by the Saco office and Brigid will be happy to assist you in the resource room! Thank you Brigid for all your incredible work!

AFFM was thrilled to welcome back Bette Hoxie in a new role as Orono's Kinship Specialist. Bette brings her wealth of knowledge and personal experience as she works closely with kinship families in northern Maine. AFFM is excited to have Bette, again!

Francie Criner is AFFM's accountant extraordinaire! Francie is an instrumental part of AFFM's team and we are lucky to have her!

Sheila Peakall is fitting in nicely to her newest position as the Resource Support Coordinator in the Orono office. Sheila now handles the support groups in northern Maine and helps coordinate special events for resource families. Thank you Sheila for all your tireless efforts! Thank you to all of the facilitators and childcare providers in northern Maine for all your amazing work!

Carey Pierson transitioned roles and is now Saco's Kinship Specialist. Carey has had a very busy year assisting kinship families in southern Maine. Carey provides warmline support, attends family team meetings and is able to meet with families at our Saco office. Thank you for all your hard work!

Holly White goes above and beyond her role as Orono's Administrative Assistant. Holly assists staff members in the Orono office and takes on each job she is given with a positive attitude. 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 did an incredible job making sure the program ran smoothly. AFFM is thankful to have Holly on our team!

Meagan Sprague is the Regional Program Manager for AFFM's Saco office. Meagan represents AFFM on several foster care related committees 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.

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!

# Preparing to Foster a Tween or Teen

Let's face it, we can never be *totally* prepared for any tween or teen. This is the stage of life where once sweet, charming, and engaging children would now rather do just about anything than have a conversation with an adult. They are changing physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially. They are developing independence and testing limits. It's a time in a youth's development when they want us the least, but need us the most. This is particularly true of youth in foster care.

Here are a few tips you might keep in mind if you are considering the life-changing, rewarding adventure of fostering older youth:



- Don't assume they know things a tween or teen should know based on their chronological age. We can't know what we were never taught. Your 15-year-old may be stuck at seven or eight emotionally and socially. Be patient in determining which skills he or she has developed, and which you need to teach.
- Be prepared to be told they know everything. Remember when you were that age? Parents knew nothing, and friends had all the answers. It can be easy to get frustrated and give up on a youth for "difficult behaviors" that are really just typical tween/teen development. Patience will go a long way.
- Establish clear household rules, boundaries, and expectations the moment he or she arrives. The youth may be coming from an environment where it wasn't understood that they knock before entering a room or are home by 10pm. Be consistent but fair in the adjustment period, keeping in mind it is developmentally appropriate for a tween or teen to push the limits a bit.
- If you want them to talk to you, try going for a drive to talk. The teen who will gulp down dinner in 13 seconds flat to avoid conversation may be much more comfortable opening up when you are sitting side by side in a car with your eyes on the road and not him.
- If the youth is coming from a chaotic environment, you have the opportunity to show her the comfort and security of a calm, structured, consistent home-life before being launched into adulthood. This may have a life-long impact.
- Understand that, for the youth who hasn't experienced a home where healthy relationships were modeled, "normal" family life in your home may feel too intimate and overwhelming. Be patient and consider that any inexplicable "pushing away" may be coming from a place of fear.
- Let them know they can talk to you about anything, and then don't freak out when they do.
- Be prepared to share one of his favorite activities with him, whether it's going to see a movie or having him explain his favorite video game. It's an opportunity to connect!
- Know that, despite it all, everyone needs to feel they belong.

Yes, fostering tweens and teens has its own unique set of challenges, but the rewards can be just as great.

*Article From: Coalition for Children, Youth & Families [coalitionforccyf.org](http://coalitionforccyf.org)*

## Would You Like to Contribute an Article to the Family Ties Newsletter?

AFFM would love to hear from you! Do you have an upcoming event or activity that you'd like to share? Are you a professional that is interested in sharing information pertaining to the child welfare system? Please send all submissions to [meagan@affm.net](mailto:meagan@affm.net) and you may be featured in an upcoming newsletter!



# Adoption Announcement!

Jessica Gleason would like to announce the adoption of her daughter (niece). It took just under 1,000 days to finalize forever. Our little Gleason girl joins her big sister (cousin), Zoey. She loves to imagine she is a mermaid princess and is often a super hero "protector" riding on unicorns. A kinship placement is nothing shy of grueling, and exhausting. DHHS reunification is nothing shy of torturous. However, the process, as difficult as it may be, is to some extent necessary. Finalizing forever must be done knowing nothing else could be done. Frequently this little girl reminded me why we were on this journey saying, "I love you because, you keep me safe." Now and forever we will continue to keep her safe.



