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Dear Friends and Fans of the Maine Child Welfare Conference,

For the last 25 years, a small group of volunteers has worked together to provide a multidisciplinary audience with high quality, low cost education, on various child welfare related issues. Most recently, our program has drawn an annual average of 300-350 attendees. Each year we build a faculty with local, national, and international speakers to provide the best information available to those with an interest in children's welfare. We have had to secure the largest facility in our region to accommodate our growing audience and we have been extremely fortunate to have been the recipient of multiple key donations to help maintain our low registration fees. In our 26th year, we expected to continue down the same road, providing the quality program you have come to expect. Like everyone else around the world, however, we have been compelled to alter our path. We have made the unfortunate decision to postpone the 26th Maine Child Welfare Conference until 2021.

Over the past couple of years, we have started to entertain the idea of trying to broaden our impact. We started to wonder if, in addition to the substantial work involved with producing the annual conference, we also had the bandwidth to produce smaller and shorter educational opportunities throughout the year. Up to this point, that bandwidth has not existed for us.

Given the challenges that families and children are facing and will continue to face, our group believes that the education we facilitate continues to be necessary. Therefore, we are choosing to view our current circumstances as an opportunity to continue to serve. The gracious agreement of our 2020 Conference faculty to join us in 2021 allows us to use the next several months to dip our toes into the world of web-based education, as we build an inaugural webinar series. We are grateful to our donors at Northern Light Foundation, Katahdin Trust Company, and Bangor Federal Credit Union, who have allowed us to use funds originally earmarked for the 2020 Conference to help get this new venture off the ground and into the cloud.

We still intend to have a 2021 Conference. In the meantime, however, in lieu of gathering in person on June 4, 2020, we are pleased to be able to offer a FREE 90-minute webinar that same day. Stay tuned to your email or follow us on Facebook (@MaineChildWelfareConference) or Twitter (@M_C_W_C) for more details as they become available.

These have been challenging times. We are grateful for all of you who work to support children's welfare in your own way. We wish you peace and good health and look forward to continuing to support your professional development.

Sincerely,

The Members of the Maine Child Welfare Conference Planning Committee