

# Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 24

Number 6

October 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 November is Adoption Awareness Month?

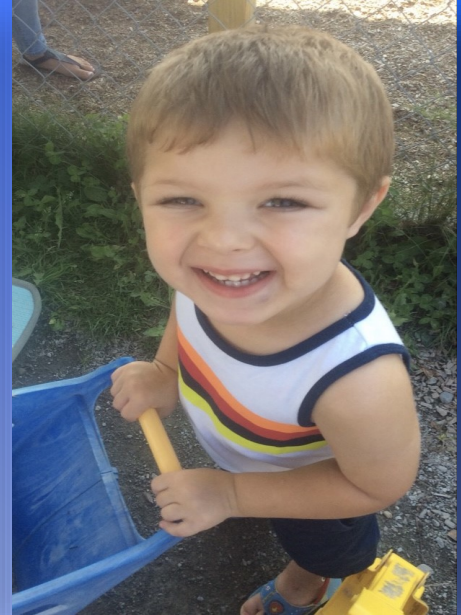
Here are some fun ways to celebrate

- ◇ Plan a movie night with adoption themed movies. [Click here](#) for a list of recommendations.  
[C.A.S.E.-Recommended-Adoption-Movies.pdf](#)  
[\(adoptionsupport.org\)](#)
- ◇ Together, read a children's book with an adoption theme. Here are some recommendations:
  - Tell Me Again About the Night I was Born By: Jamie Lee Curtis
  - The Family Book By: Todd Parr
  - Picnic in the Park By: Joe Griffiths
- ◇ Take a family photo. Plan what each family member will wear and where it will be taken.
- ◇ Keep an eye out for Story Time With AFFM to celebrate Adoption Awareness Month

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc. & The Kinship Program has full-time staff members that have both personal and professional experience with the adoption process. AFFM staff is also available to help families with their post-adoption needs, systems navigation, referrals, and to help families navigate the intricacies that arise through normative crises.

Feel free to contact one of AFFM's Resource Family Specialists at 207-827-2331 or by e-mail at [info@affm.net](mailto:info@affm.net) for further assistance.

# Adoption Announcements!



Our family adopted four biological siblings born in Maine, but living in Florida, five years ago through the Interstate Adoption program. As of June 2020, we are absolutely humbled and blessed to be able to adopt their biological baby brother! We were lucky enough to be there for his birth and to choose his name! Camryn Keith Kneeland officially became our son on June 9, 2021!

Submitted By: Ashley Kneeland



Kristen DeForge is happy to announce the adoption of her daughter Jenna Kimball-DeForge.

The adoption took place on Monday September 13th at the Biddeford District Courthouse. Jenna had been in foster care for 2,535 days.

“Take a chance and foster a teen. They will amaze you with their resiliency and determination.”

*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!*

# Youth Leadership Advisory Team (YLAT)

If you are connected with youth ages 14-21 who have experienced foster care please encourage them to check out Maine's Youth Leadership Advisory Team (YLAT). YLAT is a youth & adult partnership committed to improving the short term experiences and long term outcomes for youth who are or have been in foster care. Monthly YLAT meetings kick off in September and take [place](#) in Southern Maine, Mid Coast, Lewiston, Central Maine and Aroostook County. **YLAT meetings and training opportunities focus on learning and practicing leadership, problem-solving, advocacy skills, and building youth-adult partnerships, while having fun!**

## Youth who participate in YLAT:

- ⇒ Connect with other youth in care from their community
- ⇒ Learn about resources that are important to your future
- ⇒ Develop a variety of skills such as: leadership, public speaking, career preparation and advocacy
- ⇒ Help educate the community about the needs and challenges of youth in foster care.
- ⇒ Advocate for positive changes within the child welfare system on local, state, and national levels

**Important Note:** *In alignment with the Maine CDC, masks will be worn inside at all times and may be removed for outside activities. This fall, YLAT meetings will be held primarily outside so please dress for the weather and bring extra layers.*

**For more information** about how you can be a part of YLAT please contact [maineylat@gmail.com](mailto:maineylat@gmail.com) or Shannon Saxby at 207-776-2322. Visit our website <https://www.ylat.org/> or the YLAT [Facebook](#) page for meeting details, updates and other events happening statewide.

