

A close-up photograph of several ripe, orange pumpkins with green stems, filling the top half of the page.

Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 23

Number 10

October 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 AFFM has a Mentor Service?

The Resource Mentor Service is a support to help Resource Families get accustomed to their new role. New adoptive, foster and kinship families receive direct support, encouragement, and guidance from their more experienced peers.

The Resource Parent Mentor is there to support, encourage, and inform new and current resource families how to partner effectively with DHHS, inform the family of resources and community support that will strengthen and preserve the family, promote the importance of continuing education, and provide the direct link to AFFM.

Interested in being matched with a mentor or becoming a mentor?

Call AFFM at 827-2331

For the most up to date information on services and supports offered follow AFFM on Facebook and join AFFM's email list serv:
www.affm.net

Angels in Adoption® Award!

Since its inception in 1999, the Angels in Adoption® Program has upheld a tradition of celebrating the extraordinary efforts of individuals, couples, families, and organizations who work tirelessly to advocate for children in need of a family. Throughout the 21 years, over 2,700 Angels have received this special honor. CCAI also awards a select number of National Angels in Adoption® honorees. As the name implies, these are individuals whose contributions in the fields of adoption or foster care have an impact on a national scale.



Angels in Adoption®

AFFM is excited to announce their own, Heather Crooker and her husband Mike as a 2020 Angels in Adoption® Honoree!



Family has always been the most important aspect of Heather's life. At twelve years old, she decided that adoption would play a role in her own family's story someday. She and her husband, Mike have been strong advocates for adoption in their community since adopting their youngest daughter, Sophie in 2007. As an interracial family, Heather, Mike and their three children, Mikayla, Jack and Sophie are passionate about diversity and inclusion in all areas of their lives. The Crooker's love to share their family story and serve as a resource and support to other adoptive and interracial families in their community. Heather and Mike feel that parenthood is the most rewarding and fulfilling experience of their lives. They are so proud of their family, grown with love.

AFFM's New Guidelines for Donations

AFFM continues to follow guidelines set in place by the CDC for the safety of our staff and families. As AFFM continues to work remotely, it is a challenge to accept, sort and organize donations. With that said, AFFM will begin accepting donations by appointment only so we can assure a staff member is available at our office. AFFM can accept up to two bags of items at this time as we do not have the capacity to sort and organize.

AFFM Can Accept the Following Items:

- ◆ Kids clothing, boys & girls size infant to teen in good wearable condition
- ◆ All sizes & gender of shoes in good wearable condition
- ◆ Gently Used or New Winter clothing, jackets, snow pants, boots, hats, and mittens/gloves in good wearable condition
- ◆ New Bedding



ALL Items Must Be Washed and Cleaned. Please take the time to wash and thoughtfully sort through your donations, otherwise we will not be able to accept them. PLEASE NO faded, piling, torn, stained or inappropriate clothing. Thank you for all the lovingly sorted and washed donations you bring to us, we do our best to make sure they reach children in care.

Please Do Not Leave Donations Outside the Office. Please Call and Make an Appointment for Donation Drop Off.

Update on Holiday Gift Giving Program

AFFM is currently taking requests for the 2020 Holiday Gift Giving Program. Resource families are invited to add their children to a wish list for holiday gifts.

The amazing people from the Ogunquit Spirit of Giving Committee will once again sponsor kids in AFFM's Holiday Gift Giving Program. Due to COVID-19, The Spirit of Giving asks for requests be in the form of gift cards. Please specify which store you'd like a gift card to.



Give the office a call at 827-2331 and have your child's information and gift wish ready. Gifts will be up to \$50.00 per child.

AFFM understands this year may be more difficult for families. Requests will be filled to the best of our ability and our sponsors. AFFM will take requests until Friday, November 20th.

Join Friday with Friends!

Grab your favorite cup of coffee and join other adoptive parents to chat about the joys of family life! This is a great opportunity to catch up with friends and have some much needed down time at the end of a busy week.

Dates: October 23, 2020 & November 27, 2020

Time: 6:00AM-7:00AM

Please email Heather at heatherc@affm.net to RSVP. A zoom link will be sent the day before each group.



Feel Good Stories!

We went to lunch with my two year old grandson the other day. Much like most two year olds, he was getting very impatient while waiting for the food to arrive.

He has recently discovered all the favorite songs on YouTube such as ABC's, Baby Shark, Old MacDonald, BINGO.

My husband gets YouTube up on his phone and begins to look for videos. He finds one called Techno Chicken.

It is a video, of real live chickens dancing on a disco floor, disco ball and all. My baby boy started laughing, you know the laughter that comes from his toes and bubbles out of his mouth.

We all started laughing with him, along with everyone that was within hearing distance of him. This boy makes me smile every single day!

Submitted By: Wendy Taggart



Makes you feel great when your child comes home from school and says thank you for teaching me manners. Submitted By: Hope Hoyt

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!

New Discount in Kennebec County!

Tots 2 Teens

599 Maine Avenue Unit #4
Farmingdale Maine 04344
207-592-4782

Facebook: tots2teensme
Instagram: tots2teensme
20% off

Tots 2 Teens

Adoption Announcements!

The Rowe Family is over the moon excited to announce the adoption of Stanwood. He brings so much joy and love to our beautiful family. The road was long and windy, but the views were always beautiful in their own way. We are happy to have made it to our final destination.



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!

