



Making Homecomings Possible

Summer 2008



Words From Our Executive Director

Between 1979 and 1981, a series of high-profile missing-children cases became national headlines. These cases contributed to the shock of the nation's consciousness bringing attention to the seriousness of child victimization and forever changing the response by law enforcement agencies to reports of missing children.

On May 25, 1979, Etan Patz disappeared from a New York City street on his way to school. Even before cases of missing children routinely garnered national media attention, Etan's case quickly received a lot of coverage. His father, a professional photographer, disseminated black-and-white photographs of Etan in an effort to find him. The massive search and media attention that followed focused the nation's attention on the problem of child abduction and lack of plans to address it.

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan proclaimed that May 25th should serve as America's annual reminder that child protection must be a national priority. I can promise you that protecting our children is VCA's priority both on May 25th and every other day of the year.

On this day, I urge all parents, guardians and other responsible adults to regularly take 30 minutes, or however much time you need, to teach children ways to be safer at home, online, and in your communities. The few minutes you take now could not only help spare your family much heartache in the future, but could also prove to be an important and memorable bonding time with your child.

Missing Children's Day not only symbolizes a day of remembrance for those children who have vanished from our homes, but also a day of hope. We here at VCA are asking individuals to keep their headlights and porch lights on all day to help "light the way home" for missing and abducted children.

Please join us by remembering those children who have gone missing and consider a donation to the Vanished Children's Alliance to help us help make homecomings possible.

With gratitude,

Sheila Barry
Executive Director



Don't Miss What's In This Issue!

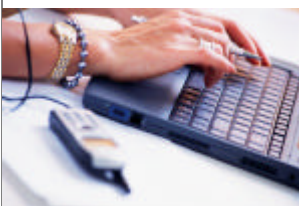
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VCA'S MISSION

The Vanished Children's Alliance, founded in 1981, is a national 501 (c)(3), nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting all children from disappearing. To ensure children's safety, VCA educates the public and professionals about the serious issue of abducted and runaway children. VCA works to prevent, locate, and recover child victims and reunite them with their families in collaboration with law enforcement, other credible service agencies, and communities at large.

Thank You Cupertino Rotary!

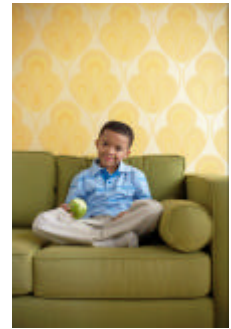
The Vanished Children's Alliance would like to gratefully acknowledge the generous funding of a **Dell Corporate Laptop, Visioneer Strobe XP 100 Scanner and Pixma IP90V Mobile Printer** by the **Cupertino Rotary Club**. This new equipment will allow us to complete our **Critical Response Unit** for our **Child Abduction/Missing Children Casework Department** and enable us to respond 24/7 to after hour emergency calls received by our on-call caseworkers. Having this portable equipment available in the event of a child abduction will allow caseworkers to respond by accessing our agency's database on-scene, scan information and print posters that detail biographical and pictorial information about that child from the laptop and disseminate information to searching parents, law enforcement and volunteers in the search of that missing child. Thanks to the Cupertino Rotary Club, many families will receive the help they need and deserve!



May 25th is National Missing Children's Day!

Talk to your child about this common abductor's trick!

