

Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc. & The Kinship Program

Volume 25

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May 2022

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 & Foster
Families of Maine, Inc.
& The Kinship Program

HAPPY NATIONAL FOSTER CARE MONTH



In honor of National Foster Care Month this May, AFFM will be selling t-shirts with all proceeds going towards direct supports AFFM provides to resource families!

Youth in care were given the opportunity to enter an art contest to have their artwork featured on the t-shirts. The artwork youth submitted focused around the theme: 'What Hope Means to You'.

Thank you to all the artists who submitted their drawings. It was very hard to choose from the wonderful submissions!

AFFM is thrilled to announce 8 year old Annabella Proctor as the contest winner! Below is the artwork that will be featured on this year's t-shirts. Congratulations, Annabella!



T-Shirts can be ordered here:

<https://www.customink.com/fundraising/whathopemeanstoyou>

State park passes are 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 foster care license) as well as your mailing address, readily available.

Family Focused Treatment Association (FFTA)

Maine FFTA is a collaboration of behavioral health agencies in support of positive outcomes for children and youth served in family-based treatment settings, particularly treatment foster care. This is accomplished by partnering with families, communities, child welfare, and other child-focused entities to promote best practices in treatment foster care.

The FFTA Maine Chapter is made up of six agencies throughout the state:



Who can be a treatment foster parent?

Interested candidates must be at least 21 years of age, and may own or rent their home. They may be single, married, or partnered, and agree to abide by the rules and standards for licensed foster homes. Candidates need to have at least six months of verifiable work experience with children with emotional and/or behavioral needs or one year as a licensed foster parent.

What's the difference between treatment foster care and regular foster care?

Children and youth referred to treatment foster care agencies typically have higher needs due to behavioral health issues and/or developmental delays. As a result, they often have special education services, therapy needs, and medication management. They require foster parents with specialized skills and training in managing children's behaviors. Treatment foster care agencies provide casework support, support workers, training, support groups, and clinical consultation.

How do I get more information?

You can contact any of the member agencies in your area.

Agency by County:

Androscoggin: CHCS, KidsPeace, Spurwink, Woodfords
Aroostook: AMHC, CHCS, Community Care
Cumberland: CHCS, KidsPeace, Spurwink, Woodfords
Franklin: CHCS, Community Care, KidsPeace, Spurwink
Hancock: AMHC, CHCS, Community Care, KidsPeace, Spurwink
Kennebec: CHCS, Community Care, KidsPeace, Spurwink, Woodfords
Knox: CHCS, KidsPeace, Spurwink
Lincoln: CHCS, KidsPeace, Spurwink
Oxford: CHCS, KidsPeace, Spurwink, Woodfords
Penobscot: CHCS, Community Care, KidsPeace, Spurwink
Piscataquis: CHCS, Community Care, KidsPeace, Spurwink
Sagadahoc: CHCS, KidsPeace, Spurwink
Somerset: CHCS, Community Care, KidsPeace, Spurwink
Waldo: CHCS, F.A.C.T., Community Care, KidsPeace, Spurwink
Washington: AMHC, CHCS, Community Care
York: CHCS, KidsPeace, Spurwink, Woodfords

Phone Numbers:

AMHC 498-6431

CHCS 1-800-924-0366

Community Care 945-4240

KidsPeace 299-1414

Spurwink 871-1200

Woodfords 878-9663



Family
Focused
Treatment
Association

Conference Thank You!

AFFM's 25th Spring Training Conference, "Strengthening and Growing Hope" was held on Friday April 22nd and Saturday April 23rd. The conference is designed to provide training to meet families unique needs as they open their homes to children in care. This year's conference was held virtually focusing on strengthening hope, future, and success.

Thank you to the speakers: Dr. Chan Hellman, Brett Hayes, Sue Badeau, Jim Harris, Kini-Ana Tinkham and The Maine Resilience Building Network, YLAT, Bette Hoxie, Elizabeth Stout Esq, Travis Bryant, Marcus Stallworth, Bobbi Johnson, Heather Crooker, Cyndi Dolloff, Angela Okafor, Todd Landry, and Maine Children's Trust. Thank you to the vendors: A Family For ME, Autism Society of Maine, Child Development Services, Camp to Belong, FFTA, FASD Maine, Fame, G.E.A.R. Parent Network, Maine Parent Federation, Maine Family Planning, 2.1.1 Maine, Resource Parent Care Team, Spurwink, and YLAT. Thank you all for making this year's conference a success!

