

Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 23

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May/June 2020

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 May is National Foster Care Month?

In honor of National Foster Care Month, AFFM is excited to announce that during the month of May, families who attend a C.A.R.E.S. Meeting via zoom will be entered into a raffle to win a basket originally meant for the silent auction held at the annual conference.

C.A.R.E.S. Meetings list can be found on page 7 of the newsletter as well as at www.affm.net. Notices for C.A.R.E.S. Meetings are shared via AFFM's Listserv and Facebook page.

We look forward to "seeing" you all!

For the most up to date information on services and supports offered follow AFFM on Facebook:

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

Join AFFM's email list serv: <https://www.affm.net/affms-mailing-list-subscription/>

Foster Care Awareness Bingo!

Follow: "A Family for ME" on Facebook.	Download: Foster Strong App (through Google)	Visit: Fosterclub.com to read "How Covid Impacts Older Youth."	Write: to Congress or Attend a Virtual Town Hall Meeting.	Share: this bingo activity on your own social media.
Read: a book that talks about foster care.	Thank: a social worker/ related field.	Register: for Camp 2 Belong's 5K (It's in october)	Follow: "Together We Rise" on Facebook.	Write/Sing/ or Draw: something related to foster care awareness.
Visit: ylat.org and nominate a Friend of Youth in Care for YLAT's annual conference	Watch: Instant Family or another related movie.	FREE	Share: a quote or statistic about foster care on your social media.	Donate: any amount of \$ to any foster care organization.
Listen: to a podcast or video about foster youth.	Talk: about foster care with a friend or family member.	Persuade: a friend to join in this bingo activity!	Purchase: a \$5 Friendship bracelet from Fosterclub.com	Ask: to see the Maine Results Count PowerPoint email meagan@affin.net
Research: what a CASA/GAL is.	Follow: "Camp to Belong Maine" on Facebook.	Thank: a foster parent.	Explore: the Opportunity Passport Program in Maine	Follow: "Adoptive & Foster Families of Maine Inc." on Facebook.

- ♦ Share pictures of completed tasks on Facebook with the hashtags #fosterbingo & #fostercareawareness
- ♦ Get creative, have fun, and raise some awareness for our friends in foster care!

Thank you Mariah Knight for creating the bingo awareness board and spreading the word about foster care during the month of May and beyond!



Southern Maine Foster Family Recruitment Team



Open your heart.
Open your home.

Become a foster parent.

A Family
for ME

A Family for ME
844-893-6311
afamilyformemaine.org



Adoptive & Foster Families
of Maine, Inc.
800-833-9786
www.affm.net



Community Health
and Counseling Services
854-0122
www.chcs-me.org



KidsPeace Foster Care
and Community Programs
771-5700
www.fostercare.com



SMART
Child and Family Services
893-0386
www.smartcfs.org



Spurwink
Treatment Foster Care
871-1200
spurwink.org/fostercare



Woodfords Family Services
878-9663
www.woodfords.org



Maine Department of
Health and Human Services
624-5276
www.maine.gov/dhhs

LEARN MORE ABOUT FOSTER CARE

Call **844-893-6311** or one of the agencies listed above. Foster parents are reimbursed for some expenses. Children's medical and dental care is also covered.

The Southern Maine Foster Family Recruitment Team, SMFFRT, is a collaboration of the Department of Health and Human Services, Community Health and Counseling Services, KidsPeace, Spurwink, Woodfords Family Services, SMART Child and Family Services, A Family for ME, and Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine. SMFFRT works together to raise awareness of the need for foster homes and provide training to existing foster families. Keep an eye out for upcoming training! Training announcements are sent via AFFM's listserv as well as private agencies email listings.

Adoption Announcements!

Congratulations to the Myers' family on the adoption of their daughter Marigold Grace Myers on April 30, 2020!



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!

Feel Good Stories!



**On April 23rd
we celebrated
our one year
anniversary for
sister day (aka
adoption day)
for Neala and
Aurora!**

*Submitted By:
Gwen McInnes*



Thank you to Local s7, International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers AFL-CIO and Bath Iron Works for collecting over \$1,000 for Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine at the Gate Collection in March.



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!



Kinship Care During COVID-19, How Are You Doing?

Being a traditional foster parent has its struggles as do all types of parenting. However, parenting for the second or third time around as a grandparent/ great grandparent is not a planned event. Retirement plans go by the wayside and any financial resources that may have been saved for a rainy day are now used to provide for the unplanned expenses in raising your grandchild/ children. Now comes a pandemic! What to do now? What are the plans for the big what ifs?

