



Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 24

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January 2021

Year in Review

2020 was a very challenging year! AFFM is grateful for having the opportunity to continue supporting families throughout Maine, even from a far via zoom meetings, phone calls, emails, etc. AFFM will continue to adapt and learn with families and expand supports and services to the best of our abilities. AFFM is hopeful for the future ahead and is appreciative as we reflect on the work we were able to accomplish throughout the year.

In February, AFFM was able to host two events before the pandemic was declared. The Saco office invited families to Urban Air Adventure Park in South Portland and the Bangor office had their event at Bangor Brewer Bowling Lanes. AFFM is hopeful the February vacation events will resume in 2022!

Sadly, for the first time in 23 years, AFFM had to cancel their Annual Spring Training Conference due to the pandemic. AFFM is aware families and professionals rely on the spring conference for training hours, connecting with other attendees, resources, etc. having to cancel was an extremely hard decision but was necessary to keep the community safe. AFFM quickly had to shift gears with the reality of covid-19 and altered the way services and support were offered, specifically training. Monica and her training staff did an incredible job of learning the ins and outs of online training and were able to pull together an informative webinar with speaker, Jim Harris Ed.D., MSW in lieu of the conference. In the webinar Jim shared with families a framework for understanding challenging behavior and strategies for addressing behavioral issues. AFFM was delighted to collaborate with Foster Parent College, to offer families free access to 60 plus online training sessions as well as participate in the RFIT and Kinship training online. AFFM also partnered with NACAC and Sue Badeau to provide a variety of training. AFFM is currently co-partnering with DHHS and The Cutler Institute in an effort to provide The National Training Development Curriculum for Maine's preservice training.

Brigid and Sheila have been working hard to assure C.A.R.E.S. meetings continued and began supporting families via zoom meetings. C.A.R.E.S. meetings will continue online until the social distancing order is lifted. AFFM will continue to follow guidelines set in place by the CDC to keep families and youth in care safe. Thank you, Brigid and Sheila, for the continued support you provide to families.

This summer, AFFM was happy to work with camps statewide to offer scholarships to 43 children who have been adopted and/or under a permanency guardianship agreement.

AFFM was able to fill 186 backpacks through the Ready Set Go to Learn Program even as schools switched gears to remote learning. Thank you to those that donated clothing, school supplies, personal care items, backpacks, and most of all your time to this program. AFFM acknowledges the challenges caregivers endured as schools became remote. AFFM tips our hats to caregivers as they took on the role of teacher this year!

At the beginning of Fall AFFM celebrated Grandparents Day with story times over zoom. AFFM staff had a blast reading stories to kids and had the pleasure of hearing stories being read by some of the kids themselves. It was AFFM's hope to give caregivers 20-30 minutes of free time.

As every December goes, AFFM was in full "Holiday" mode. This year, though proven difficult due to Covid-19, AFFM's Holiday Gift Giving Program was able to provide over 1,000 children with gifts. It can't be said enough, AFFM's gratitude to The Ogunquit Spirit of Giving Committee can not go understated. This year, beyond any other year, proved how much work goes into the program and how incredibly fortunate AFFM is to collaborate with the Spirit of Giving, community members, business owners and individuals. AFFM is so thankful for all those who step up each year to support the program to ensure kids have the holiday they deserve.

In lieu of the annual holiday parties in Bangor and Portland AFFM hosted a Story Time with Santa. Mr. and Mrs. Claus joined kids via zoom to sing songs, read stories, and chat with kids in attendance. Thank you to Mr. and Mrs. Claus (Bill and Karen Labombarde) for joining us and of course for putting a smile on the kids' faces!

In the midst of the challenges and struggles of 2020, AFFM was grateful to grow and expand services as well as our staff this year. AFFM was excited to hire five new staff. Beth Gilboy, Resource Family Specialist for southern Maine, Jessica Richards, Kinship Specialist for southern Maine, Mindy Kane, Kinship Specialist for districts 7 and 8, Sarah Hatt, Resource Family Specialist for districts 7 and 8, and Penni Theriault, Community Kinship Specialist for district 7. Welcome to the team!

In between the zoom meetings, online training, etc., AFFM remained dedicated to supporting resource families throughout the year and continued to offer supports via C.A.R.E.S. meetings, listening support, the mentor service, allegation support, etc.

Thank you to the Board of Directors, trainers, interns, mentors, C.A.R.E.S. facilitators, childcare providers, and volunteers for your commitment and dedication to AFFM. Without your support and hard work, it would be difficult to achieve all that we have. You are all appreciated!

