

Family Ties

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.

Volume 18 Number 8

Newsletter

August 2015

Good Will-Hinckley College Step Up Program

In partnership with Kennebec Valley Community College, Good Will-Hinckley offers housing and academic/life-skills coaching to youth who wish to attend a post-secondary school

Elements of the program:

- Students will have the academic and life skill support they need to obtain a degree or certification at KVCC
- Students will be engaged with their community through mentors and meaningful work
- Students will be encouraged to maintain and/or create life-long ties with supportive adults who will sustain them long after they leave our program
- Year-round housing on the Good Will-Hinckley Campus, which is adjacent to KVCC's new, state-of-the-art main campus
- An academic coach who works in partnership with KVCC staff to guide students through academic remediation needs and college classes
- Connection to a mentor from the local community who will provide organization and job-readiness skills
- Life skills development
- Leadership and community service opportunities
- A focus on maintaining and developing life-long supportive adult connections

The Students:

- Are interested in attending KVCC
- Want to be part of a supportive learning community
- Welcome the academic and life skill support offered
- Have obtained a high school diploma or GED
- Were previously in the foster care system

The Housing:

- Is safe, affordable and adjacent to the KVCC campus
- Consists of dorm-like cottages that house 6 to 8 residents each
- Includes a resident advisor and life-skill training and support

The Staff:

- Are caring and committed individuals who have a wide range of expertise and experience in helping youth aging out of foster care succeed in academics and life.



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Call today for more information:
Lisa Sandy, Director of Admissions;
(207)238-4034 or via email at lsandy@gwh.org

Foster Parents and Birth Parents– Working as a Team

Dr. John Degarmo

Okay, let me be honest with you. My wife is much better at this than I am; working with the birth parents of my children in foster care. You see, there are times when I am not as welcoming as she is. There are times when I am a little frustrated with the birth parents, due to the abuse and neglect they may have inflicted upon the children from foster care living in my house, and a part of my family. When a child from foster care is placed into my home, that child becomes a child of my own; a child that I love unconditionally, and one that I will fight for with all my strength and resources in an attempt to protect him from further harm and trauma. With this in mind, I sometimes have a difficult time getting past my own judgmental nature, and that is so very wrong of me. I know this, and I work hard at getting past this weakness of mine. As I noted above, my wife is much better at this, and is a very loving and caring person; more so than I am, and this is one of her strengths. Yet, I understand the importance of creating a healthy and positive working relationship with the birth parents of my foster children. After all, the end goal is that of reunification between the child and the parent. As foster parents, we want to ensure that we do the best we can with the birth parents so that the child has a happy, healthy, and safe home to go back to. It can be difficult enough having a foster child in your home. He may have been placed in your home because of abuse or neglect from his family. Perhaps he was in danger from parents who were abusing themselves. Whatever the reason for his placement into the child welfare's custody, your foster child has most likely come with some emotional problems, and is struggling with the loss of his family. As a foster parent, it is part of your job to help your foster child deal with these issues, and help him adjust to his new environment, as well as develop a positive and loving relationship with him.

What can be more difficult, though, is another part of your role as a foster parent; Co-Parenting. When a foster parent shares the nurturing of a foster child alongside the birth parents and caseworker, reunification tends to happen at a quicker and more successful rate. Co-Parenting sees you, as a foster parent, working alongside the biological parents of the child living under your roof, and with your family. This may be the more difficult part of your job. To begin with, these may be the people who abused or neglected your foster child. Helping them might just be the last thing you wish to do. Therefore, it is important that you do not prejudge them before you meet them. Indeed, your first inclination may be that these are people who do not deserve to have their child back. What is important to consider, though, is that many biological parents of foster children were abused themselves, and know of no other way when raising children. Also disturbing is that some birth parents were foster children, as well, and are just repeating the cycle they went through as a child. Certainly, there are reasons why their children are in care that we may never understand. What is best for your foster child, though, is that you work alongside your caseworker, as well as the birth parents, and try to determine what is best for your foster child's future, as well as how to best meet his needs in the present.