*Have you recently legalized an adoption? Would you like 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](mailto: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!*

## New Addition to the Discount Card Program!

### Cumberland County:

#### Simply Pest Solutions

10% off all services and products!

[www.simplypestsolutions.com](http://www.simplypestsolutions.com)

Call: 330-8981 or 576-5076

Email: [simplypestsolutions@gmail.com](mailto:simplypestsolutions@gmail.com)



### Penobscot County:

#### Habitat for Humanity of Greater Bangor Restore

[www.habitatrestorebangor.org](http://www.habitatrestorebangor.org)

992-0704

378 Harlow St. Bangor

10% off your purchase



Adoptive and Foster Families  
of Maine  
Discount Card

Is Eligible for Discounts Through  
the AFFM Liaison Program  
1-800-833-9786

If you have a suggestion for a business to participate in the Discount Card Program Please Contact AFFM: [info@affm.net](mailto:info@affm.net) or 207-827-2331

## AFFM Statewide Resource Family Support Groups



*At times meetings are cancelled due to weather and other unforeseen circumstances, cancellation notices are sent out via AFFM 's email list serve and Facebook. Families are urged to call or email [info@affm.net](mailto:info@affm.net) to be added to this service. For more Information and to RSVP for the support groups please call AFFM @ 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= Childcare is available upon request**

- Auburn** – A/F/K/CC: 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at Opportunity Enterprises, *use the back door* (400 Center St. Auburn)
- Augusta** – Kinship only/CC: 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 5:30 – 8:00 pm at the Buker Community Center (22 Armory Drive) call Jan Partridge at 207-495-3864.
- Augusta** – A/F/K/CC: 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Magic Years Center (25 Industrial Drive).
- Bangor** – A/F/K/CC 2nd Tuesday of the month from 5:00-6:30pm at Redeemer Lutheran Church (540 Essex Street).
- Belfast**— A/F/K/CC: 2nd Monday of the month from 5:30-7:00pm at Christ The King Church Room 330 (9 Field Street).
- Biddeford** – Kinship only/CC: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 10:00–Noon at J Richard Martin Community Center (189 Alfred Street).
- Bridgton** – A/F/K/CC: 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at the Community Center (Behind Reny's) (15 Depot St)
- Brunswick** – A/F/K/CC: 4th Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30pm at St Paul's Episcopal Church (25 Pleasant St).
- Caribou** —A/F/K: 4th Monday of the month from 10:00am-noon at Caribou CHCS, 7 Hatch Drive #120. No RSVP needed.
- Damariscotta**— A/F/K: 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month from 5:30-7:00 PM at the Lincoln County Assembly of God Church (672 Main Street).
- Dover-Foxcroft** – A/F/K/CC: 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Mayo Regional Hospital, Borestone & Sebec conference room (897 W Main Street).
- Ellsworth** – A/F/K/CC: 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 5:30 – 7:30 pm at Moore Community Center (133 State St.)
- Farmington** – A/F/K/CC: every 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month from 6 – 7:30 pm at the Gwilym R. Roberts Learning Center (by the administration office), UMF rooms 001 and 003
- Houlton** – A/F/K: 3rd Monday of the month from 10:00am – noon at Houlton CHCS, 2 Water Street. No RSVP needed.
- Lincoln** – A/F/K/CC: 1st Thursday of the month from 6:00–7:30PM at the Community Evangel Temple (124 River Road).
- 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 (116 O'Brien Ave).
- Old Orchard Beach**— A/F/K/CC: 3rd Wednesday of the month from 5:30-6:45pm at the Edith Belle Libby Memorial Library (27 Staple Street).
- Orono** – A/F/K/CC: 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 6:00 – 7:30 pm at the Wesleyan Church (387 Centerline Road).
- 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 6:00PM-8PM at Curtis Lake Church (38 Westview Drive)
- Skowhegan**— A/F/K/CC: 2nd Thursday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at the Federate Church in the Sunday school and nursery rooms (13 Island Ave.)
- South Paris**— A/F/K/CC: 2nd Wednesday 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 Eastpoint Church (345 Clarks Pond Pkwy).
- Wells**— A/F/K/CC: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at Wells Congregational Church (1695 Post Road, Wells).

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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! Below are all the ways you can connect with AFFM and learn more about services offered.*

**Locations:** 34 Main Street, Orono, Maine

& 333 Lincoln Street, Saco. Maine

**Phone:** 207-827-2331

**Email:** [info@affm.net](mailto:info@affm.net)

**Website:** [www.affm.net](http://www.affm.net)

**Like us on Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Adoptive-and-Foster-Families-of-Maine-Inc/>

Scan to sign up for our email  
List serve



**[Save a tree, sign up for the E-Newsletter!](#)**