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# OJJDP NEWS @ a Glance

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## National Youth Service Day: Mobilizing the Next Generation of Volunteers

On April 11, 2003, staff from the U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Office of Justice Programs (OJP) and Community Relations Service joined an enthusiastic group of students, teachers, government officials, and other involved citizens at the Benjamin Orr Elementary School in Washington, DC, to commemorate the 15th annual National Youth Service Day (NYSD). Orr School is OJP's adopted school in DOJ's Partners in Education Program, which promotes volunteerism by the Department's employees. Sponsored by Youth Service America and supported by the White House Office of USA Freedom Corps, NYSD is the largest service event in the world. For the past 14 years, NYSD has helped millions of young Americans identify and address the needs of their communities through volunteer activities.

During the ceremony, former U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh, who started the Partners in Education Program during his tenure as Attorney General, shared with the audience memories of his favorite teacher, his love of history, and his commitment as a public servant to the promotion of volunteerism. District Mayor Anthony A. Williams presented Youth Mayor Michael Clark with an official proclamation heralding April 11, 2003, as Youth Service Day in the District. J. Robert Flores, Administrator of OJJDP, and Robbie Callaway, Senior Vice-President of Boys & Girls Clubs of America, jointly announced a new Boys & Girls Club Program at Orr Elementary. The club is expected to open in July 2003. "Orr School students will now have a safe neighborhood club where they and their families can come after school and on weekends," said Flores. Mr. Callaway concurred, calling the club "a community center of positive activities for all."



Former U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh and J. Robert Flores, Administrator of OJJDP, were two of the speakers who participated in the National Youth Service Day ceremonies at Orr Elementary School.

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## Missing Children's Day 2003: Bringing Our Missing Children Home Safely

On May 20, 2003, a ceremony was held in the Great Hall at the U.S. Department of Justice to commemorate National Missing Children's Day. Attorney General John Ashcroft, Assistant Attorney General Deborah J. Daniels, and other dignitaries were present to recognize law enforcement efforts to recover missing children and to honor the courage of missing children and their families. The ceremony, organized by the Office of Justice Programs' Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), featured opening remarks from Assistant Attorney General Daniels and was moderated by OJJDP Administrator J. Robert Flores. Patty Wetterling, child advocate and mother of Jacob Wetterling, who has been missing since 1989, also spoke at the event.

Attorney General Ashcroft presented a number of awards to law enforcement officers who were recognized for their efforts to recover and assist



U.S. Postal Inspector Elizabeth Bendel (second from left) receiving the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award from Attorney General John Ashcroft, with OJJDP Administrator J. Robert Flores and Assistant Attorney General Deborah J. Daniels.

missing and exploited children. "I'm honored to praise the law enforcement officers and others who vigorously defend and protect our nation's children every day," said Attorney General Ashcroft. "Law enforcement officers are often the first responders when a child is at risk or is missing, and they deserve recognition for their outstanding service and dedication to their communities."

The Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Award was presented to U.S. Postal Inspector Elizabeth Bendel, who was instrumental in uncovering an international child pornography ring headquartered in Florida. Through Inspector Bendel's diligent efforts, the perpetrator and four coconspirators were apprehended. As a result, 135 victims in the case are now safe and beyond the reach of these offenders.

The 2003 Law Enforcement Leadership Award was presented by Ernie Allen, President of NCMEC, to Chief Phil E. Keith of the Knoxville (TN) Police Department for his efforts on behalf of children during his 28-year career in law enforcement. Robbie Callaway, Chairman of the Board for NCMEC, presented the 2003 National Children's Courage Award to Erica Pratt, who was abducted by two men in Philadelphia, PA. Held captive in the basement of an abandoned home with her hands and feet bound with duct tape, Erica, then 7 years old, freed herself by chewing through the tape, kicking open the basement door, making her way to a window, and yelling for help.

Ms. Daniels, who serves as National Coordinator for AMBER Alert, provided an update on the program, describing its past successes and



2005 National Children's Courage Award winner Erica Pratt (front center) flanked by (left to right) Assistant Attorney General Deborah J. Daniels, NCMEC President Ernie Allen, Chairman of the NCMEC Board Robbie Callaway, Tamara Brooks, Kelsa Pratt (Erica's mom), OJJDP Administrator J. Robert Flores, and Patty Wetterling.

future plans. "National Missing Children's Day allows us a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the strong partnership between the public and private sectors who work together on preventing abductions and providing services to child victims and their families," said Ms. Daniels. "It is through these partnerships that we will develop and implement a coordinated nationwide AMBER Alert system that will offer a tremendous asset in bringing abducted children safely home." Tamara Brooks, one of the 70 children safely returned home as a result of AMBER Alert, was in attendance at the ceremony.