Am I vulnerable due to high blood pressure, asthma, diabetes, autoimmune disease, etc.?

I am in my 70's, how do I keep myself and the children safe?

What if I get the virus?

What if I am hospitalized?

Who will care for the children?

Food supplies are limited. How do I get groceries and remain a safe distance away from potentially infected people? Who will watch the children while I do the necessary shopping?

I have family members who will shop for me but they do not observe safe distancing.

My grandchild has Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and had challenging behaviors before the shutdown. Now he is off the wall!

My grandchild's mother is upset because visits are only by phone and her two-year-old says "Hi" and "Bye bye." She gets angry that she has so little time and tells me it is my fault as I just want to keep her child away from her.

My grandson's grandparent died and there is no easy way to explain the he will never see him again.

The kids are home and I have no clue about modern math. How do I help?

I do not have internet and the kids need to use the net for school assignments and meetings with their teachers!

I do have internet but I am not technology smart and I am unsure if my pre-teens are on appropriate internet sites.

These are just a few of the comments that kinship caregivers have shared in the past two months.

All of these are justified and very real concerns. The AFFM staff is working daily to respond to the ever growing number of questions. All of the AFFM staff are working from their homes at this time. Many of the questions that I have listed are shared also by the AFFM staff. There is no easy road map to navigate these questions. However, Kinship Supervisor Bette Hoxie (bette@affm.net) and Kinship Specialist Carey Pierson (carey@affm.net) are available to respond to your questions. As kinship navigators it is our job to seek answers for your many unique and very personal questions. AFFM is very aware that this is a difficult time for everyone, and we are navigating uncharted courses. We are in this together and will continue to respond to the best of our abilities and to make referrals when needed.

Stimulus Checks: Who Is Eligible and How Much Will They Be?

AFFM has received some questions around stimulus checks such as who is eligible and when they will receive payment? Below is information that will hopefully answer some of the posed questions.

The legislation will give single adults who reported adjusted gross income of \$75,000 or less on their 2019 tax returns a one-time check for \$1,200. Married couples who filed jointly will receive \$2,400. Families will get an additional \$500 for each child under 17. According to the IRS, Social Security recipients and railroad retirees who weren't required to file federal tax returns for 2018 or 2019 will receive \$1,200 stimulus payments automatically based on information contained in their "1099" benefit statements. No additional paperwork is required, per the latest guidance from the IRS. Stimulus payments will also go out automatically to Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) recipients who were not required to file tax returns for 2018 or 2019. Like Social Security beneficiaries, SSDI beneficiaries also receive SSA-1099 benefits statements every January, which the IRS will use to send the payments. For everyone else who was not required to file 2018 or 2019 tax returns, and who are not Social Security recipients, SSDI recipients, VA beneficiaries, or railroad retirees, the [IRS has created a free, online tool](#) you can use to quickly register to receive your stimulus payment if you don't typically file a tax return due to your income level. People who may fall into this category include some low-income workers. The IRS started sending out stimulus payments in mid-April. You may check on the status of your stimulus payment by [using this IRS website](https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/get-my-payment), (<https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/get-my-payment>)

Information from: <https://www.aarp.org/politics-society/advocacy/info-2020/coronavirus-stimulus-checks.html>. Click to read the full article and for more information around stimulus checks.

Helpful Resources/Updates

The link below highlights free online training offered from outside organizations along with training put on by AFFM. This list will be updated often, so check back. If you know of any training being offered that you feel should be added, please email monica@affm.net

*To view training offered by AFFM and other free online training, visit
www.affm.net/services/training/*

Teen Resources for Things to Do and Support While Social Distancing

There are so many lists of suggested activities for families and children out there, but many of them are geared towards younger children or families with younger children. AFFM wanted to compile a list of online activities and supports geared specifically towards teenagers! If you have suggestions to add to this list, please email them to Brigid at Brigid@affm.net.

[List of Supports For Teens Link](#)

If you receive a hardcopy of the newsletter and do not have access to the internet, please call AFFM at 827-2331 to receive a printout of the linked materials.

SAVE THE DATE for the 30th Annual Teen Conference!



30 Years! Won't Stop Believing!

Saturday, September 26, 2020

USM - Lewiston-Auburn Campus, 51 Westminster St., Lewiston ME., 04240

Visit YLAT.ORG and Facebook.com/MaineYLAT for more information.

