

Family Ties

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

Volume 25

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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.



Have You Attended A C.A.R.E.S. Meeting?

C.A.R.E.S. meetings allow for families to make connections and form relationships with other families and find support that can last a lifetime. People who attend often find others that are in a similar situation as their own. Members of a meeting may share their personal experiences and offer one another emotional comfort and moral support.

C.A.R.E.S. meetings provide practical advice and tips to help families cope with the challenges and joys of being a resource family. In-person meetings typically have onsite child care which allows kids to interact with other kids who are experiencing similar life events. Youth benefit from knowing that they are not alone, and others are experiencing similar situations. This opportunity is a great resource for the whole family and provides many other benefits including but not limited to:

- ***NEW: Attend a meeting and receive 1.5 hours of training!***
- Gaining a sense of empowerment and control.
- Improving your coping skills and sense of adjustment.
- Talking openly and honestly about your feelings.
- Reducing stress, fatigue, or a sense of isolation.
- Developing a clearer understanding of what to expect with your situation.
- Getting practical advice or information about additional support options.

C.A.R.E.S. Meeting schedules can be found in the newsletter, on www.affm.net or on AFFM's Facebook page. We hope you're able to join a group soon!



AFFM's Story Time

Caregivers if you have yet to include your child in the monthly Story Time, please consider doing so. You will not be disappointed! The children have the opportunity to meet others in similar situations (foster, adoptive or kinship placements) and you get the opportunity to have up to an hour to yourself.

The kids who have participated thus far have been engaged and engaging. Meagan Sprague and Bette Hoxie delight in their sweet comments. They ask each other their names and ask simple questions like "Did you like that story?" Or "How old are you?" and often hold their fingers up to indicate their own ages. One introduced her Mom by her given name and then said "but you can call her Mommy." They say thank you for each story and blow kisses as we end.

We have attempted to keep stories simple and add at least one that is on YouTube. Meagan and Bette take turns reading and although there is considerable talking and commotion between books, once the stories begin the children are absorbed and they can retell bits of each story at the end. They additionally let us know what they hope to have us read on our next gathering.

Both Meagan and Bette agree that it is a venture we love and look forward too. We encourage you to sign on and see how your kids respond. Story Time is held monthly on the first Wednesday of the month from 5:30 until about 6:30 and is on Zoom. Watch for an email from Meagan for dates and the Zoom link.



Next Story Time: Wednesday July 6th at 5:30pm on zoom!
Information will be sent via AFFM's Listserv

Adoption Announcements!



"After 1539 days in foster care my two boys are now adopted!"
Congratulations to Matthew Blake Zadkiel Marcoux and Paxston Daniel Obrexis Marcoux and the rest of the Marcoux family!

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!

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 Back to School Program is designed to assist families who would struggle otherwise purchasing back to school items for the children in their care.

AFFM's Back to School Program 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 fill out a request form found [here](#) or at affm.net. If you have questions please email meagan@affm.net if you are in districts 1-3 and sheila@affm.net if you are in districts 4-8.

*Please note, AFFM's Back to School Program 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 29th.

*If your child is entering 7th grade up to high school, AFFM may be able to provide a \$25 gift card. As teens tend to have their own style of clothing, AFFM hopes to provide kids going into middle school and high school with gift cards to purchase their own outfits. The Back to School Program was designed to bring a sense of normalcy to kids in care, especially at the beginning of a school year. AFFM is aware providing teens the opportunity to pick their own clothing may help ease some anxiety as they transition into a new school. **AFFM has a limited amount of gift cards available, this will be first come first serve.***

Immunizations

As we approach the new school year, it is important to be sure that children are up to date on all their immunizations. All students to be enrolled in or to attend school must be immunized before starting school.

AFFM is partnering with WIC, OCFS and Public Health Nursing to encourage all children 5 years and older as well as all adults who are eligible, to receive the vaccine to prevent infection from the COVID-19 virus. Vaccine clinics will be held at WIC locations.

AFFM will be at WIC offices to hand out backpacks requested from the Back to School Program, in coordination with the pop up clinics. Keep an eye out for dates and time.

We wish for your child/ren to have a happy and healthy start to a new school year!

Have you Heard About WIC?

