



Missing Children's Day 2008

Eight Years of Success in Protecting Children: A Look Back



Bringing Missing Children Home Safely

2002

- President Bush announces the creation of the National AMBER Alert Coordinator position, and Attorney General Ashcroft designates the Assistant Attorney General of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) to fill this role.
- On September 18, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC) launches its Child Recognition & Identification System. This software helps analysts identify child victims in child pornography and the individuals who sell, trade, and distribute these images.

2003

- On September 4, an abducted 2-year-old boy is rescued in DeMotte, IN, thanks to an AMBER Alert. This marks the safe return of the 100th abducted child nationwide since the program was implemented at the local level 7 years earlier.

2004

- The U.S. Postal Service launches its Deliver Me Home Network Program. The network targets the resources of the Postal Service to find missing children and return them home.

Through the program, Team Adam provides services and funding for the development of fliers. The Postal Service pays for the mailing and distribution of the fliers, creating a massive distribution system. The Postal Inspection Service works closely with local law enforcement agencies, postal managers, letter carriers, and families.

- Congress passes the Missing Child Cold Case Review Act of 2004, authorizing the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to assist NCMEC with cold cases by conducting reviews of inactive case files (long-term missing and homicide cases) to develop recommendations for further action.

2005

- HUD's OIG announces the launch of Operation Find HUDKids on May 25. OIG works closely with NCMEC and law enforcement to identify and locate missing children living at the time of their disappearance in HUD's Rental Assistance Housing properties throughout the United States. Through a memorandum of understanding, OIG and NCMEC develop a computer-matching project under which OIG receives data on missing children cases from

NCMEC and runs it through HUD tenant systems to identify positive hits on missing children living in HUD housing. OIG special agents actively work with law enforcement and NCMEC to solve missing children cases related to HUD housing.

- On February 17, Hawaii becomes the 50th State to complete its statewide AMBER Alert plan. Only four States had statewide AMBER Alert plans in place at the end of 2001.

2006

- The U.S. Postal Service and Department of Justice (DOJ) unveil the AMBER Alert stamp during Missing Children's Day 2006.
- The AMBER Wireless Network Initiative is launched through a voluntary partnership between DOJ, the wireless industry, and NCMEC to distribute AMBER Alerts to wireless subscribers who opt to receive the messages and are able to receive text messages on their wireless devices.

2007

- In July, the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) launches the NamUs project, which is the first

national online repository for missing persons and unidentified decedents. This initiative automatically searches missing persons' case files and compares them against unidentified decedent case files. Only medical examiners and coroners can input information into the system. Ultimately, medical examiners, coroners, law enforcement officials, forensic professionals, and the public will be able to use the database to search and match missing persons records and information about unidentified human remains.

- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) releases *What About Me? Coping with the Abduction of a Brother or Sister*, the first document designed to help siblings of missing children address the personal and emotional issues surrounding an abduction. The document was developed with the assistance of young adults who had faced the abduction of a sibling.
- On September 14, DOJ announces the 10 tribal sites selected to serve as pilot communities as part of its AMBER Alert in Indian Country Initiative. DOJ's goal is to expand the AMBER Alert program into Indian Country and bridge the gap between tribal communities and State and regional programs across the country.

Protecting Children Online

2001

- In August, Attorney General Ashcroft and the Chief Postal Inspector announce the successful conclusion of a 2-year investigation that dismantles a multimillion-dollar child pornography enterprise, believed to be the largest such operation ever broken up. The Ft. Worth, TX, company, Landslide Productions, Inc., grossed as much as \$1.4 million per month in subscription sales to child pornography

Web sites. The company's owner receives an unprecedented lifetime Federal prison sentence. The undercover investigation, dubbed Operation Avalanche, conducted in concert with the Department's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, results in thousands of search warrants and arrests around the globe. NCMEC's CyberTipline receives more than 250 complaints from citizens worldwide related to the company's Web sites.

2002

- Launched in 2002, the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Program operates 30 regional task forces. These task forces account for 493 arrests for child exploitation.
- NCMEC works with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America on its Internet safety initiative.
- NCMEC's CyberTipline receives 24,442 tips in a 1-year period.
- The White House holds its Conference on Internet Crimes on October 23. Representatives from the FBI, Postal Inspection Service, DOJ's Criminal Division, and ICAC Task Forces also meet with the President to discuss the extent of the problem and what law enforcement agencies are doing to address the problem.
- President Bush signs Child Internet Safety legislation on December 4. This bill makes it illegal for child pornographers to disseminate obscene, computer-generated images of children.

