

A close-up photograph of several ripe, red strawberries with green leaves, filling the top portion of the page.

Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 23

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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.

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc. & The Kinship Program (AFFM) understand that there are many changes to your everyday life during these uncertain times. AFFM staff is still available from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30p.m. Monday through Friday to discuss and talk about the challenges that come with being an adoptive, foster, or kinship parent. AFFM offices are currently closed to the public but can set up times for resource families to pick up material goods. AFFM has compiled a variety of supports and resources for parents and youth to utilize here: <https://www.affm.net/2020/05/covid-19-response/>.

AFFM has also shifted to offer training and C.A.R.E.S. meetings virtually. You can RSVP to attend a virtual group or talk to a family support specialist by calling 207-827-2331.

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/>

Online Training Opportunities!

Resource Families looking to complete training hours for re-licensing can now sign up through FosterParentCollege.com for free! These trainings are done on your own time! See the instructions below to request an account today!

If you prefer webinars, check out www.affm.net/training for the most up-to-date listing!



FOSTERPARENTCOLLEGE.COM®

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine Inc. and FosterParentCollege.com®

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine Inc. (AFFM) is providing parents with free access to FosterParentCollege.com (FPC) online training! FPC's interactive online courses explore practical parenting strategies, behavior problems, and emotional disorders in children. Parents can complete courses on FPC to receive credit towards their annual training requirements.

To gain access to your own individual training account, please follow the instructions below:

1. Click on the following link: [Maine Registration](#).
2. Select your county from drop down menu.
3. Click on **Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine**.
4. Select **Request Registration**.

Note: Your registration request will be emailed to AFFM staff. Once registered, you will receive a welcome email with your log in information.

5. Click the following link to log in: [FPC Login](#).
6. Enter in your email address and password.

AFFM Contact

If you have any questions about using FPC or have any issues with registration, please contact:

Monica Bushey – Training Coordinator
email: Monica@affm.net | phone: (207) 827-2331

Ready Set Go To Learn (RSGTL)!

AFFM is aware of how challenging this past school year has been for families due to Covid-19 and finishing the year remotely. It is our goal to make the next upcoming school year, whatever it may bring, go as smoothly as possible.



The RSGTL is a program designed to assist families who would struggle otherwise purchasing back to school items for the children in their care. RSGTL provides a new backpack, grade-appropriate school supplies, personal care items and when available, a new outfit*.

The program serves children in grades kindergarten (age 5) to senior year of high school. If you feel you will need assistance this upcoming school year, please email meagan@affm.net if you are in southern Maine and sheila@affm.net if you are in northern Maine.

We will be happy to take your request and fill a backpack to the best of our abilities. Please have your request in no later than Friday July 31st.

****Please note, AFFM's RSGTL relies heavily on donations to fill the backpacks. You may not receive all the items you requested.***

Adoption Announcements!



"We would like to share our celebration of the adoption of Aiden and Charlie Carroll! After 3 years in foster care, these two darling brothers have found their forever home with us and we couldn't be more grateful to God and to all of the people supporting us along the way. Aiden is 6 and loves police rescue vehicles, drawing and dancing! Charlie just turned 4 and can't get enough sports, fishing and bike time! First, second and forever families are part of their story now and we wish them all the joy and happiness they deserve."

James and Jodi Carroll

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!

New Discount in Kennebec County!



Gingersnaps Consignment
100 Western Ave. Suite B, Augusta
207-213-6075
Nikki.gingersnaps@gmail.com
20% off discount

If you have a suggestion for a business or organization that AFFM can approach to participate in the discount card program, please email info@affm.net. You can also print off and send a completed business application form to 304 Hancock St. Suite 2A Bangor, ME 04401. Forms can be found at www.affm.net

Updates on Passes

AFFM is excited to announce families are now able to use the discount card as admissions into the children's museums and now the Maine Wildlife Park!

It is important that you call AFFM at 827-2331 with the date you wish to visit a museum or the wildlife park as it's still required only one resource family attends per day. Your AFFM Discount Card can be used as your pass for up to 6 people for a day's visit to the children's museums.

**Note, the Children's Discovery Museum in Augusta is closed and plans to reopen in Waterville. Please visit <http://www.childrensdiscoverymuseum.org/> for more information.*

State park passes are still available to licensed foster homes. If you are interested in receiving a state park pass please contact AFFM. We ask that you have your foster care Id number (found on your license), readily available.

AFFM will **not** have discounted passes to York's Wild Kingdom this year. As businesses are attempting to adjust to a new norm, York's Wild Kingdom will only be opening the zoo at a discounted price. As they approach what would be their busiest time of the year, this closure will have a significant financial impact on York's Wild Kingdom and they are unable to provide a donation.

Please note, due to Covid-19, the museums, York's Wild Kingdom, and the Maine Wildlife Park will have new protocols in place for your safety. Please visit their websites for further information.

