

Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 22

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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 and kinship families. This includes kinship families in the informal system (not working in conjunction with DHHS).

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. AFFM understands every situation in fostering, adoption and kinship care is unique and families will face challenges. AFFM strives to continue to be a resource for families and is available 24/7.

AFFM believes that Maine's children have the right to be a member of a healthy, safe and stable family.

AFFM believes that all adoptive, foster and kinship families deserve to have unconditional support to help build on their strengths and to provide the best quality home environment possible.



AFFM believes that access to services to enhance families abilities and develop new skills is imperative.

AFFM believes all families who open their homes to Maine's children deserve unbiased support.

Did You Know November is Adoption Awareness Month?

Maine continuously strives to find permanency for all youth in the foster care system.

There were exactly 300 children/youth who were adopted during the period 09/01/2018 to 08/31/2019

This included 58 sibling groups, between 2 and 5 children/youth

Of the 300 children adopted, 73 were aged 9 or older at the date of adoption.

The types of adoption - for the 300 adoptions are as follows:

- ◆ Foster Parent 162
- ◆ Recruited Adoption 28
- ◆ Relative Adoption 110

During the period of September 2018 to August 2019, 228 families adopted a child.

Check out page 5 for scheduled adoption celebrations! As always, thank you to ALL resource families who open their hearts and homes to youth in care!

Learn more about the support services AFFM offers by calling 207-827-2331 or visit www.affm.net

Feel Good Stories!



My 4 year old stayed with my sister last week. They returned her bottles and then donated the money to Winnie's Restaurant and Dairy Bar in Presque Isle. The owner of Winnie's will feed those in need who cannot afford a meal and this is the restaurant that Chase donated his bottle money to! We were so proud of him!

Submitted By: Janet Thibodeau

We received an emergency respite call on a Friday night to take 2 young boys for the weekend. The children arrived at 8:30pm. The youngest boy put his hand out and said, "Hi my name is Alvin! I'm named after the chipmunk." I immediately told the case worker I'd keep the boys. She said, "Really? You've made my job so much easier." After I had had the boys a few months One day I said, Lets go outside and sit on the front porch to which the youngest boy named Alvin said, "No thanks! I'm an indoor kid!" We laughed so hard!

Submitted By: Deb Marlowe

When asked if she understood what being adopted meant, my 5 year old daughter answered, "It means your my parents even! Duh!"

Submitted By: Christine Flaherty

AFFM is looking for "Feel Good Stories" to be featured in the next upcoming newsletter!

Do you know someone who has done something kind for another? Did you read something that made you smile? Did your child say or do something that made you laugh out loud? Email your stories to meagan@affm.net and help AFFM spread some happiness!

Meet the Amazing People Behind Xander Bunnies!

AFFM was recently approached by a foster parent who had come across the website, <https://lavender-life.com/>, she had heard about Xander Bunny and thought AFFM could somehow benefit from connecting with the Bennett's about receiving some. After a few emails back and forth, the Bennett's graciously agreed to provide Xander Bunnies to Maine's youth in care! On August 13th, after the long journey from Michigan, Vic and Vickie Bennett pulled up in front of AFFM's Saco office with a U-Haul in tow ready to unload 1300 Xander Bunnies!

Through the years, the Bennett's have been passionate about rescuing kids at risk. Their Xander Buy-A-Bunny-Give-A-Bunny idea came when their daughter and son-in-law fostered & adopted Xander (the bunny's namesake). It was so therapeutic for him! Now, as they fill each bunny, they pray for the little "Xander" that may someday receive it; they pray for families in trauma, that they can get their feet back under them; they pray for families to consider fostering to provide a safe temporary home; they pray for some to open their hearts to adopt; & they pray for the heroes on the front lines of the rescue. Together we CAN make a difference! AFFM is very grateful to have met such caring, incredible people!

If you receive a Xander Bunny through AFFM, we ask that you please send us a thank you note so we can show Vic and Vickie the difference that they've made to Maine's youth in care! Please contact Meagan if you're interested in more information about Xander Bunny.



New Discounts!

Black Bird Portraits

North Berwick 207-229-2874

Blackbirdportraits.wixsite.com/Maine

Blackbirdportraits207@gmail.com

40% discount



Possibilities

49 Main St

Lincoln, ME 04457

207-794-1000

www.possibilitiesgifts.com

\$5 off \$50 purchase excluding jewelry.

