

# Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 24

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July 2021

*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 Facebook SWAP Group?

This SWAP ONLY GROUP is a place for families to communicate available and needed resources. This will allow for more immediate access to resources needed by families living in the same geographic location.

AFFM recognizes that families have needs outside of the normal office hours and hoping this will facilitate those needs.

This is strictly for resources that AFFM would accept as donations at the office to provide to other families. AFFM will monitor this Closed Group and ensure there will be no selling of resources and all members MUST be approved by AFFM Admin.

To join the group visit:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/affmswap/>

Or call 823-2331 and a staff will assist you.

*Note: Please make sure you have answered all of the security questions when requesting to join. If your request has been pending for more than a week please call our office to inquire*





# Kinship



# Corner

## Story Telling

I had the privilege of attending the Generations United Intergenerational International Conference. As part of the conference the art of storytelling was shared. I loved the information shared by the storytellers. As kinship caregivers one of the greatest gifts we can give to the children in our care is the ability to connect them to the generations before them.

One storyteller used Sankofa, an African symbol of a mythical bird to illustrate the needs for connections. In the example, the bird's feet are planted in the present, the body moving forward, and the neck craning back, and in its mouth, the bird has a seed which indicates planning for the future. The storyteller shared the importance of connecting the past, present, and future for all but especially for youth who have experienced disruptions in their families.

The storytelling project shared the significance of understanding and empathy in forming connections between the generations. The children in kinship care require knowledge of where they came from, and with whom they share genetics and history. This understanding will illustrate to them their own unique role within the family.

Children need to know their culture, familial strengths and challenges, family leaders and family characters, traits, habits, languages, etc. in order to make an impact on their present and their future. As kinship caregivers, we are in a unique position to share what we know of our own heritage, with the children in our care, so that they in turn can share with future generations. Don't leave out those special stories that get embellished over time! You can learn much more about storytelling at the Generations United website. [GU.org](http://GU.org) Have fun with this project!

Bette Hoxie, Kinship Supervisor

### **Child Tax Credit 2021**

*The IRS plans to send as much as \$300 per child beginning July 15th and each subsequent month on or around the 15th for the rest of the year.*

The IRS will pay half the total credit amount in advance monthly payments beginning July 15th. You will claim the other half when you file your 2021 income tax return. Changes apply to tax year 2021 only.

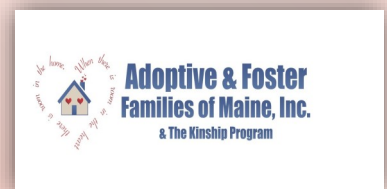
#### **Qualifying Child:**

- The individual lives with the taxpayer for more than one-half of the tax year 2021
- The individual is the taxpayer's son, daughter, stepchild, eligible foster child, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother, half-sister, or a descendant of any of them (for example, a grandchild, niece, or nephew).

More information about the Child Tax Credit can be found at [irs.gov](http://irs.gov)

AFFM has partnered with the University of Maine to help survey families who receive support from AFFM. Please keep an eye out for survey mailings (by mail or e-mail) from the University. **Surveys will arrive about 3 months after your first call or service from AFFM.**

This will help AFFM document the impact of our work with families and identify areas for improvement. Thank you for helping AFFM with this important effort!



# Feel Good Stories!

*I had my beautiful great granddaughter for almost 6 months last year and enjoyed her so much. I worked with both of her parents to help them and her. In November they were reunited and doing great. They continue to do the things that help them. And they visit me every couple of weeks.*

*All good feelings.*

*Submitted By: Roberta Yost*



Throughout the years, AFFM has had the privilege and honor providing families with a weeklong getaway to Rangeley. Families had the opportunity to stay at the Tamarack cottage on Dodge Pond. As many families are aware, each year, AFFM was able to offer up to six weeks at Tamarack. This year, as changes happened within the Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust and of course with the pandemic, AFFM was only able to offer two weeks.

Congratulations to Melissa Hutchinson and Lisa Wilmot as being the 2021 recipients. AFFM hopes you had a wonderful time!

Thank you to the Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust. AFFM is hopeful we will be able to offer this opportunity to families next year.

**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](mailto:meagan@affm.net) and help AFFM spread some happiness!**

AFFM is excited to welcome Melanie Crane, LCSW, as she joins the Board of Directors! Along with real estate, Melanie is passionate about giving back to our community and we are so thrilled to have her as the newest member of our team!

Melanie joins Board of Directors Barbara Ford, Board President, Stephanie Watson-Todd, Secretary/Treasurer, Chelsea McAuliffe, Mary Ellen Roma, Pat Locke, Huyanna Clearwater and Sharon Carter

Thank you all for your dedication and commitment to AFFM and the families served!