**NO CRITICISM**

**dedication**

**IT'S OKAY TO VOICE YOUR OPINION**

I'm more involved with my program

**GETTING TO MEET AND CONNECT WITH KIDS I RELATE TO**

How to speak on a panel

**NEW LIFE AND LEADERSHIP SKILLS**

Stay strong. It will get better. You are not alone.

**BE OUT, BE PROUD!**

There's a place I can talk about ways to make DHHS better and inform system change.

How to advocate for myself and the life I want, the changes we need.

Consistency

Be willing to receive help. DHHS is helping even if you don't realize it.

There are other people like me

LEARN HOW USE YOUR VOICE AND EXPERIENCES TO ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE AND IMPROVEMENTS IN YOUR LIFE, OUTCOMES AND SYSTEMS!

Making a change

friendly people

Working on goals

Friends teaching others about foster care

**FUN**

I learned social skills

**Comfort zone**

Staying connected with friends and making new connections

# Feel Good Stories!

Zack drew a picture of Daddy Ink!!! The likeness is uncanny!!!



*Zack drew a picture of Daddy Ink, the likeness is uncanny! ☺*

When our oldest children first joined our family they were 8 months old and just turned 2 years old. Our oldest had some speech delays and had difficulty in saying our names (Brigid and Aaron) he called me Bri-Bri and my husband's name came out sounding like "Ink." As attachments bonded, those monikers naturally became "Mumma Bri Bri" and "Daddy Ink." As time passed our oldest shortened how he addressed us, dropped the ending of his name for me and the middle of his name for my husband, calling me "Mumma" and Aaron "Dink." Gradually Aaron did become Daddy/Dad but our now 14 year old loves to recall "remember when I used to call Dad 'Dink!'" and the whole family gets a good chuckle!

Submitted By: Brigid Torberg

**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 would like to extend a thank you to the Dover Rover's ATV Club for hosting a charity ride and collecting school supplies for AFFM's Back to School Program!***

## Holiday Gift Giving Program!

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine and the Kinship Program will continue taking holiday requests until Friday November 19th for the Holiday Gift Giving Program! Resource families are invited to add the children in their care to a wish list for holiday gifts.

Once again, the amazing people from the Ogunquit Spirit of Giving Committee, as well as, individual sponsors will work to provide gifts to kids in AFFM programs. Give the office a call at 827-2331 and have your child's information ready.



We ask that you keep requests to under \$50.00 per child. The sooner AFFM has the information the more likely we are to fulfill the children's wishes.

AFFM will take requests until Friday November 19th. The deadline is in place in order for gifts to be collected and delivered to pick up locations in a timely manner. We ask that you get your requests in as early as possible.

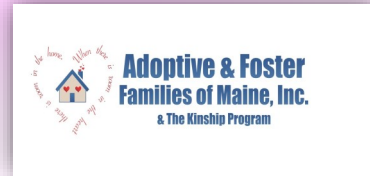
# Kinship



# Corner

AFFM has partnered with the University of Maine to help survey kinship 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!



## Kinship Care National News

With funding from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) has awarded a new 5-year cooperative agreement to Generations United (GU). In partnership with five national organizations and an array of subject matter experts, GU will lead the creation of the first National Technical Assistance Center on Grandfamilies and Kinship Families (NTAC)

The goal of the NTAC is to measurably increase the capacity and effectiveness of states, territories, tribes/tribal organizations, nonprofits and other community-based organizations to serve and support families in which grandparents and other relatives are raising children of family members. Specifically, the NTAC will provide:

1. Universal/general technical assistance, such as regional meetings, a new website, toolkits and other materials, a peer learning collaborative listserv, webinars, videos, and podcasts;
2. Targeted/specialized technical assistance provided by subject matter experts in response to requests from agencies, organizations and individual caregivers; and
1. Intensive/sustained technical assistance to develop and document replicable models of collaboratively working across jurisdictions to break down silos and holistically support grandfamilies and kinship families.