Sells all craft, home decor, candles, jewelry, and specialty items.

Belfast & Moosehead Lake Rail

www.belfastandmooseheadlakerail.org

\$2 off Adult Fare for any Train Ride



Update for Foster Homes

On June 20th Governor Janet Mills, signed into law LD 1526, An Act To Increase The Availability of Foster Homes. The law will eliminate the requirement that the State Fire Marshal inspect a family foster home and certify that it meets all elements of the fire safety code before the Department of Health and Human Services may issue a license to operate as a family foster home. The bill moves the inspection responsibility to the Department of Health and Human Services, which is directed to adopt rules governing the method of inspection.

This will go into effect on September 24, 2019.

Kinship Corner

Generations United Plays Key Role in Meetings with the Federal Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Washington, DC – There are 2.6 million children in grandfamilies (aka families where grandparents and other relatives are raising children) who are playing an increasingly important role in helping to raise America's children. Generations United is honored to be partnering on the Federal Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, recently established by law. **Jaia Peterson Lent**, deputy executive director at Generations United, has been selected as Council co-chair.

"I am honored to serve with such a prestigious and dedicated group of individuals to address the important needs of grandfamilies and the children who thrive in their care," Lent explained. "The inclusion of grandparents and other relative caregivers on the Council will be vital to the successful outcome of our work together."

The Advisory Council — established by the Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act — held its first meeting the week of August 28-29.

"Generations United congratulates the Administration for Community Living and Administrator Lance Robertson for their support of grandfamilies," said **Donna Butts**, executive director of Generations United. "Establishing and facilitating the Council's endeavors can result in giant steps forward on behalf of these important families. We are proud to support this work."

In addition to Lent, five Generations United's GRAND Voices Members will be serving: **Sarah Smalls** - Virginia; **Bette Hoxie** - Maine; **Gail Engel** - Colorado; **Sonya Begay**, Navajo (Dine') - Maryland; and **Sharon Olson** - Minnesota. **Ana Beltran**, Generations United's longtime special adviser to the National Center on Grandfamilies, will also be presenting at the Council's first meeting along with other experts.

The Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act recognizes that grandfamilies would benefit from improved coordination of resources intended to support them, as well as better dissemination of information about those resources.

The Advisory Council will identify, promote, coordinate, and disseminate to the public information, resources, and the best practices available to help grandparents and other relatives both meet the needs of the children in their care; and maintain their own physical and mental health and emotional well-being.

About Generations United

For over three decades, Generations United has been the catalyst for policies and practices stimulating cooperation and collaboration among generations, evoking the vibrancy, energy and sheer productivity that result when people of all ages come together. We believe that we can only be successful in the face of our complex future if generational diversity is regarded as a national asset and fully leveraged. The National Center on Grandfamilies is a critical part of Generations United's mission and strives to enact policies and promote programs that support relative caregivers and the children they raise. www.gu.org

AFFM is excited to see what supports the Advisory Council will bring to kinship families and is honored to have Bette Hoxie represent Maine!

Grandfamilies Leadership Program

The University of Maine Center on Aging is pleased to once again offer an online certificate program for professionals and volunteers who work with grandfamily caregivers. The online Certificate in Grandfamilies Leadership Program provides core education, technical support, and leadership development for professionals delivering grandfamily and kinship programming across the country.

Registration is now open! Space is limited, and participation is on a first come first served basis, so please visit www.kinshipcert.org and register now. Registration will be capped to allow participants the opportunity for online discussion with colleagues in the field.

The course will begin on Monday, September 30th

Participants will complete the 9 modules over a 12-week period.

The course closes on December 22, 2019



Updates to the Laws on Child Safety Seats



A child should ride rear-facing until a minimum of 2 years old. If a child is heavier or taller than allowed by their rear-facing or convertible car seat manufacturer guidelines, the child may then transition to a forward-facing car seat with a 5-point harness. The 55-pound weight limit is intended to be used as a guide. Most car seat manufacturers now make a 5-point harness system that will hold a child weighing between 55-80 pounds. This is the industry trend. While 55 pounds was written into law, the law also states child safety seats must be used in accordance with the manufacturers' instructions. If a child's height is over the seat's height limit, then the seat cannot be used; the child may transition to a booster seat. Most belt positioning booster seats require the child to be a minimum of 3 or 4 years old before use without a harness, regardless of weight or height. Booster seat laws essentially remained unchanged.