Thank you to AFFM's dedicated staff;

Travis Bryant, Executive Director

Meagan Sprague, Regional Program Manager

Bette Hoxie, Kinship Supervisor

Holly White, Administrative Assistant

Monica Bushey, Training Coordinator

Sheila Peakall, Resource Support Coordinator

Heather Crooker, Resource Family Specialist

Francie Criner, Accountant

Carey Pierson, Kinship Specialist

Brigid Torberg, Resource Support Coordinator

Mindy Kane, Kinship Specialist

Sarah Hatt, Resource Family Specialist

Jessica Richards, Kinship Specialist

Beth Gilboy, Resource Family Specialist

Hether Anderson, Resource Family Trainer

Pat Tavernakis, Resource Family Trainer

Ann Stephenson, Resource Family Trainer

AFFM wishes you all a healthy and happy New Year!

A Time to Say Thanks!

The month of December always goes by in a blur for AFFM and there was no exception this year. AFFM's Holiday Gift Giving Program, though it looked a little differently this year due to covid-19, was still able to provide over 1,000 kids with gifts. AFFM could not have done this alone and we are so unbelievably thankful for the incredible support from businesses and individuals who donated to this program!

It was so heartwarming to see a community come together to help others, especially during these times. AFFM is indebted to each and every one of you for the love and support provided. We wish nothing but the best to you and your families as we move forward in the New Year!

- ◆ Becca Scheiblauber
- ◆ Kaity Cameron
- ◆ Gretchen Schaefer
- ◆ Carolyn Benner
- ◆ Ben Jewell
- ◆ Ethan Mongue
- ◆ Becca McKinnis
- ◆ Gwyn Esty-Kendall
- ◆ Sara O'Donnell
- ◆ Kim Milberg
- ◆ Ashlee Black
- ◆ Kristen Chase Ricker
- ◆ Tara Bowden
- ◆ Hilary Graebert & Family
- ◆ Laurel Grosjean
- ◆ Blair Johnstone
- ◆ Abigail LeBlanc
- ◆ Mike DeVeau
- ◆ Greg Nichols
- ◆ Paula Matlins
- ◆ Kathy Shepard
- ◆ Aubrae Filipiak
- ◆ Beth Kotredes
- ◆ Amanda McLaughlin
- ◆ Diana Godin
- ◆ Jason Norris
- ◆ Jodi Renshaw
- ◆ Sara Stevens
- ◆ Janel Sines
- ◆ Misty Fitzgerald
- ◆ Mike Vecchione
- ◆ Deb Harriman
- ◆ Caryn Jacobs
- ◆ Becky Moulton
- ◆ Ashley & Lucah Stanley
- ◆ Sara and Eric Scott
- ◆ Kim and Jon Pelkey
- ◆ Amanda Criner
- ◆ Lots of Tots Daycare-Princeton
- ◆ Joel and Kim Susen

- ◆ Kera Knight
- ◆ Andrew Tompkins
- ◆ Jason Lagrange & Family
- ◆ Kate Garland
- ◆ Erica Peters
- ◆ Down East Toyota- Bangor
- ◆ The Neighborhood Early Learning Center Bangor
- ◆ Ron Redman A-COPI
- ◆ Robyn Ham and businesses in downtown Boothbay
- ◆ Alex Carey
- ◆ Mary Lake
- ◆ Bangor Federal Credit Union
- ◆ Tyler Technologies
- ◆ Bangor International Airport
- ◆ Toys for Tots—Bangor
- ◆ The Department of Maine Legion Auxiliary
- ◆ Louise Hatch
- ◆ Knox County Union
- ◆ Justin and Caitlin Geishaker
- ◆ Laura Genese Troop 1418
- ◆ Amanda Stewart
- ◆ Chrisanna Greeley
- ◆ Torie Cambra
- ◆ Aimee Harris
- ◆ Nikki Keene
- ◆ Laurie Allaire
- ◆ Chelsea Amaio and Philip Mantis
- ◆ Michael and Donna Whalen
- ◆ Maine Trailer Registration
- ◆ Jessica Richards
- ◆ Cheryl Haley
- ◆ Marc Motors—Sanford
- ◆ Holland's Variety Drug Store
- ◆ Kim and Jon Boucher
- ◆ Laura Wilkes
- ◆ Saint Paul's the Apostle in Bangor
- ◆ Judy Cyr