It might not always be easy. It might not always be pleasant. Yet, your role as a foster parent is not only to help the children in need, but also work towards reunification. This means, as you know, the reunifying of the child with his family. Does this always happen? No. Should it always happen? Well, I have seen occasions where the child was placed in harm when returning to his family and to his home, and with him being better off with another family. A tragedy on many levels. As foster parents, we have the opportunity to help bring families together, to help children heal, and to help biological family members be better parents and care takers. Through our actions and our words, through our questions and our answers, and through our compassion and patience, we can help in the healing process for all involved. As a foster parent, you are a role model not only for the child, but for his parents; not only for your friends and family, but for society. As a foster parent, you have the ability to give words of comfort and love to both the child and his family. As a foster parent, you can teach life lessons and help both child and parent learn new skills. What a great opportunity, and at the same time, a big responsibility. I know you are up to the task! I know you will do a great job!

Thank you for what you do. Thank you for being a foster parent and caring for children. Sadly the need is strong, as there are so many children placed into care each year. Yet there are so few willing to be a foster parent, as it is not an easy task. Truly, it is the hardest job you will ever come to love.

For much more, order Dr. John's BRAND NEW eBook-*Foster Parenting 101: Foster Parents and Birth Parents-Working Together*.



Thank You!

AFFM would like to thank The Wilhelm Reich Infant Trust for the generous use of the Tamarack Cottage this summer. Thank you for allowing families to break away from their hectic lives and enjoy time together at this beautiful location! Keep an eye out in the February *Family Ties* Newsletter for your chance to win a week stay at Tamarack!

Save the Date

Community Care is pleased to offer the following training opportunity for
Therapeutic and Family Level resource families licensed through
the Augusta, Bangor, Ellsworth or Skowhegan DHHS offices in Maine.

*** Save The Date ***

Saturday, October 24th - Jeff's Catering in Brewer

Becoming Brain Friendly & Trauma Informed



About Karen Williams, MSSW

Karen Williams, MSSW, is a writer and speaker known for her ability to explain the latest neuroscience and apply it to real life. Her current focus is on three areas: brain development and behavior; the impact of substances, stress, trauma and traumatic brain injury on development and behavior; and the developmental readiness of youth to protect themselves. Her presentations and workshops are based on the research of many leaders in the field of brain and youth studies. She is the developer of the brain-based SAMHSA Model Program curriculum *Protecting You/Protecting Me*, and the "brain-friendly and trauma-informed" *Positive Behavior in School and Society (PBSS)*, a joint project of Rainbow Days, Inc. and AT&T.



50 seats available - Email your contact information to jamartin@comcareme.org to reserve your seat.

Holiday Gift Giving Program

It's hard to believe but it's that time of year again, Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine and the Kinship Program is gearing up for the Holiday Gift Giving Program! Resource families are invited to add their children's names, gender, clothing size and age to a wish list for holiday gifts.

Once again, the amazing people from the Ogunquit Spirit of Giving Project will work to provide holiday presents to kids in AFFM programs. Give the office a call at 1-800-833-9786 and have your child's information and gift wish ready. We ask that you keep requests to under \$50.00 per child. The sooner we get the information the more likely we are to fulfill the children's wishes.



Meet Peter!

Peter is a delightful boy who is about to turn 8 years old in August. He will be going into the second grade this fall after a very successful 1st grade year. Peter currently lives with his foster parents whom he has been with for the past couple of years. He has a great relationship with them and they have been very committed to him which has allowed Peter to make tremendous growth in all forms of his development.

Peter loves people and gets along very well with others. He also loves to be outside and enjoys most sports, especially basketball. Peter is also a very good swimmer. In addition, he really loves music and loves to sing. His foster father has a lot of different instruments and Peter has been knows to play them all. Overall Peter is an enthusiastic and delightful little boy who deserves to have a permanent family to call his own. His current foster parents would love to continue to be a presence in his life and would certainly help transition Peter to an adoptive home.

Peter has really made some great progress this year and has been able to become a more confident little guy. If interested in learning more, please contact Michelle Freeman, Portland DHHS office, 822-2178.



Adoption Announcement!



Katie and Robert Gilmour would like to announce the adoption of Micah Gilmour on April 14th! He joins brothers and sisters RJay, Frankie, JoJo and Brennan. Congratulations!

Andrea Jellison is overjoyed to announce the adoption of daughter, Kay Lauren Jellison on July 15th . Kay is welcomed by her loving grandparents as well!

Congratulations!!



Have you recently legalized an adoption? Want to share the exciting news with others? AFFM would love to create an adoption announcement in our Family Ties newsletter. Send a write up and photo (if you wish) to meagan@affm.net or call the office at 827-2331. AFFM looks forward to hearing from you!