Jonathan had proven himself responsible enough to stay home unsupervised. He knew not to admit he was alone if he answered the phone, not to answer the door, and not to leave the house without permission. However, one day he was at home waiting for his mom to come home and he heard a knock at the door. He did as his parents had told him and ignored the knock on the door. He heard the person at the door say, "I'm a police officer, you need to let me into your house. We've had a report of a burglar." Jonathan was faced with a dilemma: should he follow the standard rules from his parents, or should he break their rules and open the door for the man? He remembered being told during a safety presentation at his school that sometimes people lied about who they were. He wondered if people could lie about being a police officer, too. Jonathan could see what looked like a navy uniform through the window next to the door, but couldn't see what the person looked like. Jonathan decided he had no way of knowing what to do without help from a trusted adult. He went to the phone in the kitchen and dialed 911. He told the 911 operator about the person at the door claiming to be a police officer. She told him not to open the door, that the man at the door was not a police officer. She helped him stay calm and on the phone line until the police officers she sent arrived and arrested the imposter. Because Jonathan used his wits, he was able to stay safe. When talking to your children about staying home alone, make it clear that **they never have permission to open the door or to let anyone into the house unless they've been approved by you.** Provide them with the phone numbers of safe people they can call if they need help (at least 2 of these should be neighbors). Tell them **it is okay to call 911 if there is an emergency. Don't leave your children home alone until you have determined they would be able to handle any emergency that might happen in your absence.**



Our last issue announced our evening observing National Missing Children's Day with the San Francisco Giants on May 30, 2008. Unfortunately, there was a scheduling conflict and we have had to postpone the event. We hope to have a new date scheduled soon. We apologize for the inconvenience.

VCA's Easiest Fundraiser Yet!

Most people want a way to support their favorite charity without having to remember to write a monthly check. People know that when they shop at **iShop.com** or do a web search at

GoodSearch.com, they can help the Vanished Children's Alliance

without additional effort or cost. VCA has a new and easy way to support our important programs that prevent and locate missing children. By registering your credit and debit cards at **eScrip.com**, you can support the Vanished Children's Alliance any time you use the cards at participating stores. You will not be charged any additional fee to participate, and the easy sign up takes about 5 minutes. Our ID number is **500002123**. You can use this number to find the Vanished Children's Alliance when you sign up. A list of participating stores can be found on the website as well as additional information about **eScrip**.



Visit our website at www.vca.org!!



Meet our Unsung Hero!

On April 15, 2008, Vanished Children's Alliance joined the Victim Support Network in thanking the generous, usually anonymous, people that work with its members with little or no recognition. The Vanished Children's Alliance recognized Sarah Brito for her tireless support of our agency. Mrs. Brito started volunteering with our agency in December 2007 working on



Sarah and some of VCA's staff at the Unsung Hero Lunch

helping us build a database of Canadian schools and businesses. This database is similar to the one we currently use to disseminate missing children's posters and safety tips throughout the United States. Sarah has also helped VCA with clerical duties, organizing materials, and scanning documents for digital storage. No job is too small for this compassionate volunteer!

When she isn't helping out at the Vanished Children's Alliance, Sarah is a personal chef and caterer. More information about Sarah and her culinary delights can be found at chefbrito.com. She can also be reached by email at sbrito@gmail.com.

Safety Source!

When at the mall, the park, or in other public areas, establish a place to meet if you become separated or lost. Role-play what your child should do if he or she gets lost in a public place.

35% of child abductions occur in the summer. Have your children check in with you when they're with friends so you know where they are.



Guardian Angels

Wal★Mart, Milpitas

Benefactors

Wal★Mart, Albuquerque

Advocates

Morgan Stanley

United Way

Sponsors

P G & E Corporation

DONOR RECOGNITION CORNER

Donations made from February 15, 2008-May 22, 2008

Members

Nike Employee Match

Home Depot Foundation

All State Giving Campaign

Chevy's Restaurant

Debra Tutt

Anonymous

Safeway, San Carlos

What do the levels mean?

Member: \$25+

Sponsor: \$50+

Advocate: \$100+

Benefactor: \$500+

Guardian Angel: \$1000+

Thank you to all of our generous donors! We couldn't do what we do without you!

If you're interested in donating:

Please make checks payable to

Vanished Children's Alliance

**991 W Hedding St, Suite 101
San Jose, CA 95126**

**Or make an online donation at
www.vca.org**

You will receive a letter from our Executive Director certifying our receipt of your donation!

Welcome VCA's Public Relations Volunteer!