# Adoption Announcements!

*On May 5th, 2021 after 1043 days in foster care Richard Harper and Mary-Gene Rumery adopted sibling group Jeffery Allen, Karson George and Laci-Jane Rumery-Harper. Making Hannah Rumery officially a big sister x3!*



We are happy to announce the adoption of our ten year old daughter, Hailey-Marie Sapphire Hazelton to our family on January 19th 2021. Hailey-Marie was excited to find that she could choose a middle name for herself; it made her feel more in control of the situation, so she chose the name "Sapphire." We have known Hailey-Marie all of her life and she has been with us for the past two years. In the mist of Covid -19 we were blessed to finalize the adoption via zoom. Because of zoom we were fortunate to have in attendance Shelly-Ann Horn, our daughter from North Carolina and Timothy and Amanda Hazelton, our son and daughter-in-law, from Kenduskeag, along with our grandchildren Madelyn and Logan Horn, Benjamin, Gabrielle, and Faith Hazelton. Also in attendance were our very good friends and family, Richard and Sherry Horn. The adoption was legalized by the honorable Judge Charles Budd, Jr. We will celebrate this day each year as a "Gotcha" day. The day we "got each other." Hailey-Marie named her stuffy the judge sent her "Gotcha" as a reminder of the day. A special "thank you" goes to DHHS and AFFM for their support and educational services and for AFFM's helping hand when Hailey-Marie came to live with us, she received a personal care package, birthday present and blanket. AFFM knows what a child needs. At that time in her life that personal care package meant the world to her because it was the only thing that belonged to her. Thank you and thank you God!



*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](mailto: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!*

# Updates on Maine Children's Museums

As businesses are adjusting to the new norm and continuing to practice safety guidelines, Maine's children's museums have also made their own adjustments to keep families safe. It is recommended to check out each of the children's museums websites for the most up to date changes on admission. AFFM families will still be able to use their discount card as access to the museums. As before, we ask you to call AFFM with the date you plan to visit the museum as it's still required one family attends per day. Below is the most up to date information on Maine's Children's museums.

**Children's Museum & Theatre of Maine:** As the museum follows COVID-19 Guidelines, the building capacity and hours are limited. To keep families safe and maintain social distancing, all visitors must reserve tickets online (members, too!) for play times and performances <https://www.kitetails.org/reserve-tickets>

**Children's Discovery Museum of Central Maine:** Currently closed as they continue to grow in their new space in the Waterville location. Updates will be shared once the museum is open to families.

**Coastal Children's Museum:** A "soft" opening is anticipated on July 7th. Through the month of July the museum will take reservations to ensure a reasonable capacity since attendees are below vaccination age. <http://www.coastalchildrensmuseum.org/book-a-time>

**Maine Discovery Museum:** The museum is not currently open to the public and will not be open during the summer. At this time the museum is only holding summer camp. They are hopeful to open in the fall.

*Thank you to the Children's Discovery Museum of Central Maine, Maine Discovery Museum, Children's Museum and Theatre of Maine, and the Coastal Children's Museum for your continued support!*

## Upcoming Event

*Join AFFM Friday July 30, 2021 for a Family Fun Day at Mantle Lake Park in Presque Isle from 1pm-3pm. There will be games and entertainment to all who attend!*

*RSVP today by calling 827-2331*

## Ready Set Go To Learn (RSGTL) Back to School Program!

AFFM's goal is 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 your child will be in need this upcoming school year, please call AFFM and a staff will assist you in filling out a request form. If you have questions please email [meagan@affm.net](mailto:meagan@affm.net) if you are in southern Maine and [sheila@affm.net](mailto:sheila@affm.net) if you are in northern Maine.

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

**Please have your request in no later than Friday July 31st.**



# C.A.R.E.S.

Connect . Advice. Resources. Education. Support

## AFFM C.A.R.E.S. Meetings Offered Online During the Months of July!

*(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](mailto:sheila@affm.net) or [brigid@affm.net](mailto:brigid@affm.net) if you have questions.*

**\*STATEWIDE C.A.R.E.S. MEETING: Tuesday July 13th from 10-11:30 A.M.**

**Friday With Friends, July 16, from 6:00 AM-7:00AM**

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

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

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

**District 3 (Androscoggin/Franklin/Oxford County):** Thursday July 15th 10:00-11:30AM and Thursday July 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](mailto:brigid@affm.net)*

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

**District 4 (Knox/Lincoln/Waldo county):** Monday July 14th 5:00-6:30PM

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

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

**District 7 (Hancock/Washington county):** Thursday July 15th 6-7:30PM

**District 8 (Aroostook county):** Tuesday July 27th 6-7:30PM

**\*Kinship Only:** Tuesday July 13th 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](mailto: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](mailto:info@affm.net)

**Website:** [www.affm.net](http://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!](#)**