



# FAMILY TIES

**VOLUME 27 | NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024**

*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 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.

PH: 207-827-2331



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

[WWW.AFFM.NET](http://WWW.AFFM.NET)



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

# Mentor Service

## BENEFITS

How adoptive, foster, and kinship families can utilize a mentor?

- A listening ear
- Preparing for adoption
- Navigating/understanding DHHS policies/practices
- Support for specific child behaviors
- Preparing for permanency guardianship
- Problem solving aide
- Navigating school (special education)
- Identifying/finding resources (material, social, training, etc.)
- And more!

Mentors help new families figure things out that they were not prepared for such as, how to register a child for school, understanding the Key Clinic, etc.

*Scan the QR code to learn more about this free service*



iMPROVE  
DEVELOP  
TRAINING  
MOTIVATE  
COACHING  
iNSPIRE

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE MENTOR SERVICE CALL**

**207-827-2331**

**CONTACT INFO:**

info@affm.net | www.affm.net

**CELEBRATE NATIONAL ADOPTION MONTH ALL NOVEMBER!**

**In honor of National Adoption Month this November, The Children's Museum & Theatre of Maine and Maine Discovery Museum are providing families with unlimited\* visits to the museums with AFFM's Discount Card!**

*\*Outside of the month of November the museums offer free admittance **up to 6 people/per day with prior RSVP to AFFM***

**MAINE  
DISCOVERY  
MUSEUM**  
74 MAIN ST. BANGOR

**DON'T FORGET YOUR  
DISCOUNT CARD WHEN  
YOU VISIT!**



**250 THOMPSONS POINT RD, PORTLAND**

## **A MESSAGE FROM OCFS MEDICAL DIRECTOR**

Healthy habits can help children succeed in school. With all the excitement and emotions of the upcoming holidays, you can help children grow and thrive, at school and at home, by focusing on healthy habits. More information on health and safety is available on [HealthyChildren.org](https://HealthyChildren.org)

Focus on sleep, exercise and nutrition- make sure children have a good healthy breakfast before they head to school. Encourage children and youth to drink water through the day, get daily exercise, and maintain a healthy sleep schedule.

Tune into your child's mental health- look for changes in behavior, ask how they are feeling. Build in self-care and outside activities. If your child needs mental health support, there are resources available through schools, and in the community. Let your child know it is okay to talk about their feelings.

Plan for mindful media use in your home and through out the day- help children choose high- quality, age appropriate games and programs, and balance screen time with sleep, exercise and other healthy activities.

Stay up to date on check ups and immunizations. Check with your child's physician if they are due for a check up, or for any immunizations, including the flu vaccine.

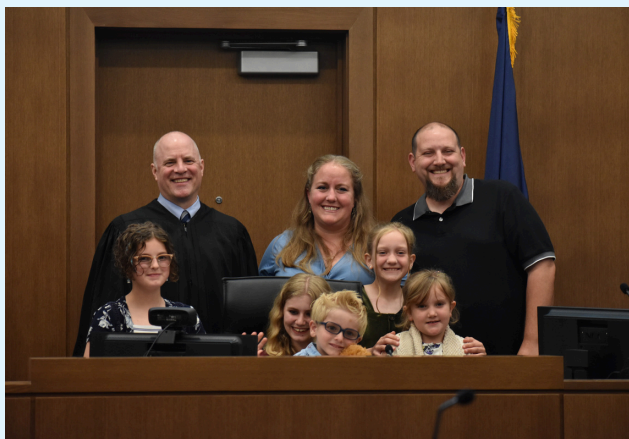
Thank you again for all you do to keep the children of Maine happy, healthy and safe!

Adrienne W. Carmack, MD  
Medical Director, OCFS





# ADOPTION ANNOUNCEMENTS!



On May 28th, Sophira, Skyra and Jax were officially adopted into their forever home with parents, Ray and Jaimie. After more than 800 days in care together, the three biological siblings gained two more sisters, Chevelle and Charlotte, though you would never guess they hadn't known each other just two years ago! The family's support system (community, family and friends) filled the courtroom with over 20 people in the room and dozens of their teachers, classmates, and additional friends and family on Zoom. The family of seven feels loved, complete and whole. They are excited to see what the future holds!

.....

We're delighted to celebrate our family becoming legally official.

After experiencing foster care for 1608 Piper was adopted on May 28, 2024 and after 682 days, Ophie was adopted on July 15, 2024.

These babies have been a huge blessing and are incredibly loved by our village.

Always O'hana, Officially Varnum's!



## Upcoming Training

### *Mandated Reporter Training 12/4/24 Time: 6PM-8PM*

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 protection 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.