WIC is a nutrition program for thousands of Maine families, helping Maine kids to grow up strong and healthy. WIC food benefits are available based on income guidelines and up-to-date nutrition research. WIC seeks to serve all Maine families with healthy foods, including formula, free nutrition advice, tips for staying healthy, breastfeeding support and supplies and resources for growing families. WIC is complete nutrition care.

WIC is open to anyone living in Maine, including migrants working in Maine. Applicants can be any of the following:

- ♦ Women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or had a baby in the last six months.
- ♦ Infants and children up to the age of five, including adopted and foster children.
- ♦ Fathers may apply for their children.

People on SNAP, MaineCare or TANF are automatically eligible for WIC.

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/population-health/wic/>

Upcoming Training

July 7, 2022 7:00 PM-8:30 PM Allegation Prevention

This training will assist families in asking "the right questions" prior to placement, provide helpful hints on what and when to document events, provide creative ways to prioritize and/or reduce conflicts between adults and children, provide a basic understanding of confidentiality rules, and the respecting and valuing of privacy. The training will also share the process of investigating an allegation in a foster home and what families can anticipate in terms of the process.

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

July 21, 2022 9:00 AM 11:00 AM Mandated Reporter Training

All resource families are required to take the mandated reporter training when becoming licensed. They also need to renew this training every 4 years! Join us here for mandated reporter training and receive 2 training hours towards recertification! Mandated Reporters are a critical part of Maine's Child Protective System and act as an early warning network to identify suspected child abuse and neglect; promptly enough to avoid serious and long term damage to a child. Professionals who frequently encounter children in their work are in the best position to recognize and report suspected child abuse and neglect and are required by law to do so.

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

July 27, 2022 7:00PM-8:30PM Managing Confidentiality; The Why and How

Who... What... When... Where... are very important questions to consider when you are a resource parent. How do you manage these questions while maintaining confidentiality as a caregiver? Understanding boundaries when it pertains to confidential information can be key to keeping children safe. This workshop will help to define those boundaries and work through them by discussing why confidentiality is important and how caregivers can work within the boundaries. This workshop will: *Discuss federal and state policy and the DHHS guidelines, also known as the "Little Red Book" *Work through different types of confidentiality in everyday lives *Cover the rights the foster children and biological parents have when it comes to confidentiality and 'their story'. *Address the DHHS social media policy and how to manage this. *Work through common questions around confidentiality.

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

Are you looking to complete your relicensing hours on your own time?

Foster Parent College is self-paced training available 24/7 with courses including informative handouts, interactive exercises, review questionnaires, and printable summaries of training. Training offered include but are not limited to: Anger Outbursts, Child Abuse and Neglect, Foster Care to Adoption, Understanding Behavior, and Kinship Care.

Sign Up Here: <https://affm.net/support/training/>

Thank You!



A huge thank you to Marc Motors Nissan in Sanford for selecting AFFM as your May Community Spotlight recipient! We appreciate your support!

Thank you to all that made Family Fun Day at Fort Williams a success on Saturday May 14th! We could not have asked for better weather and fun was had by all!!! Thank you Ukuleles Heal The World, Wildlife Encounters Ecology & Wellness Center, 207Bounce, Cape Elizabeth Fire/Rescue, Fort Williams Park, and all of our volunteers, donors, and sponsors! Thank you especially to the families that joined us today! It was incredible to gather again!



Thank you to all that made Family Fun Day at Fort Knox a success on Saturday May 14th! Thank you Frank's Bake Shop & Catering, LaBree's Bakery, Anah Shrine Funsters, KidsPeace, Spurwink, Fort Knox Park, Bangor Police Dept. K9 Unit, David Dunbar & Steve Carey, Ontrack DJ Bros and all of our volunteers, donors, and sponsors! Thank you especially to the families that joined us today!

Update to AFFM's Donation Guidelines

AFFM accepts donations by **appointment only**, please call us to schedule a donation drop off appointment at 207-827-2331. Due to lack of storage space we may be limited in what sizes we are able to accept due to what current needs are. **Please, when dropping off your donations, ONLY bring what was discussed when you made the appointment.** AFFM does have a Private Facebook Group, "AFFM Swap Only" where items (such as cribs, beds, baby furniture, toys) can be shared for home to home donations. Any donations that are left outside anonymously will be discarded for safety precautions.

Please make sure to sort and wash the donations you bring to us, we are doing our best to make sure they reach children in care. As always, thank you for your support!