Silent Auction winners will be contacted directly. Congratulations to Desiree Davis for winning the scavenger hunt!

If you missed a workshop or you would like to revisit one you had attended, you will have that opportunity! AFFM's conference will be available for viewing for 30 days after the event for those who registered!

Upcoming Training/YLAT Conference

Join the Southern Maine Foster Family Recruitment Team for an in person training!

SUPPORTING LGBTQ+ & YOUTH IN CARE

Presented By: Maine Family Planning

This workshop will provide information and practice skills to equip parents and caregivers in supporting and affirming youth as they explore, develop, and express their gender identity and sexual orientation. We will review language, discuss the use of pronouns, and identify the challenges many LGBTQ+ youth face in their families, schools, and communities. The training session will also identify supportive laws, strategies, and skills to help overcome these challenges. Through scenarios, we will practice effective communication and ways to engage LGBTQ+ youth and identify local and national resources for both youth and caregivers.



THURSDAY MAY 19, 2022

Time: 10-Noon

Where: Spurwink 901 Washington Ave, Portland Maine (use the rear parking lot, enter via ramp)

**** Licensed families will receive 2 hours of training to help meet re-licensing requirements ****

Masks are required for this location

email meagan@affm.net for questions

Save the Date

32ND TEEN CONFERENCE

OUR VOICE, OUR TIME, OUR FUTURE

JUNE 22, 2022

8:30 - 4:30

For other upcoming training opportunities visit

<https://affm.net/support/training/>

OCFS Announces New Online Resource Parent Portal



The Maine Department of Health and Human Services is pleased to announce that on **April 11, 2022**, the Office of Child and Family Services launched a new online portal for currently licensed families and for families wishing to apply to be a resource parent.

The **Resource Parent Portal** allows families to renew a foster care license, download forms, and upload required documentation.

To **renew** a license the portal can be accessed by clicking on this link: <https://som01.force.com/resourceparentportal>

- The first time you use the portal, you will receive a verification code via email that will allow you to set up an account
- All license applications and renewals, including uploading of completed supplemental documents can be done through the portal
- Additionally, you can download commonly used forms, such as mileage reimbursement forms, by clicking “forms” on the taskbar

New applicants will access the portal through this link: <https://afamilyformemaine.org> and click **Start Today** and follow the prompts. Applicants will receive a code after viewing an online informational video to be used to apply through the resource parent portal.

If you are unable to use the portal, paper forms may be mailed to you by request from your local OCFS office.

As a reminder, the CPS Hotline continues to be available to assist all individuals in making a report by phone 24 hours a day/365 days a year at 1-800-452-1999 and should continue to be used for resource parents to report incidents that require immediate attention or approval.

Thank you as we come together to support the safety, permanency and well-being of children in Maine.

Adoption Announcements!



Janel St Peter is happy to announce the adoption of her son, Thomas Detour. After 743 days in foster care, on March 10th the adoption was legalized!

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!

AFFM's Resource 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? Fill out a form online at: <https://affm.net/support/mentor-service/> or call 827-2331

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

"Mentors help new foster parents understand what information is important to be shared with the caseworker."

"Mentors help foster families understand the importance of birth families and that most of these parents really love their children."



Empathy During an Epidemic of Overdose Deaths and a Pandemic-Bette Hoxie

Each day more and more grandparents and other relative's step in to fill the role of the birth parents that are suffering from mental illness and or drug addiction.

Daily there are parents suffering to be the best they can be but not quite making the grade. On those same days relative's frequently grandparents or great grandparents who are often single, parent children who have lost one or both of their parents to a drug overdose.

Now imagine how it must feel to grieve the loss of a child and simultaneously step in to parent that child's child or children. Not an easy task with the best of supports in place. During the pandemic and in rural areas of Maine counseling is nearly non-existent.

If DHHS is involved and the child needs a safe placement, a relative is called. With the child's best interest at heart the relative says of course I will care for my grandchild/children or relative's child. With all good intentions a background check is done. (Safety must come first!) If the relative passes the basic background checks the next step is for the caregiver to get a foster care license. That is no simple process but it is manageable under normal circumstances. Keep in mind, however that the relative is/ may be grieving the loss of a loved one, while assisting a child/children who each grieve in their own way. Many of the relative caregivers may have a newborn placed with them. Imagine caring for a sweet new baby who may well have been born affected by the mother's use of drugs and or alcohol. Withdrawal in adults is difficult. Imagine what it must be like for a newborn! Again, most healthy infants sleep erratically, feed in 2-3 hour increments and may cry at all hours of the day or night! Now imagine that the grandparent is 60 years plus, retired or on route to retirement. Tiredness is real, yet relatives face these realities with love and optimism!