Parmeeta Ghoman started volunteering at VCA in April of this year. A newlywed, she has recently relocated here from London, England after her marriage. While she waits for approval on her work visa, she shares her skills and knowledge for free with the Vanished Children's Alliance. Her background in public relations and bubbly personality is helping put the Vanished Children's Alliance on the map! When she isn't sharing her experience with VCA, she is helping out at other local non-profits. We are lucky to have this gem work with us!





Vanished Children's Alliance

991 W. Hedding St., Ste. 101
San Jose, CA 95126

Phone: (408) 296-1113
Fax: (408) 296-1117
E-mail: info@vca.org

"Making Homecomings Possible"

www.vca.org

What is the community saying about VCA?

"I really appreciate all that you are doing for children everywhere ...Thank you again for your... hard-work!"
-Recent recipient of our safety materials

Upcoming Events!

MAY

20TH ADULT PRESENTATION,
SAN FRANCISCO

21ST FUNDRAISING EVENT

WILLOWSTREET PIZZA, WESTGATE

23RD NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY,
OBSERVED

24TH FUNDRAISING EVENT

ORIGINAL PANCAKE HOUSE 12:00-3:00

SAN JOSE

24TH FINGERPRINTING EVENT, SAN JOSE

25TH NATIONAL MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY

30TH FINGERPRINTING EVENT, SAN JOSE

31ST FINGERPRINTING EVENT, SAN JOSE

JUNE

2ND-5TH CHILD SAFETY PRESENTATIONS,
OAKLAND

JULY

8TH CHILD SAFETY PRESENTATION,

SAN JOSE

FOR MORE EVENTS, CHECK OUT THE CALENDAR OF
EVENTS ON OUR WEBSITE, WWW.VCA.ORG!

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SCHEDULE VCA FOR A
PRESENTATION OR AN EVENT, CALL OUR
OUTREACH DEPARTMENT AT **(408) 296-1113!**

We're
Missing!

**HAVE
YOU
SEEN US?**

If so,
please call
**1-800-
VANISHED**



Abductor

Bethany Leanne Markowski

Endangered Missing

Date of Birth: 02/01/1990

Missing Date: 03/04/2001

Missing From: Jackson, TN

Sex: Female **Race:** White

Height: 4' 8" **Weight:** 75 Lbs

Hair Color: Brown

Eye Color: Green



Age-Progression



Age Progression

Justin Edward Kestel

Family Abduction

Date of Birth: 05/05/1991

Missing Date: 06/21/1992

Missing From: Lorena, TX

Sex: Male **Race:** White

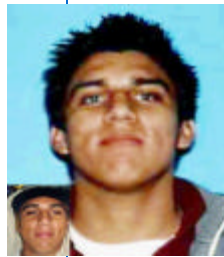
Height: 2' 3" **Weight:** 18 Lbs

Hair Color: Brown

Eye Color: Blue



Abductor



Abductor

Chiomaezronesha Atinuke A.O. Gray

Nonfamily Abduction

Date of Birth: 04/27/1992

Missing Date: 12/13/2007

Missing From: Ventura, CA

Sex: Female **Race:** Black

Height: 5' 4" **Weight:** 115 Lbs

Hair Color: Black

Eye Color: Brown



Do You Know the Whereabouts of a Missing Child?

- Stay calm and gather as much information as possible!
- Do not attempt to intercede.
- Contact Law Enforcement
- Contact VCA at **1-800-VANISHED**

When reporting a possible sighting to VCA...

- Describe the child, accompanying adult(s) and any unusual behaviors/circumstances.
- If a vehicle is involved, get the vehicle description and license plate.

- Specify location(s) where the child was seen and when. Provide any and all relevant addresses.
- Explain whether the child had indicated being taken from the other parent.
- Explain whether the child hinted at having a different name or family.
- Tell us if you think you have seen the child's picture on television, a grocery bag, poster, directory, mailer, VCA fax dissemination, or other missing children's announcement.
- Remember that you may remain anonymous with VCA if you wish. The important thing is to help reunite missing children with their families!

If you no longer wish to receive this quarterly newsletter, please email info@vca.org with the subject "Unsubscribe."