### *Understanding Boundaries as a Resource Parent 12/10/24 Time: 6PM-7:30PM*

In this training, you will understand setting boundaries for healthy relationships. This training will answer some of the common issues and concerns when setting boundaries.

### *Self-Care for Foster and Kinship Providers 12/11/2024 Time: 9AM-10:30AM*

After this training participants will be aware of what self-care really is and how participants can successfully implement self-care in their own daily lifestyles.

<https://affm.net/trainings-rsvp/>

# Staff to Contact for Support

## DISTRICTS 1 & 2 (COUNTIES: YORK & CUMBERLAND)



Kelly Donegan  
Kinship Navigator  
kelly.d@affm.net  
207-659-8147  
York only



Tammy Cutchen  
Kinship Navigator  
tammy.c@affm.net  
207-478-6990  
Cumberland only



Beth Gilboy  
Resource Family  
Specialist  
Beth@affm.net  
207-631-4318



Brigid Torberg  
Resource Support  
Coordinator  
Brigid@affm.net  
207-710-2089

## DISTRICT 3 (COUNTIES: OXFORD, ANDROSCOGGIN, FRANKLIN)



Jessica Richards  
Kinship Navigator  
Jessica@affm.net  
207-817-6062



Brigid Torberg  
Resource Support  
Coordinator  
Brigid@affm.net  
207-710-2089



Beth Gilboy  
Resource Family  
Specialist  
Beth@affm.net  
207-631-4318

## DISTRICTS 4 & 5 (COUNTIES: WALDO, LINCOLN, KNOX, SAGadahoc, KENNEBEC & SOMERSET)



Alyssa Rovella  
Kinship Navigator  
Alyssa.r@affm.net  
207-817-6060



Sheila McDougal  
Resource Support  
Coordinator  
Sheila@affm.net  
207-817-6063



Heather Crooker  
Resource Family Specialist  
HeatherC@affm.net  
207-817-6065

## DISTRICT 6 (COUNTIES: PENOBSOT AND PISCATAQUIS)



Heather Crooker  
Resource Family  
Specialist  
HeatherC@affm.net  
207-817-6065



Terri Barnett  
Kinship Navigator  
Terri.b@affm.net  
207-659-0801



Sheila McDougal  
Resource Support  
Coordinator  
Sheila@affm.net  
207-817-6063

## DISTRICTS 7 & 8 (COUNTIES: WASHINGTON, HANCOCK, AROOSTOOK)



Sarah Hatt  
Resource  
Family Specialist  
Sarah@affm.net  
207-631-0342



Sheila McDougal  
Resource Support  
Coordinator  
Sheila@affm.net  
207-817-6063



Mindy Kane  
Kinship Navigator  
Mindy@affm.net  
207-631-0580

## ALL DISTRICTS (ALL COUNTIES) P: 207-827-2331 E: INFO@AFFM.NET



Travis Bryant  
Executive Director



Meagan Sprague  
Resource Family  
Program Manager



Bette Hoxie  
Kinship Program Manager



Monica Bushey  
Training Program  
Manager



Hether Anderson  
Lead Resource  
Family Trainer



Holly White  
Administrative  
Specialist

# KINSHIP CORNER

## Did You Know There Are Kinship Specific C.A.R.E.S. Meetings?

**RSVP HERE:** <https://affm.net/cares-rsvp/>

**Biddeford** - Meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month 10:00A.M. - 12:00 P.M. at The Second Congregational Church at 19 Crescent Street Biddeford. NO childcare is provided. This meeting is led by Cat Anglea, AFFM Facilitator and Resource Parent.

**Wilton** - Meets the 3rd Thursday 6:00-7:30 P.M. at SeniorsPlus 284 Main St. Suite 210, Wilton, ME. This meeting is led by Cyndi Dolloff, AFFM Trainer, Facilitator and Resource Parent. Childcare provided with RSVP!

**Milford**- Meets on the first Wednesday of the month from 6:00-7:30 P.M. at the Dr. Lewis S. Libby School (13 School St.) Meeting led by Bette Hoxie, AFFM Kinship Program Manager.

**South Portland/Southern Maine Agency on Aging** - Meets the 2nd Thursday of the month 12:00 to 1:00 P.M.. at the South Portland Library. Childcare provided with prior RSVP. The meeting is led by Tammy Cutchen, AFFM Kinship Navigator and Robyn Berry, SMAA Family Caregiver Support Program Specialist.

**Statewide** - Meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month 6:00-7:30 P.M. by ZOOM Conferencing. RSVP IS REQUIRED EACH MONTH TO RECEIVE THE LINK TO JOIN THE MEETING. Meeting led by Bette Hoxie, AFFM Kinship Program Manager and Dona Lane, M. ED, Clinical & Educational Consultant.

