

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 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 support and resources 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.



November is National Adoption Month!

Here are some of the ways AFFM Supports Adoptive Families:

AFFM has full-time staff members that have both personal and professional experience with the adoption process. AFFM staff is available to help families with their post-adoption needs, systems navigation, referrals, and help families navigate the intricacies that arise through normative crises.

C.A.R.E.S. Meetings specifically for families who have adopted or have permanency guardianship

Adoption Specific Training

Jockey Being Family backpacks for children recently adopted. A newly adopted child may receive a backpack personalized with their initials and filled with a cozy blanket and coveted Jockey Being Family® bear. Adopted parents will also receive a cloth tote of resources.

AFFM Events and Activities are open to all resource Families: adoptive, foster, and kinship!

Access to Material Goods and AFFM's Resource Rooms

Mentor Program

Discount Card Program

Back to School Program and Holiday Gift Giving Program

To learn more about AFFM Supports visit:
www.affm.net or email info@affm.net

Upcoming Training!

The Attachment Continuum of Care

November 10, 2022 From 6PM-8PM

with Chris McLaughlin, MSW, LCSW & the Executive Director of NASW Maine and Resource Parent Panel

Chris will work with a variety of panelists who have both professional and personal experiences with helping and caring for youth who are working through attachment challenges. This training will guide participants through the multiple layers of attachment and the contributing factors that impact the family team. Through personal dialogue and professional insight backed by years of experience and research, this training looks to reduce shame and provide tools to help families and professionals better serve the youth they care for.

Hosted By: AFFM in partnership with Office of Child and Family Services and A Family For ME

This is an in person as well as a virtual event

In Person Location: Jeff's Catering 15 Event Center Way, Brewer

(Light snacks and childcare available to those attending in person)

If you plan to join virtually, after registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting

[Click Here to Register](#)

For families receiving a hardcopy of the newsletter, email info@affm.net for the registration link

Angels in Adoption® Award!

Since its inception in 1999, the Angels in Adoption® Program has upheld a tradition of celebrating the extraordinary efforts of individuals, couples, families, and organizations who work tirelessly to advocate for children in need of a family. Throughout the 21 years, over 2,700 Angels have received this special honor. CCAI also awards a select number of National Angels in Adoption® honorees. As the name implies, these are individuals whose contributions in the fields of adoption or foster care have an impact on a national scale.

AFFM is thrilled to have Cyndi Dolloff as Maine's Angels in Adoption® Recipient! Cyndi's adoption journey began several years ago when she had a two-and-a-half-year-old girl join her home. The goal, at the time, was for the girl to live with Cyndi temporarily. Fast forward five years later to Cyndi adopting her. Throughout the years, Cyndi and her daughter grew and faced many of life's challenges together. After her daughter moved out of her home, she had children of her own and turned to Cyndi for help in raising them. One of Cyndi's grandchildren has been with her since he was two months old and the other has been with Cyndi since she was a newborn. Cyndi eventually adopted her grandchildren, who are now seven and eight years old. As an intergenerational caregiver, Cyndi provides a caring, fun, active lifestyle for her family.

Along with being a full-time single mother and caregiver, Cyndi also works with children as an Ed Tech. Cyndi strives to teach her students that they are all valued, loved, and can make a difference in the world. Even with the very little free time that Cyndi has, she continues to go out of her way and help others. Cyndi participates on resource parent panel discussions and is a volunteer mentor for other resource families. Cyndi discusses the importance of diversity and inclusion at home and in the classroom. She has openly shared her experience as an adoptive, foster, and kinship caregiver. Individuals that have had the opportunity to interact with Cyndi share that she has a wonderful perspective, a warm personality, and is very supportive. Congratulations Cyndi on this well-deserved accomplishment!



Feel Good Story!



The families and children at Foundations Academy pulled together their resources and purchased items for a kinship family in need. The class gathered \$80 in Walmart gift cards and a bunch of groceries! They included things like pasta and sauce, Mac and cheese, canned goods, fresh eggs, snacks for school lunches, hot and cold cereal, toilet paper, tooth brushes, and so much more!