Kinship Corner

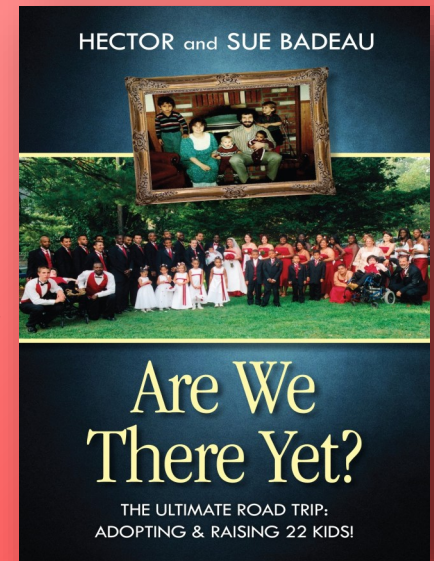
Adoption in Kinship Care

Adoption means, being with people who believe in you, are committed to you and will be there for you always, forever and no matter what. This will be just as true when you are 34 or 64 as it is when you are 4 or 14 years old. Every child, and indeed, every adult, needs relational permanency to be safe, to grow, to heal from any history of trauma, to cope with new challenges faced throughout life and to thrive across all domains of life: mentally, emotionally, socially, physically and spiritually. Kinship families are fundamentally pre-disposed to provide this deep, abiding relational permanency for the children in their extended family circle. Legally adopting the child in their care enriches and strengthens this connection by ensuring that the child has not only relational, but also legal permanency. Legal permanency stabilizes the family relationship, removes the necessity of continuous government involvement (or intrusion) in the family life and provides the entire family unit with recognized status in the community. Legal permanency tells medical providers, schools, and other entities: this is a family, full stop. No "ifs, ands or buts" as my own grandmother would have said.

Kinship adoption provides children with the benefit of both relational and legal permanency. In the eyes of the law, it is equal to and as impermeable as other adoptions from foster care, from private adoption agencies or even from overseas. In every form of adoption, everyone's role changes. The role changes, and emotional challenges associated with these changes, are unique, however, for kinship families.

Some of the interesting things to think about are, how will you explain your new title and will you ask the children to call you, Mom and Dad or continue to call you what they had before the adoption was legalized? There is no wrong answer. If you and the children agree to your titles that is what it will be. For young children, the names may change as the children acclimate themselves to the adoption and or attend school and want to be more like their peers. If names and other aspects of adoption become challenging as they frequently do, do not hesitate to reach out for help. It is not a sign of failing your children or that you cannot do what you committed to do. Children with early trauma need lots of support and getting family counseling is essential. Reach out to AFFM as support groups, mentors and training in specific areas may help a lot. Reach out early. Do not wait for a crisis to seek help. We are there for you!

Thank you to my friend, Sue Badeau for her part in this article! If you want a good read about adoption see her book; *Are We There Yet?*



Have a Question or Concern Related to Kinship Care? Reach Out to Your Local Kinship Specialist!

Kinship Supervisor Bette Hoxie bette@affm.net (District: 4, 5 & 6 Counties: Knox, Waldo, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Kennebec, Somerset, Penobscot, & Piscataquis)

Kinship Specialist Carey Pierson carey@affm.net (District: 1 & 2 Counties: York & Cumberland)

Kinship Specialist Jessica Richards jessica@affm.net (District: 3 Counties: Franklin, Oxford, & Androscoggin)

Kinship Specialist Mindy Kane mindy@affm.net (District: 7 & 8 Counties: Hancock, Washington, & Aroostook)

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

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 brigid@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 OCTOBER 13TH TIME: 10:00AM-11:00AM

Southern Maine C.A.R.E.S. Meetings:

District 1 (York County): Wednesday October 21st 6:30PM-8:00PM and Tuesday October 27th 10:00AM-11:30AM

District 2 (Cumberland/Sagadahoc County): Tuesday October 6th 10-11:30AM, Tuesday October 13th 7:00PM-8:30PM, Thursday October 22nd Noon-1:30PM *(For Permanency Guardianship/Adoptive families)*

District 3 (Androscoggin/Franklin/Oxford County): Tuesday October 20th 10:00-11:30AM and Thursday October 22nd 7:00-8:30PM

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 brigid@affm.net

Northern Maine C.A.R.E.S. Meetings:

District 4 (Knox/Lincoln/Waldo county): Wednesday October 14th 5:00-6:30PM

District 5 (Kennebec/Somerset county): Wednesday October 7th 6-7:30PM

District 6 (Penobscot/Piscataquis county): Monday October 19th 6-7:30PM

District 7 (Hancock/Washington county): Thursday October 29th 5:30-7PM **Kinship Only: Thursday October 22nd 6-7:30PM

District 8 (Aroostook county): Tuesday October 27th 3-4:30PM **Kinship Only: Thursday October 15th 7:30-9PM

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

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.
304 Hancock Street Suite 2A, Bangor, ME 04401
333 Lincoln Street, Saco, ME 04072

Phone: (207) 827-2331
Fax: (207) 573-3023
On the Web: www.affm.net
E-Mail: info@affm.net

Affiliated With:
The North American Council on Adoptable Children
National Foster Parent Association
Generations United

Partnering With: Department of Health and Human Services

FAMILY TIES THE NEWSLETTER OF ADOPTIVE & FOSTER FAMILIES OF MAINE, INC PUBLISHED WITH SUPPORT FROM THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES. PLEASE DIRECT COMMENTS TO: EDITOR, FAMILY TIES, AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ORONO, ME
PERMIT NO. 65



**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!](#)