New Discounts Added to Discount Card Program!

Kiddo's Indoor Playground

945 Center St.

Auburn Maine 04210

207-619-0905

\$5 per child all day admission

www.kiddosmaine.com



Sweet Frog

14 Waterville Commons Dr.

Waterville 877-9338

www.sweetfroyogurt.com

Buy one & get one free (same or lesser value)

Sweet Frog

878 B Stillwater Ave.

Bangor 947-3764

www.sweetfroyogurt.com

Buy one & get one free (same or lesser value)



Kinship Corner

Are you Familiar With the Supports AFFM Offers Kinship Families?

Experienced staff whom walk the walk and talk the talk guide and direct kinship families to such things as:

- Referrals to appropriate legal representation,
- Assistance with finding appropriate mental health providers
- Assistance navigating DHHS system, (including understanding of differences between guardianship through probate court, foster care, permanency guardianship, adoption and simple power of attorney)
- Legal training and education related to kinship parenting
- Clothing items and other material goods
- Assistance in getting children ready for school with our Ready Set Go to Learn Program
- Holiday Gift Giving Program (check out page 3 for more information!)
- Holiday parties in Skowhegan, Bangor and Portland
- Vacation activities such as roller parties, children's museum passes, tickets to fairs, Portland Sea dogs, Wildlife park passes, etc.
- Monthly Family Ties newsletter
- Kinship specific support groups
- Non-judgmental listening support
- Mentors

visit <http://www.affm.net/2014/10/resource-family-mentor-service/> for more information about AFFM's mentor service.

This is just the tip of the iceberg of support offered to kinship families. To learn more call [1-800-833-9786](tel:1-800-833-9786) or [207-827-2331](tel:207-827-2331) or visit www.affm.net



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

State-Wide Resource Family Support Groups

At times meetings are cancelled due to weather and other unforeseen circumstances, cancellation notices are sent out via the AFFM email list serve. Families are urged to call or email info@affm.net to be added to this service. The email list serve also provides information about available donated goods, social family activities, training events, DHHS and legislative updates, and more.

Augusta – Kinship only: 3rd Wednesday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at The Buker Community Center, 22 Armory Dr, Augusta. Free on-site childcare available. For more info, please call Jan Partridge at 207-495-3864.

Augusta – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: Meets the 1st Wednesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Magic Years Center (25 Industrial Drive). Onsite childcare is available with advanced notice. Please call 1-800-833-9786 or email: Jim (Jim@affm.net) to RSVP (3-4 days in advance).

Bangor – Kinship only: 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 pm. Families and Children Together, 304 Hancock St. Suite 2B. Free on-site childcare is available. For more information, please call Maine Kids-Kin at 207-941-2347 or 1-866-298-0896.

Belfast – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship. Meets the 2nd Monday of the month from 6:00-7:30PM at the Parish House St. Margaret's Episcopal Church (95 Court St.) On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Please call 1-800-833-9786 or email Jim (jim@affm.net) to RSVP (3-4 days in advance).

Biddeford – Kinship: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 10:00 – 11:30 am at the J Richard Martin Community Center, 189 Alfred St. Free on-site childcare is available with advanced notice. Please contact Diane Loranger at 423-2543 or call 1-800-833-9786 or email meagan@affm.net to RSVP. Please RSVP.

Bridgton – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: 3rd Monday of the month from 6:30 – 8:30 pm at the Community Care (Behind Reny's) 15 Depot St. Childcare is not provided at this time. Please RSVP to Vanessa at 647-2317 or AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 before you come.

Brunswick – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: 4th Tuesday of the month from 5:30 – 7:00 pm at St Paul's Episcopal Church, 25 Pleasant St. On-site childcare is available with advanced notice. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 to RSVP.

Caribou – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: 1st Thursday of the month from 5:30 at Caribou Adult Education Building on Bennett Drive in between Caribou Rec and the gas station. Childcare is not provided at this time. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email info@affm.net to RSVP.

Dover-Foxcroft – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at Mayo Regional Hospital, Borestone and Sebec conference room. On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email sheila@affm.net to RSVP. Please call before you come.