Kinship



Corner

Grief and Loss C.A.R.E.S. Meeting

Bette Hoxie and Dona Lane co-facilitate the Kinship statewide C.A.R.E.S. meeting which centers around Grief and Loss specifically with family members suffering from substance use disorder.

It is the hope of AFFM that between Bette and Dona, they can provide support to all kinship families and especially to those families who are caring for children whose parents may be misusing drugs and alcohol or worse yet who have died from an overdose. Managing one's own grief is difficult but doing so while trying to help children manage their grief is a huge undertaking!

The Kinship Statewide C.A.R.E.S. Meeting is held the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:00PM-7:30PM. The next meeting will be held over zoom on Tuesday July 12th. RSVP today!

Dona Lane - Substance Use Prevention and Recovery Coordinator

Dona has been working in social services for over 30 years and has also worked with church communities in partnership to help support drug-free living, coping with emotions, and support through the holiday season support groups. Her formal training has been from advanced clinical work at Harvard and she was on the Public Speakers Bureau, educating on addiction/recovery as well as mental health and wellness. Dona has been a therapist for many years and a consultant for the last 15 years. Although she no longer formally practices, Dona does consult, coach, and help wherever she is needed. Dona is also a First Nation Mi'kmaq and does practice much of the way she was taught by her late father and grandmother.

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)

When a flashlight grows dim or quits working, do you just throw it away? Of course not. You change the batteries. When a person messes up or finds themselves in a dark place, do you cast them aside? Of course not! You help them change their batteries.

Some need AA...attention and affection; some need AAA...attention, affection, and acceptance; some need C....compassion; some need D...direction.

And if they still don't seem to shine...simply sit with them quietly and share your light.

– Rachel Dansby Freeman

Join AFFM at Congdon's After
Dark on August 30th!
10% of proceeds from all food
trucks will be donated to AFFM!

Tuesday August 30, 2022
4PM-8PM
1100 Post Road
Wells, ME



Connect . Advice. Resources. Education. Support

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

STATEWIDE Kinship C.A.R.E.S. MEETING: Tuesday July 12th from 6:00PM-7:30PM

Friday With Friends, Friday July 22nd from 6:00 AM-7:00AM

****NEW: Attend a meeting and receive 1.5 hours of training!****

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

F/A/K Daytime- Meets Tuesday, July 5th 10:00-11:30 A.M. by **ZOOM**.

F/A/K Evening- Meets Wednesday, July 13th 7:00-8:30 P.M. by **ZOOM**.

F/A/K Afternoon- Meets Thursday, July 21st 12:00-1:30 P.M. by **ZOOM**.

A/PG Afternoon - Meets Tuesday, July 19th 12:00-1:30 P.M. by **ZOOM**.

South Portland - F/A/K- Meets Tuesday, July 12th 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, July 19th 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, July 19th 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, July 20th 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, July 26th 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:

F/A/K- Meets Wednesday, July 6 from 6:00-7:30 PM by **ZOOM**.

F/A/K- Meets Monday, July 18th from 6:00-7:30 P.M. by **ZOOM**.

F/A/K- Meets Thursday, July 21st from 12:00-1:30 P.M. by **ZOOM**.

Rockland - F/A/K- Meets Wednesday, July 6th from 5:30-7:00 P.M. at the Salvage Church (30 Sherer Lane, Rockland). On-site childcare is available with advance notice.

Damariscotta - F/A/K: Meets Thursday, July 7th from 5:30-7:00 P.M. at The Lincoln County Assembly of God Church (672 Main Street). On-site childcare is available with advance notice.

Bangor - A/PG - Meets Tuesday, July 12th from 6:00-7:30PM at the Redeemer Lutheran Church (540 Essex Street). On-site childcare available with advance notice.

Dover-Foxcroft - F/A/K - Meets Thursday, July 14th from 6:00-7:30PM at the Dover-Foxcroft Congregational Church (824 West Main Street). On-site childcare available with advance notice.

Ellsworth - F/A/K- Meets Tuesday, July 19th from 5:30-7:00 P.M. at The Resource Center (460 High Street, directly across from Mardens). On-site childcare is available with advance notice.

AFFM is aware if you receive the printed version of the newsletter some dates listed above 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

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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

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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.



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!](#)