Many of the NTAC's activities will address recommendations for [improving support to grandfamilies and kinship families](#) developed by the Advisory Council to Support Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (SGRG). These recommendations will be included in the SGRG council's initial report to Congress, which will be delivered in November. Together with the recommendations of the RAISE Family Caregiving Council, these recommendations will form the foundation for the National Family Caregiving Strategy that will be developed beginning later this year.

## New Discount in Piscataquis County!

***Repeat After Me***

***64 East Main Street Suite E  
Dover-Foxcroft, ME, ME 04426***

***279-1607***

***<https://www.facebook.com/RepeatAfterMeMaine/>***

***25% discount***

**25%**



# FASD Awareness Month & The FASD Respect Act

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Senator Susan Collins co-sponsored the *Advancing FASD Research, Services, and Prevention Act of 2021* (FASD Respect Act). The legislation addresses prenatal substance exposure through early intervention—by providing support through programs and funding for prevention efforts and for individuals and families affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). FASDs include Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), partial Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), Alcohol Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder (ARND), Neurobehavioral Disorders Associated with Prenatal Alcohol Exposure (ND-PAE), and related conditions.

“Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders can cause tremendous harm to a child’s physical, mental, behavioral, and cognitive development,” **said Senator Collins**. “Amid FASD Awareness Month, this important bill would strengthen federal, state, and local programs and funding to support individuals and families affected by these heartbreaking conditions. This legislation is critical to protecting the health of mothers and their babies.”

“It’s time for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder to come out of the shadows and be recognized as the leading known cause of intellectual disability and birth defects in the U.S. and worldwide,” **said Connie Mazelsky, co-founder of FASD Maine**. “We are truly grateful for Senator Collins’ leadership in co-sponsoring the *FASD Respect Act*. This vital legislation provides a framework and funding so we can improve diagnosis and help our systems of care become FASD-informed to improve the lives of the thousands of Mainers with this lifelong condition.”

“FASD is an overlooked crisis affecting millions of children and adults,” **said National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (NOFAS) President Tom Donaldson**. “This landmark bill will advance research, increase education, and most importantly provide access to critical services for individuals affected by FASD and offer them long overdue opportunities to succeed. The FASD community thanks Senator Collins for her visionary support in co-sponsoring this FASD legislation to bring much needed focus and resources to a huge societal problem.”

The *FASD Respect Act* recognizes the need to have a comprehensive approach to all prenatal substance and prenatal alcohol exposures as they are a significant health concern to our nation’s children and families. According to the National Vital Statistics, around 18 percent of infants are potentially affected by prenatal exposure to alcohol, binge drinking, or illicit drugs each year. This legislation aims to develop a more collaborative approach across state, tribal and federal governments to support the medical, substance use, child welfare, and educational issues that the mother, infant and family face after being diagnosed with FAS, FASD, or a related condition. Specifically, the bill would create a National Advisory Council on FASD to combat FASD as well as reestablish the Center of Excellence on FASD and related conditions.

Specifically, the *FASD Respect Act*:

- Creates the “National Advisory Council on FASD” consisting of parents, advocates, professional organizations, and experts in the field. The Committee will submit recommendations to the National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and develop new recommendations for Congress pursuant to the 2009 National FAS Task Force “Call to Action.”
- Directs the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)—acting through the Director of the National Institutes of Health and in coordination with the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders—to establish a research agenda for FASD, award grants, and enter into contracts and cooperative agreements with public or private nonprofit entities.
- Creates a program at the Health Resources and Services Administration to build State and Tribal systems to identify, treat, and support individuals with FASD. Grants will support States and Tribes to develop or update strategic plans to establish or expand FASD-informed clinical services and integrate them into existing systems of care.
- Directs HHS to establish a Center of Excellence to build local, state, tribal and national capacities to prevent the occurrence of FASD—including disorders and birth defects related to combined abuse of alcohol and other substances. To establish the Center, HHS will award a grant or enter into a cooperative agreement or contract with a public or nonprofit entity with demonstrated expertise in promoting FASD awareness, prevention and intervention services.
- Authorizes the Departments of Education and Justice to address FASD-related issues and provides funding for training of professionals on the recognition and support for those with FASD.