Being a senior citizen sets up new and complicated scenarios. Their housing may be designed to exclude children, which then forces the relative caregiver to consider moving to a new location. Moving is expensive. A residence with enough bedrooms is not easily accessible in Maine. This move compounds things and adds new financial burdens. For families on a fixed income the challenges mount! DHHS requires that all children in protective custody be in a licensed home. Licensing also has special requirements. The training needed takes more time away from traditional family care.

I am sharing the tip of the iceberg about the stressors inherent in being a kinship caregiver. All of this is done because family members love their children and their grandchildren or other relative's child. Under the most challenging of circumstances family is family! And family comes first so in spite of grief and loss, the need to make huge life adjustments, nearly 50 % of children in child protective care in Maine are being placed with relatives. Many more relatives step in and care for children without DHHS intervention.

If there is one way that all of us can help it is to be empathetic. Understand that no one thinks their child/or children will lose the capacity to care for their own children and yet it happens. We all have parents and grandparents as well as other relatives who are or have been significant in our lives. As we assist families that are struggling with a family member's mental health and or addiction, let's be there to help not judge. If there are barriers that we can help lower, let's do it!

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)

STATEWIDE C.A.R.E.S. MEETING: Tuesday May 10th from 10-11:30 A.M

STATEWIDE Kinship C.A.R.E.S. MEETING: Tuesday May 10th from 6:00PM-7:30PM

Friday With Friends, Friday May 27th from 6:00 AM-7:00AM

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

F/A/K Daytime- Meets Tuesday, May 3rd, 10:00-11:30 A.M. by **ZOOM** Conferencing. *Training: Maine Parent Federation joins us for our first hour for an informational training, presenting on the supports and services of MPF and how they may be of benefit to Resource Families. 1 hour training certificate will be provided to attendants*

F/A/K Evening- Meets Wednesday, May 11th, 7:00-8:30 P.M. by **ZOOM**.

F/A/K Afternoon- Meets Thursday, May 19th, 12:00-1:30 P.M. by **ZOOM**.

Adoption/Permanency Guardianship Meeting - Meets Tuesday, May 17th, 12:00-1:30 P.M. by **ZOOM**.

South Portland - F/A/K- Meets Tuesday, May 10th, 6:00-7:30 P.M. at The Point 345 Clarks Pond Pkwy, South Portland. Childcare provided with prior RSVP.

Biddeford, Kinship Only- Meets Tuesday, May 17th, 10:00A.M. - 12:00 P.M. at JR Martin Community Center 189 Alfred St #1 Biddeford. NO childcare is provided.

Farmington - F/A/K- Meets Tuesday, May 17th, 6:00-7:30 P.M. at UMF Roberts Learning Center Rm 001 & 003. Childcare provided with prior RSVP.

Sanford - F/A/K- Meets Wednesday, May 18th, 6:30-8:00 P.M. at Curtis Lake Church 38 Westview Dr Sanford. Childcare provided with prior RSVP.

Auburn- F/A/K- Meets Tuesday, May 24th, 6:00-7:30 P.M. at Opportunity Enterprises 400 Center St. Auburn. Childcare provided with prior RSVP.

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

District 4 (Lincoln, Knox, Waldo county): Wednesday May 4th from 5:30-7:00PM at the Salvage Church (formerly Grace Bible Fellowship), 30 Sherer Lane, Rockland. On-site childcare is available with advance notice. **RSVP IS REQUIRED.**

Damariscotta -Thursday May 5th from 5:30-7:00PM at the Lincoln County Assembly Of God Church (672 Main Street). Onsite childcare is available with advance notice. **RSVP IS REQUIRED.**

District 5 (Kennebec/Somerset county): Wednesday May 4th from 6:00PM-7:30PM by **ZOOM**.

District 6 (Penobscot/Piscataquis county): Thursday May 16th from 6:00PM-7:30PM by **ZOOM**.

District 7 & 8 : Thursday May 19th from 12:00PM-1:00PM by **ZOOM**.

Ellsworth: Tuesday, May 17th from 5:30-7:00 P.M. at The United Baptist Church (28 Hancock Street). On-site childcare available with advance notice.

*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 for virtual meetings.***

Questions for Southern Maine Meetings Please Email: brigid@affm.net

Questions for Northern Maine Meetings 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

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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!](#)