**AFFM has partnered with the University of Maine to help survey kinship families who receive support from AFFM. Please keep an eye out for the survey (by mail or e-mail) from the University. Surveys will arrive about 3 to 6 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!**



## Food for Thought and a Plea for Creative Ideas

Housing shortages in Maine are at an all time high! Children entering kinship care both through Child Protective Services and private placements or through the Probate Court is also at an all time high!

Here is the dilemma: Grandparents, other relatives and fictive kin generally have children join into their households without any prior notice. They may live in senior housing where children are not permitted, they may live in their own homes but have limited bedroom /sleeping space. They may have a bedroom but not enough beds. They may or may not have a vehicle. If they do have a car it may not accommodate infant and toddler car seats or be large enough to cover the number that they need to transport. The issues go on!!!

The kinship navigators have been working with a number of other agencies in an attempt to find adequate housing etc. for several Maine kin families. AFFM has limited funds to support kin caregivers and the families are so appreciative of all that they receive. However, it does not go far and staff are struggling to increase their own awareness of housing possibilities. Feel free to share any ideas you may have with Bette Hoxie and the Kinship Navigators across the state.

An example of one family has this scenario: A single grandmother is caring for 2 minor grandchildren, an 18 year old grandson who is a senior in high school and she is the full time caregiver to an adult disabled son. She was evicted over a year ago and has been moving from one motel to another . She qualifies for a housing voucher but thus far nothing that will meet the need she has to fit the 5 of them has become available. She does not own a vehicle so each time she has to move from a hotel to another she has to take from her limited social security benefits to rent a uhaul. She has to throw food and sometimes acquired items away to be sure all will fit in the u haul. There has to be a better way!

This is meant to be informative as well as a bid for creative housing ideas. AFFM and the Kinship Program welcome your suggestions!





**\*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 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.

**South Portland, Kinship Only-** Meets the second Thursday of the month from 12pm-1pm at the South Portland Library.

**Waterboro - F/A/K** - Meets the first Tuesday of the month from 6:00-7:30pm at Massabesic Adult Learning Center  
84 West Road Massabesic East Waterboro

**Biddeford, Kinship Only-** Meets the third Tuesday of the month from 10:00A.M.-12:00 P.M. at The Second Congregational Church at 19 Crescent Street Biddeford. *Childcare is not provided at this time.*

**Wilton, Kinship Only-** Meets the third Thursday of the month from 6:00-7:30 P.M. at SeniorsPlus 284 Main St. Suite 210, Wilton.

**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**

**Augusta- F/A/K** - Meets on the first Monday of the month from 5:30-7:00 P.M. by **ZOOM**.

**Orono - F/A/K** - Meets on the third Monday of the month from 6:00-7:30 P.M. at the Orono United Methodist Church (36 Oak Street).

**Damariscotta - F/A/K-** Meets the first Thursday of the month from 5:30-7:00 P.M. at Central Lincoln County YMCA (525 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).

**Ellsworth - F/A/K-** Meets the third Tuesday of the month from 5:30-7:30 P.M. at United Baptist Church (28 Hancock Street).

**Skowhegan-F/A/K-** Meets the second Tuesday of the month from 4-5:30 P.M. at The Federated Church (13 Island Ave.)

**Belfast- F/A/K-** Meets the first Tuesday of the month from 5:30-7:00 P.M. at the Baptist Church (95 High Street).

**Machias- F/A/K-** Meets the second Thursday of the month from 5:00-6:30 P.M. at the Rose M. Gaffney School (15 Rose Gaffney Road)

**Milford-Kinship Only-** Meets on the first Wednesday of the month from 6:00-7:30 P.M. at the Dr. Lewis S. Libby School (13 School St.)

**Presque Isle- F/A/K-** Meets the first Tuesday of the month from 5:30-7:00 P.M. at Presque Isle Public Library (39 2nd Street).

**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**

**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](mailto:brigid@affm.net)**

**Questions for Northern Maine Meetings Please Email: [sheila@affm.net](mailto:sheila@affm.net)**

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.  
304 Hancock Street Suite 2A, Bangor, ME 04401  
333 Lincoln Street Suite 101 Saco, ME 04072

Phone: (207) 827-2331  
Fax: (207) 573-3023  
On the Web: [www.affm.net](http://www.affm.net)  
E-Mail: [info@affm.net](mailto:info@affm.net)

Affiliated With:  
Families Rising  
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.

NON-PROFIT  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Bangor, ME  
PERMIT NO. 65



## 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**



Like us on Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Adoptive-and-Foster-Families-of-Maine-Inc/>

## Contact Us



Save a tree, sign up for the E-Newsletter!

**207-827-2331**

Email: [info@affm.net](mailto:info@affm.net)

LEARN MORE

Visit Our Website  
[www.affm.net](http://www.affm.net)