Ellsworth – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: 3rd Tuesday of the month from 5:00 – 7:00 pm at Ellsworth Elementary Middle School, 20 Forest Ave. On-site childcare is available with advanced notice. Please contact Mindy Kane, Community Health and Counseling Services (CHCS) at 263-2014 or 461-8878 or email mkane@chcs-me.org. Thanks to a local grant awarded to CHCS, AFFM is able to provide mileage reimbursement for families traveling more than 30 miles from home.

Farmington – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: every 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at the Roberts Learning Center (room 201 & 205), University of Maine at Farmington. On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Mileage reimbursement for families traveling more than 30 miles one way. Please call 1-800-833-9786, or email Sheila (sheila@affm.net). Please RSVP 3-4 days before.

Houlton – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: every 2nd Thursday of the month from 5:30 – 7:30 pm at Houlton CHCS, 2 Water Street. On-site childcare available with advanced notice. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email info@affm.net to RSVP. Please call before you come.

Lewiston – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: every 4th Tuesday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at CMHC (12 High Street entrance) in Lewiston. The Tri-County Adoptive Foster & Kinship Assoc. offers trainings, as well as local support & resources. On-site childcare is provided with advanced notice. Call Denise Gove at 782-1138 or email her at dgrove@aol.com to RSVP.

Lincoln – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: every 1st Thursday of the month from 6:00–7:30PM at the Community Evangel Temple, 124 River Rd. Onsite Childcare is available with advanced notice. Mileage reimbursement for families traveling more than 30 miles one-way. Please call 1-800-833-9786 or email: Jim@affm.net 3-4 days in advance to RSVP.

Machias – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: every 1st Friday of the month from 5:30 – 7:30 pm at Rose M Gaffney Elementary School, 15 Rose Gaffney Road, Machias. On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Please contact Mindy Kane, Community Health and Counseling Services, at 263-2014 or 461-8878 or email MKane@chcs-me.org to RSVP. Thanks to a local grant awarded to CHCS, AFFM is able to provide mileage reimbursement for families traveling more than 30 miles from home.

Orono – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: every 3rd Monday of the month from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at AFFM (34 Main Street Orono). On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email info@affm.net to RSVP. Please call before you come.

Presque Isle – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: Meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 6:30 – 7:30 pm at the Wesleyan Church (387 Centerline Rd). On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Please contact AFFM at 1-800-833-9786 or email Jim@affm.net to RSVP. Please remember to RSVP before you come.

Rockland—Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: Meets the 3rd Monday of the month at 6:00PM-7:30PM at the Knox Center-Pen Bay Healthcare (6 White Street, Rockland). On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Please RSVP by calling AFFM at 1-800-833-9786.

Saco— Kinship. Meets the 4th Wednesday of the month from 5:30-7:30PM at AFFM (333 Lincoln Street, Kimball Health Center). Please contact Meagan at 1-800-833-9786 or email meagan@affm.net to RSVP. Please RSVP before you come.

Sherman – Adoptive/Foster/Kinship: every 1st Monday of the month at 7 Cow Team Road in Sherman. Please contact Debbie Irish at 365-7133 for more information. This group does not meet in the summer.

South Paris – Foster/Adoptive/Kinship: every 1st Thursday of the month from 6:00 – 7:30 pm at the Paris Public Library, 37 Market Square, South Paris. On-site childcare is available with advance notice. Please call 1-800-833-9786 or email Meagan (Meagan@affm.net) to RSVP, please call 3 to 4 days in advance.

Waterboro – Foster/Adoptive: every 4 Thursday of the month from 6:30 – 7:30 pm at Waterboro Town Hall, 24 Townhouse Road, East Waterboro. Please contact Brigid at brigid.maaffsg@gmail.com.

Adoptive and Foster Families of Maine, Inc.
34 Main Street, Orono, ME 04473

Phone: 1-800-833-9786 or (207) 827-2331
After Hour Emergency Support: (207) 745-4159
Fax: (207) 899-6978
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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COMMENTS TO: EDITOR, FAMILY TIES, AT THE ADDRESS ABOVE.

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OLD TOWN, 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! Learn more about AFFM and services offered by calling 1-800-833-9786 or visit www.affm.net

Locations: 34 Main Street, Orono, Maine

& 333 Lincoln Street, Saco, Maine

Phone: 1-800-833-9786

Email: info@affm.net

After Hour Emergency Support: 207-745-4159

Website: www.affm.net

Scan to sign up for our email

List serve



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