Have Fun!

Meet New People!

See Old Friends!

Learn New Skills!

A day devoted to Maine's Foster Youth and those that support them!



AFFM C.A.R.E.S. Meetings Now Offered Online During the Month of May and June!

AFFM is aware if you receive the printed version of the newsletter some dates listed below may have passed. Please know the groups will continue to meet on a rotating schedule. Please email Sheila@affm.net or hether@affm.net if you have questions.

(C.A.R.E.S. Meetings will resume normal meeting dates and times after the social distancing order has been lifted.)

Dial in from anywhere using your phone or computer. Connect with other adoptive, foster, and kinship families.

Receive support in how to handle complex situations. Share your expertise in an effort to help others.

Receive Information and support to help better understand DHHS rules/expectations.

Learn about programs and resources. Receive information on training and important topics.

STATEWIDE C.A.R.E.S. MEETING: TUESDAY MAY 12TH & JUNE 9TH TIME: 1:00PM-2:00PM

Southern Maine C.A.R.E.S. Meetings for May and June:

Counties that have multiple groups scheduled throughout the month will have two options to sign on.

York County: Wednesday May 20th Time: 6:30-7:30PM, Tuesday May 26th Time: 10-11AM, Wednesday June 17th Time: 6:30-8PM, Tuesday June 23rd Time: 10-11AM

Cumberland/Sagadahoc County: Wednesday May 6th Time: 7-8PM, Monday May 18th Time: 1-2PM, Thursday May 28th Time: 1-2PM (For Permanency Guardianship/Adoptive families), Monday June 1st Time: 1-2PM, Friday June 12th Time: 7-8PM, Thursday June 25th Time: 7-8PM (For Permanency Guardianship/Adoptive families)

Androscoggin County: Tuesday May 26th Time: 7:00PM-8:00PM and Monday June 22nd Time: 1-2PM

Oxford County: Thursday May 14th Time: 7:00PM-8:00PM and Tuesday June 16th Time: 1-2PM

Franklin County: Friday May 8th Time: 10-11AM and Thursday June 4th Time: 7-8PM

Notices regarding C.A.R.E.S. Meetings are sent out via AFFM's email listserv. Please make sure you are signed up to receive emails from AFFM. RSVPs are required to obtain login information. Any questions or comments please email hether@affm.net

Northern Maine C.A.R.E.S. Meetings for May and June:

Counties that have multiple groups scheduled throughout the month will have two options to sign on.

Aroostook County: Tuesday May 19th Time: 3-4:30PM Tuesday June 16th Time: 3-4:30PM

Hancock County: Tuesday May 19th Time: 5:30-7PM Wednesday June 17th Time: 5:30-7PM

Kennebec County: Wednesday May 6th Time: 6-7:30PM and Wednesday May 20th Time: 6-7:30PM Wednesday June 3rd Time: 6-7:30PM, Tuesday June 16th Time: 6-7:30PM (For Permanency Guardianship/Adoptive families)

Knox/Lincoln County: Tuesday May 5th Time: 5:30-7PM, Wednesday May 13th Time: 5-6:30PM Tuesday June 2nd Time: 5:30-7PM, Wednesday June 10th Time: 5-6:30PM

Penobscot County: Monday May 18th Time: 6-7:30PM and Tuesday May 12th Time: 6-7:30PM, Monday June 15th Time: 6-7:30PM, Tuesday June 9th Time: 6-7:30PM (For Permanency Guardianship/Adoptive families)

Piscataquis County: Thursday May 14th Time: 6-7:30PM Thursday June 11th Time: 6-7:30PM

Somerset County: Thursday May 14th Time: 7:45-9PM Thursday June 11th Time: 7:45-9PM

Washington County: Thursday May 21st Time: 5:30-7PM and Thursday May 28th Time: 6-7:30PM (Kinship Only) Thursday June 18th Time: 6-7:30PM Wednesday June 25th Time: 6-7:30PM (kinship only)

Notices regarding C.A.R.E.S. Meetings are sent out via AFFM's email listserv. Please make sure you are signed up to receive emails from AFFM. RSVPs are required to obtain login information. Any questions or comments please email sheila@affm.net

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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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**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: 304 Hancock Street Suite 2A, Bangor, ME 04401
333 Lincoln Street, Saco. Maine 04072

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!](#)