Mr. Flores spoke about the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, which addresses the growing use of new technologies to exploit children. He emphasized the need for collaboration to tackle the problem of missing and exploited children. Mr. Flores was joined by Kelsey Sauerer, last year's Art Contest winner, to present the 4th annual Missing Children's Day

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## New Publications

All publications may be viewed and downloaded at OJJDP's Web site. (Visit the "Publications" page at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ojjdp](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ojjdp) for access to alphabetical and topical listings of titles, with links to content summaries and full-text files. Be sure to check the "New Releases" link for the latest news on OJJDP publishing activity.) The publications may also be ordered from the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse (JJC) at 800-638-8736, 410-792-4358 (fax), and online at [puborder.ncjrs.org](http://puborder.ncjrs.org).

**Best Practices in Juvenile Accountability: Overview.** Provides an in-depth history of OJJDP's Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grants (JAIBG) program, reviews the developmental perspective shaping juvenile accountability, and offers case histories illustrating effective practices that promote accountability.

Bulletin. April 2003. 12 pp. NCJ 184745.

**Child Delinquency: Early Intervention and Prevention.** Presents valuable information on the nature of child delinquency and describes early intervention and prevention programs that effectively reduce delinquent behavior. The



first issue in OJJDP's Child Delinquency Series, this Bulletin summarizes the final report of OJJDP's Study Group on Very Young Offenders, which draws on hundreds of studies to describe the developmental course of child delinquency and delineate key risk and protective factors. The Bulletin also identifies effective and promising prevention and intervention programs that help reduce the incidence of delinquency and offer significant cost savings to society.

Child Delinquency Series Bulletin. May 2003. 20 pp. NCJ 186162.

**Prevalence and Development of Child Delinquency.** Provides information on very young offenders (those between the ages of 7 and 12) who become involved with the juvenile justice system.

Child Delinquency Series Bulletin. March 2003. 8 pp. NCJ 193411.

**Risk and Protective Factors of Child Delinquency.** Focuses on four types of risk and protective factors—individual, family, peer, and school and community—that are essential to effective early childhood delinquency intervention.

Child Delinquency Series Bulletin. April 2003. 16 pp. NCJ 193409.

**Treatment, Services, and Intervention Programs for Child Delinquents.** Examines various treatments, services, and intervention programs designed to mitigate the disruptive behavior of child delinquents (offenders younger than age 13).

Child Delinquency Series Bulletin. March 2003. 16 pp. NCJ 193410.

## Videoconference Addresses Truancy

On April 30, 2003, OJJDP sponsored the live national satellite videoconference **Community Responses to Truancy: Engaging Students in School**. During the videoconference, participants learned about the causes of truancy and the effects of truancy on youth, their families, schools, and communities.

Truancy is a serious problem that affects many schools and communities. Chronic truancy has been identified as a warning sign of delinquent activity, social isolation, and other factors that limit youth's potential to become productive citizens. Because the root causes of truancy are multifaceted, solutions to the problem need to include community partnerships that involve schools, social services and law enforcement agencies, courts, and community- and faith-based organizations. Showcasing various types of truancy solutions, the videoconference featured promising strategies, provided examples of community efforts to reduce truancy, and highlighted available truancy prevention and intervention resources.

Teleconference panelists were J. Robert Flores, Administrator, OJJDP; the Honorable Joan L. Byer, Jefferson County Family Court, Kentucky; Khaki Dimock, At-Risk Youth Programs Manager, King County Superior Court, Washington; and Dr. Ken Seeley, President of the Colorado Foundation for Families and Children. The broadcast was downloaded to 525 sites in 47 states; a record 2,597 people viewed the live online Webcast. Videotapes are available from JJC for \$15, and the teleconference can be viewed at [www.trc.eku.edu/jj/archive.html](http://www.trc.eku.edu/jj/archive.html). ■



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*Youth Service Day (continued from page 1)*

After the opening ceremony, Orr Elementary students participated in their own service learning projects, ranging from writing letters to soldiers overseas to building care packages for the homeless. Other projects focused on being a good citizen, promoting child safety, and creating art projects for sick children. Volunteers from the White House Office of Presidential Correspondence also joined OJP staff in promoting literacy by reading to the students some of First Lady Laura Bush's favorite children's books. Communities in Schools hosted a barbecue lunch that was enjoyed by all the students, teachers, and volunteers.

More information about National Youth Service Day is available on the OJJDP Web site at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ojjdp](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/ojjdp). ■

*Missing Children's Day (continued from page 2)*

Art Contest Award to Carissa Hahn, a middle school student from Hutchinson, MN.

In her moving tribute to the families of missing children, Patty Wetterling described the effect of her son Jacob's abduction on herself and her family. She read from a journal entry by Jacob's sister, who described her feelings as an 8-year-old girl when her brother went missing. Echoing the theme of the ceremony, "Bringing Our Missing Children Home Safely," she encouraged the public to "look at the pictures of our missing children" and noted the important role ordinary citizens can play in their recovery.

For more information about Missing Children's Day activities and to learn how you can help in the effort to recover and assist missing and exploited children, visit the NCMEC Web site at [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com). ■