The updates to the laws will go in effect September 19, 2019.

Let's Celebrate!

**Join OCFS for an Adoption
Awareness Celebration at the
Hall of Flags!**

When: Friday November 1st

Time: 9AM-11AM

Location: Maine State House
Augusta

Attendees will enjoy live entertainment, guest speakers, craft tables and snacks!

AFFM will host the Annual Blaine House Tea

**Friday November 22nd from
2:00PM-3:30PM**

An invitation will be extended to families who have recently adopted. Attendees will enjoy tea and snacks followed by guest speakers.

*Space is limited for this event
and therefore is by invite only.*

**Join AFFM's Orono Office for
the Annual Holiday Party!**

When: Sunday December 1st

Time: 11:00AM-3:00PM

Location: Bangor Ramada Inn
347 Odlin Road, Bangor

*More information to come
via Listserv!*

**Join AFFM's Saco Office for the
Annual Holiday Party!**

When: Saturday December 7th

Time: 1:00PM-3:00PM

Location: Eastpoint
345 Clarks Pond Pkwy, South
Portland

*More information to come
via Listserv!*

Adoption Announcements!



The Watson-Todd's are happy to announce the adoption of their Daughter Allie Rose Watson-Todd!



William and Caitlin Kilpatrick are delighted to announce the adoption of their girls, Ava and Mayah. The process was legalized on July 3, 2019 in a joint adoption hearing with the girls' two other birth siblings and their adoptive parents.



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.

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!

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine and the Kinship Program will continue taking holiday requests until November 21st for the Holiday Gift Giving Program! Resource families are invited to add the children in their care 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 gifts to kids in AFFM programs. Give the office a call at 827-2331 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.

AFFM will take requests until November 21st. The deadline is in place in order for gifts to be collected and delivered to pick up locations in a timely manner. We ask that you get your requests in as early as possible.

AFFM Statewide 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 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 PG= Permanency Guardianship CC= Childcare

Auburn— A/F/K/CC: 4th 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: 3rd Wednesday of the month from 5:30 – 8:00 pm at the Augusta Elks Lodge (397 Civic Center Dr.) call Jan Partridge at 207-495-3864. A potluck is provided at this group.

Augusta— A/F/K/CC: 1st Wednesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Magic Years Center (25 Industrial Drive).

Augusta-- A/PG/CC: 2nd Friday of the month from 6:00-7:30 pm at the Buker Community Center (22 Armory Street).

Bangor— A/PG/CC: 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30 PM at the 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: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 10:00–Noon at J Richard Martin Community Center (189 Alfred Street).

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)

Brunswick— A/F/K/CC: 4th Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30pm at St Paul's Episcopal Church (27 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: 1st 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: 2nd 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: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 5:30 – 7:30 pm at Moore Community Center (133 State St.)

Farmington— A/F/K/CC: every 3rd 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 Obrien Ave).

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 6:00 – 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.)

Rumford— A/F/K/CC: 3rd Thursday of the month from 6-7:30PM at the Rumford Public Library (56 Rumford Ave.)

Sanford— A/F/K/CC: 3rd Wednesday of the month from 6:00PM-8PM at Curtis Lake Church (38 Westview Drive)

Scarborough— Kinship Only: 4th Wednesday of the month from 1:00PM-2:00PM at SMAA (136 US Rte 1)

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 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: 4th Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at Wells Congregational Church (1695 Post Road).

Windham—A/PG/CC: 4th Thursday of the month from 6-7:30pm at the Windham Assembly of God (1050 Roosevelt Trail).

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.
34 Main Street, Orono, ME 04473

Phone: (207) 827-2331
Fax: (207) 889-6978
On the Web: www.affm.net
E-Mail: info@affm.net

Affiliated With:
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National Foster Parent Association
Generations United

Partnering With: Department of Health and Human Services

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NON-PROFIT

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

ORONO, ME



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

Website: www.affm.net

Like us on Facebook:

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

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