- ◆ Brenda Crane—Finard Properties
- ◆ Melanie Crane
- ◆ Christopher Main- Old Castle Lawn and Garden
- ◆ Michelle Sawyer
- ◆ Ashley White
- ◆ Brogan Poulin
- ◆ Susan Hyland
- ◆ Target—Biddeford (Hether and Katherine)
- ◆ Bruce Kaplan
- ◆ Kaitlin Rustin
- ◆ Kim Williams
- ◆ Erin Herrick
- ◆ Linda Ashe-Ford
- ◆ St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- ◆ Tammy Cutchen
- ◆ Prime Motor Group
- ◆ Dina Pereira
- ◆ Devan's Purple Closet
- ◆ WPOR Portland Radio Group
- ◆ Haley's Metal Shop, Inc.
- ◆ Norway Savings Bank
- ◆ Kayla White—Ticket to Dream
- ◆ Machias Savings Bank
- ◆ United Way of Aroostook
- ◆ Angel Fancini
- ◆ Amanda and Jared Willette
- ◆ Sara Shorey
- ◆ Lisa Frazel
- ◆ Jen and Stephanie Watson-Todd
- ◆ Seaside United Church of Christ
- ◆ Spirit of Giving
- ◆ Amanda Lane
- ◆ Amy Chase
- ◆ Ryan Criner
- ◆ Castine Kayak (Karen Farncoeur)
- ◆ United Methodist Women

Thank you to Prime Automotive Group for supporting AFFM and the Holiday Gift Giving Program! Your donation was a huge help in providing gifts to children in care!

Thank you to Lewiston DHHS, Caribou DHHS, Rockland DHHS, Skowhegan DHHS, Machias DHHS, and Maine Parent Federation for allowing families to pick up gifts at your offices!



Prime Automotive Group
is proud to support
Adoptive & Foster Families of Maine



Visit us at
www.DrivePrime.com



Thank you Dina Pereira and crew!



Thank you Keller Williams Real Estate Crew!



Thank you Devan's Purple Closet!



Thank You!

Kinship



Corner

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)

Looking for Training Hours?

Are you a licensed resource family looking for TRAINING hours? Don't wait until it's time to renew! You can access Foster Parent College FREE from the comfort of your home and stay caught up on your training on your own time!

Are you looking for a specific topic you would like to learn more about? Check out Foster Parent Colleges' extensive list of classes!

Don't wait until it's time to renew your license! Start your Training NOW!

<https://www.fosterparentcollege.com/info/affiliate-list.jsp>

Click on Maine and choose AFFM as your affiliate site.

If you have any questions, please reach out to:

Hether Anderson: hether@affm.net or Monica Bushey: monica@affm.net

Adoption Announcements!



This is our family picture taken September 29, 2020 after the adoption hearing. Lorraine, Chris, Tate and the blessed is Maximus. I met Maximus at my job. For 2 years I would see him in the lunchroom. He would tell me about the latest book he was reading or give me some important information about facts he read. One day he told me he was looking for a forever family, I promised him I would pray for him that way. I went home and told my family about him and a few weeks later we were doing respite care for him. It only took 2 visits and we loved him like our own. He has been a delight to have with us and we are so excited about the future with him. He is an avid reader and loves to draw. He is planning to write and illustrate a book.

Submitted By: Lorraine Thompson

Adoption Announcements Continued!

On September 9, 2020 the Moores family grew by three!

Erin, Bo, and Sophia Moores you have been an important part of our family from day one.

We are so happy to make it official!



Ruth Lyons is excited to announce the adoption of her son Carter!

Carter was officially adopted on June 23, 2020!



I'm pleased to announce the adoption of my son Timothy Skomurski!

We are beyond excited that you're officially a member of the Skomurski tribe!

Timothy was adopted on November 13th, 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!

C.A.R.E.S.

Connect . Advice. Resources. Education. Support

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

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

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.

***STATEWIDE C.A.R.E.S. MEETING: Tuesday January 12, 2021 from 10-11:30 A.M.**

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

District 1 (York County): Wednesday January 20th 6:30PM-8:00PM and Tuesday January 26th 10:00AM-11:30AM

District 2 (Cumberland/Sagadahoc County): Tuesday January 12th 7:00PM-8:30PM, Thursday January 28th

Noon-1:30PM (*For Permanency Guardianship/Adoptive families*), Tuesday January 5th 10:00AM-11:30AM

District 3 (Androscoggin/Franklin/Oxford County): Tuesday January 19th 10:00-11:30AM and Thursday January 28th 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 January 13th 5:00-6:30PM

District 5 (Kennebec/Somerset county): Wednesday January 6th 6-7:30PM *With training!*

District 6 (Penobscot/Piscataquis county): Monday January 11th 6-7:30PM *With training!*

District 7 (Hancock/Washington county): Thursday January 21st 6-7:30PM *With training!*

District 8 (Aroostook county): Tuesday January 26th 6-7:30PM

****Kinship Only:** Thursday January 21st 7:30AM-9:00PM

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

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Save a tree, sign up for the E-Newsletter!