This year the students have been talking about "see a need, meet a need" and they were certainly able to do that! The groceries were delivered to the family and they were so thankful!

Adoption Announcements!



Love makes a family and the judge ruled it so! Samwel and Maikel are home for good! Officially a family on September 6, 2022.

Suzanne Schropfer and Leilani Stratton



Congratulations to Christine and Matthew Provencal on the adoption of their daughter Blessing Marie Provencal. "It's been a long almost four years but she's finally ours. We couldn't be happier!"

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!



Empathy in Child Protection

I frequently hear from kinship caregivers, parents and youth who feel misunderstood, threatened and or devalued. If there is one component I believe to be missing in policies, laws and family interventions it is the lack of empathy.

Relationships are key to everyone's well-being and it does not matter if you are an only child or from a big family. Imagine what it would be like if you are suddenly removed from your parent/parents, and your belongings that mean so much are often left behind. As a child, they may be aware that things are not happy and/or calm in the household but there is a sense of normalcy to which they are accustomed. Who provides empathy and understanding to this child? In about 60% of CPS cases in Maine children are placed with a grandparent, an aunt, uncle or older sibling. There is a certain degree of normalcy within the home of a family member.

What if something happens and the child/children are removed from the relative's home and placed with an unknown family? No transition plan occurs so the child has little to no idea where the parents and or the relatives have gone. As a child you must wonder what you did to create all the rejections and abandonments. The case worker tells the child, "You are going to be living here for a while until your parents do what they need to do to keep you safe." As a child you begin to wonder, "Am I unsafe? Did I do something to make somebody unsafe? Why do the people who say they love me keep disappearing?" The child is re-traumatized, the parents are grieving/hurting and the relative caregivers are feeling confused, and heartbroken.

Such a tumbleweed effect of emotions, needs and dedication. Who sorts through it all to establish how to calm the storms etc.? Empathy, with all involved, gets lost as each person is in the entanglement of emotions and the checklist of needs continuously grows. So many unanswered questions. So many fears so much anger and hurt!

I believe that our anger is our fear personified. I also believe strongly that the momma bear mentality is real and yet creates its own set of misunderstandings. So again, it seems as though empathy is non-existent. Parents are accused of not accepting their own wrong doing in child protective matters. Grandparents who want the best interests for both their children and grandchildren get angry, both at their child who is the parent for not putting their child/children first over their own needs, and the caseworkers who seem to find fault with them as a relative. Such a jumbled up group of emotions and caring.

How does one sort it all out and ultimately make the best decisions for children who have little or no voice in matters of placement and permanency? There are no easy answers but it does seem as though each member of the child's family and the caseworker would all feel better if a time could be established when all parties involved could hear one another's reaction to the situation. Once the desire to be the momma bear and the protector of children settles a bit, the mutual understanding and empathy can aid in forming better resolutions and help maintain much needed family connections.

Submitted by A Kinship Caregiver

A Message From OCFS Medical Director

All children over the age of 6 months should be protected from preventable diseases, like the influenza and COVID-19 virus, by keeping up to date on their vaccines and boosters. The COVID-19 vaccine can be administered alongside other childhood vaccines. [Visit this page](#) to view the recommendations to stay up to date on COVID-19 vaccines and boosters. Contact your child's healthcare provider to ask about availability of vaccines for your child. You can also find COVID-19 vaccine sites in Maine offering vaccine [here](#) or by visiting [bravelikeme.com](https://www.bravelikeme.com) You can find more answers about pediatric COVID-19 vaccine [here](#). You can find more information about the flu at [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) Now is the time to get vaccinated to protect everyone in your household from the flu and COVID. This will help to keep everyone healthy, especially as the cold weather approaches.

Adrienne W. Carmack, MD

Office of Child and Family Services

Links in this piece: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/stay-up-to-date.html>

<https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/vaccination-sites>

<https://www.bravelikeme.com/>

<https://www.maine.gov/covid19/vaccines/public-faq>

<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/conditions/flu/Pages/the-flu-what-parents-need-to-know.aspx>



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



children's
MUSEUM + THEATRE
of maine

Celebrate National Adoption Month all November!