As always, thank you to the Children's Discovery Museum in Waterville, Maine Discovery Museum in Bangor, Children's Museum and Theatre of Maine in Portland, and the Coastal Children's Museum in Rockland, the Maine Wildlife Park, York's Wild Kingdom, and Maine state parks for your continued support!

Kinship



Corner

Grandparents and other kinship caregivers, are you aware that decisions are being made right now regarding how the next round of funds pertaining to COVID 19 are being considered?

Are you concerned that you as a kinship grandfamily, you may be left out of the equation?

If so now is the time to speak up. Call your Senators and Congressmen. Tell them your special story. Let them know how the pandemic has affected you, the children in your care and their parents.

Have visits been difficult and/or curtailed? How does this affect the children, your schedule and the parents efforts? Are you a senior citizen caring for a grandchild or another relative's child and additionally caring for an aging parent? Do you have difficulty accessing food for you and your family? Have you suffered the loss of a job and income? Are you struggling to help the kids keep up with such work as we shelter in place?

All these questions and more concern kinship families. This is a time when many issues are on the table. If you believe kinship caregivers should be compensated in some way during this unique and challenging time let your concerns be heard.

<https://legislature.maine.gov/senate-home-page/find-your-state-senator>

AFFM is proud to announce that they have been awarded a direct service grant from the John T Gorman Foundation to help enhance the services provided by The Kinship Program. The Gorman Foundation and The Kinship Program both value the importance of family connections and the vital role that kinship families provide for the children in their care. The Kinship program has knowledgeable and empathetic staff that can help connect kinship families with a variety of supports and services. AFFM's Kinship Specialists are certified grandfamily leaders and can assist families in navigating an array of systems that can be often difficult to manage when trying to provide day to day care for the children in their home and their families divided loyalties. If you are a kinship family or know of a kinship family in your community and are wondering "what should I do" or "who can help", please contact one of our kinship specialists, and they will be happy to assist you.

Feel Good Stories!



Dear Foster Family
my name is silas a boy scout
with Troop 24 I helped my
family become a foster a
foster family we got to love 4
children and we adopted my little
brother.
I know foster care can be hard
so I hope that these activity
bags can help ease you into it.
Silas.

Thank you to Silas, a boy scout with Troop 24, for collecting items and making up 20 activity bags for children coming into care. "I know foster care can be hard so I hope that these activity bags can help ease you into it."

Thank you again Silas for this kind gesture!

In October of 2019, I took custody of my 4-year-old 2nd cousin who was living in not the best conditions.

He has such a sweet-heart and is incredibly grateful for every little thing. Well, flash to COVID-19 changing the life he had JUST started settling into...no more school, routine, etc.

My 4-year-old nephew has been staying with us since the quarantine because his early learning center is closed. The boys now share a room. The other night, my nephew, Jacob, could not sleep and was a little fussy. I snuck a peek into the room to see my sweet-hearted little guy, Bud, sitting up in his bed and reassuring his cousin and singing him a lullaby. My nephew went right to sleep!

Absolutely precious!

Submitted By: Angela Frost

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!

C.A.R.E.S.

Connecting. Advice. Resources. Education. Support

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

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 JULY 14TH & AUGUST 11TH TIME: 1:00PM-2:00PM

Southern Maine C.A.R.E.S. Meetings for July and August:

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

District 1 (York County): Wednesday July 15th 6:30-8PM, Tuesday July 28th 10-11:30AM, Wednesday August 19th 6:30-8PM, Tuesday August 25th 10-11:30AM

District 2 (Cumberland/Sagadahoc County): Monday July 6th 1-2:30PM, Friday July 10th 7-8:30PM, Thursday July 23rd 1-2:30PM (*For Permanency Guardianship/Adoptive families*), Monday August 3rd 1-2:30PM, Friday August 7th 7-8:30PM, Thursday August 27th 1-2:30PM (*For Permanency Guardianship/Adoptive families*)

District 3 (Androscoggin/Franklin/Oxford County): Thursday July 9th 7-8:30PM, Tuesday July 21st 1-2:30PM, Thursday August 6th 7-8:30PM, Tuesday August 18th 1-2:30PM.

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 July and August:

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

District 4 (Knox/Lincoln/Waldo county): Wednesday July 8th 5-6:30PM and Wednesday August 12th 5-6:30PM

District 5 (Kennebec/Somerset county): Wednesday July 1st 6-7:30PM and Wednesday August 5th 6-7:30PM

District 6 (Penobscot/Piscataquis county): Monday July 20th 6-7:30PM and Monday August 17th 6-7:30PM

District 7 (Hancock/Washington county): Wednesday July 22nd 5:30-7PM and Tuesday August 18th 5:30-7PM

****Kinship Only:** Thursday July 23rd 6-7:30PM and Thursday August 27th 6-7:30PM

District 8 (Aroostook county): Tuesday July 28th 3-4:30PM and Tuesday August 25th 3-4:30PM

****Kinship Only:** Thursday July 16th 7:30-9PM and Thursday August 27th 6-7:30PM

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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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!](#)