# C.A.R.E.S.

Connect . Advice. Resources. Education. Support

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

*(C.A.R.E.S. Meetings will resume normal meeting dates and times tentatively in October. Some groups are beginning to meet in person this month, following CDC guidelines)*

*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. 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.*

**\*STATEWIDE C.A.R.E.S. MEETING: Tuesday October 12th from 10-11:30 A.M**

**\*STATEWIDE C.A.R.E.S. MEETING: Tuesday October 12th from 6:00PM-7:30PM**

**Friday With Friends, Friday October 15th from 6:00 AM-7:00AM**

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

#### **Virtual:**

- Tuesday, October 5th 10-11:30am (Open to D1-D3)
- Wednesday, October 13th 7-8:30pm (Open to D1-D3)
- Thursday, October 21st 12-1:30pm (Open to D1-D3)

#### **In-Person: (Subject to Change)**

**District 1 (York county)** Tuesday, October 19th Location: J. Richard Martin Community Center (189 Alfred Street Biddeford)

Meeting led by Carolyn Sawyer, AFFM Facilitator. Masks required unless vaccinated, per city building guidelines.

**Sanford– F/A/K:** Wednesday, October 20th Sanford, Curtis Lake 6-7:30pm

**District 2 (Cumberland county)** Tuesday, October 12th S. Portland, East Point Church 6-7:30pm

**District 3 (Androscoggin, Oxford, and Franklin county)** Tuesday, October 19th Farmington, UMF 6-7:30pm and Tuesday, October 26th

**District 3 (Androscoggin, Oxford, and Franklin county)** Auburn, Opportunity Enterprises 6-7:30pm

*Please email [brigid@affm.net](mailto:brigid@affm.net) with questions regarding C.A.R.E.S. Meetings in District 1, 2, & 3*

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

**District 4 Rockland- F/A/K:** Wednesday October 6th from 5:30-7:00 PM at the Salvage Church (formerly Grace Bible Fellowship), 30 Sherer Lane, Rockland. On-site childcare is available with advance notice. RSVP IS REQUIRED. Meeting led by Pat Tavernakis, AFFM Trainer.

**Damariscotta - F/A/K:** Thursday October 7th from 5:30-7:00 PM at the Lincoln County Assembly Of God Church (672 Main Street). Onsite childcare is available with advance notice. RSVP IS REQUIRED. Meeting led by Pat Tavernakis, AFFM Trainer.

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

**District 6 (Penobscot/Piscataquis county): Virtual** Monday October 18th 6-7:30PM

**Lincoln– F/A/K:** Thursday, October 7th from 6:00-7:30PM at the Community Evangel Temple (124 River Road). Onsite childcare is available with advance notice. RSVP IS REQUIRED. Meeting led by Bette Hoxie, AFFM Kinship Supervisor. \*Masks required by all attendants ages 2 & up.

**District 7 (Hancock/Washington county): Ellsworth– F/A/K:** Tuesday, October 19th from 5:30-7:00PM at the United

Baptist Church (28 Hancock Street). Onsite childcare is available with advance notice. RSVP IS REQUIRED. Meeting led by Mindy Kane, AFFM Kinship Specialist. \*Masks required by all attendants ages 2 & up.

**Cherryfield– F/A/K:** Thursday, October 21st from 5:30-7:30PM at the Cherryfield Academy Community Center (53 Main Street). Onsite childcare is available with advance notice. RSVP IS REQUIRED. Meeting led by Mindy Kane, AFFM Kinship Specialist. \*Masks required by all attendants ages 2 & up.

**District 8 (Aroostook county):** Tuesday October 26th from 6-7:30PM at the Wesleyan Church (387 Centerline Road Presque Isle). Onsite childcare is available with advance notice. RSVP IS REQUIRED. \*Masks required by all attendants ages 2 & up.

*Please email [sheila@affm.net](mailto:sheila@affm.net) with questions regarding C.A.R.E.S. Meetings in District 4, 5, 6, 7, & 8*

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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.

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ORONO, ME  
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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!](#)**