For the month of November, The Children's Museum & Theatre of Maine will honor Adoption Month by waiving the 6 person limit on AFFM's membership. Right now, the pass allows AFFM families to have 6 people visit per day at no charge. For November, the museum is offering unlimited visits for any family with AFFM!

*250 Thompsons Point Rd,
Portland, ME*

**Don't Forget
Your Discount
Card!**

Reserve your visit:

**[https://
www.kitetails.org/
plan-your-visit](https://www.kitetails.org/plan-your-visit)**



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

November

National Adoption Month

Whole Month Of November

For the month of November,
The Bangor Children's
Discovery Museum will honor
Adoption Month by waiving the
limit on AFFM's membership.
Right now, the pass allows
AFFM families to visit one
family per day at no charge.
For November, the museum is
offering unlimited visits for any
family with AFFM!

**Don't Forget
your AFFM
Discount card!**

**MAINE
DISCOVERY
MUSEUM**

***Operating hours
are Tuesday
through Saturday
10AM -5PM***

74 Main St, Bangor, ME 04401

STATEWIDE C.A.R.E.S. MEETING meets the second Tuesday of the month from 10-11:30 A.M

STATEWIDE Kinship C.A.R.E.S. MEETING meets the second Tuesday of the month from 6:00PM-7:30PM

Friday With Friends meets the fourth Friday of the month 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: *Childcare is Available at in Person Meetings with Advance Notice*

F/A/K Daytime- Meets the first Tuesday of the month from 10:00-11:30 A.M. by **ZOOM**.

F/A/K Evening- Meets the second Wednesday of the month from 7:00-8:30 P.M. by **ZOOM**.

F/A/K Afternoon- Meets the fourth Thursday of the month from 12:00-1:30 P.M. by **ZOOM**.

A/PG Afternoon - Meets the third Tuesday of the month from 12:00-1:30 P.M. by **ZOOM**.

South Portland - F/A/K- Meets the second Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30 P.M. at The Point 345 Clarks Pond Pkwy, South Portland.

Biddeford, Kinship Only- Meets the third Tuesday of the month from 10:00A.M. - 12:00 P.M. at JR Martin Community Center 189 Alfred St #1 Biddeford. Childcare is not provided.

Wilton, Kinship Only- Meets Thursday, September 15th, 6:00-7:30 P.M. at SeniorsPlus 284 Main St. Suite 210, Wilton. *Childcare is not provided at this time.*

Farmington - F/A/K- Meets the third Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30 P.M. at UMF Roberts Learning Center Rm 001 & 003.

Sanford - F/A/K- *Temporarily on hold*

Auburn- F/A/K- Meets the fourth Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30 P.M. at Opportunity Enterprises 400 Center St. Auburn.

Northern Maine C.A.R.E.S. Meetings: *Childcare is Available at in Person Meetings with Advance Notice*

F/A/K- Meets the first Wednesday of the month from 6:00-7:30 PM by **ZOOM**.

F/A/K- Meets the third Monday of the month from 6:00-7:30 P.M. by **ZOOM**.

F/A/K- Meets the third Thursday of the month from 12:00-1:30 P.M. by **ZOOM**.

Damariscotta - F/A/K: Meets the first Thursday of the month from 5:30-7:00 P.M. at The Lincoln County Assembly of God Church (672 Main Street).

Bangor - A/PG - Meets the second Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30PM at the Redeemer Lutheran Church (540 Essex Street).

Dover-Foxcroft - F/A/K - Meets the second Thursday of the month from 6:00-7:30PM at the Dover-Foxcroft Congregational Church (824 West Main Street).

Ellsworth - F/A/K- Meets the third Tuesday of the month from 5:30-7:00 P.M. at The Resource Center (460 High Street, directly across from Mardens).

Skowhegan-F/A/K- Meets the second Tuesday of the month from 6-7:30P.M. at The Federated Church (13 Island Ave.)

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.

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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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AND HUMAN SERVICES. PLEASE DIRECT COMMENTS TO: EDITOR, FAMILY TIES, AT
THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

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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

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!](#)