2003

- Federal funding for the ICAC program almost doubles from 2002 to 2003—from \$6.5 million to \$12.5 million. The number of child exploitation arrests increases from 683 to 1,474 as a result of this increase in funding.

2004

- In April, Angel Mariscal, an Ecuadorian national, is convicted in Miami, FL, and sentenced to 100 years in Federal prison. Postal inspectors arrested Mariscal in September 2002 for distributing child pornography by mail, and he is indicted on conspiracy charges to produce and ship child pornography. Mariscal was responsible for the sexual abuse, rape, and commercial exploitation of more than 150 child victims. He is HIV positive. Postal inspectors

conduct investigations into Mariscal's customers, resulting in 50 convictions. Many of the offenders are identified as child molesters.

- On April 20, as part of an ongoing effort to crack down on Web sites that deceive minors into viewing pornographic and obscene materials, DOJ and NCMEC announce the CyberTipline, a reporting mechanism for child sexual exploitation. The CyberTipline receives reports from the public on misleading Internet domain names.
- NCMEC's CyberTipline receives more than 112,000 tips during this calendar year.

2005

- The ICAC Task Force program increases the number of traveler cases it prosecutes by 300 percent—from 835 cases in 2004 to 3,429 cases in 2005.

2006

- There are 46 ICAC task forces in operation this year. In FY 2006, ICAC investigations lead to more than 2,040 arrests and more than 9,600 forensic examinations.
- The ICAC program accomplishments in the number of cases prosecuted from 1998 to 2006 include:
 - Number of travel/enticement cases handled: 11,004.
 - Number of child pornography manufacturing cases handled: 40,157.
 - Number of child pornography distribution cases handled: 171,913.
 - Number of child pornography possession cases handled: 25,474.
 - Number of arrests: 7,834.
 - Number of victims identified: 1,551.
 - Number of forensic examinations: 19,901.
- The number of victims identified through the ICAC program increases from 275 in 2005 to 1,135 for the first 6 months of 2006, a more

than 600-percent increase. The number of arrests each year that are a direct result of the ICAC task forces increases from 284 during the years 1998–2002, to 1,934 in the first 6 months of 2006.

- Attorney General Gonzales announces the creation of Project Safe Childhood (PSC) on May 17. PSC is designed to protect children as they navigate the Internet.
- The Department of Homeland Security creates the Virtual Global Task Force, which provides an international 24-hour/7-day-a-week presence to combat Internet crimes against children.
- In November, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service and NCMEC launch the **2 SMRT 4U** Internet Safety Awareness Campaign to encourage teens to practice safe, smart habits when posting information about themselves on social network Web sites. *Teen Vogue* magazine, with a readership of more than 4.5 million teen girls, disseminates information through its magazine content, Web site, and public events. The campaign supports the Attorney General's Project Safe Childhood initiative. The campaign features a stainless steel "awareness" ring, similar in concept to the Lance Armstrong bracelet, to promote knowledge of Internet safety. More than 442,000 rings are distributed to teens in 82 countries, with 68 percent of them reporting they have changed their behavior as a result of the campaign. The campaign was financed with forfeited funds from criminals and received the Department's 2007 Internet Safety Award.

2007

- NCMEC's CyberTipline has received more than 535,000 tips since its inception. These increases can be attributed to growing awareness of dedicated ways to report child sexual exploitation, rapid growth worldwide in the

use of the Internet, a Federal law requiring Internet service providers to report child pornography on their systems to NCMEC, and an increase in the prevalence of the sexual exploitation of children.

- The Department announces that 13 new State and local law enforcement agencies will share more than \$3 million to form new ICAC task forces. The funding marks the presence of ICAC task forces in all 50 States (59 task forces total). A total of \$17 million is awarded to the ICAC Task Force program, which also includes more than 1,050 affiliated agencies.
- Between October 1, 2006, and August 31, 2007, ICAC task forces receive more than 18,000 complaints of technology-facilitated child sexual exploitation. Investigations initiated from complaints lead to more than 2,062 arrests, forensic examinations of more than 9,100 computers, more than 4,700 case referrals to non-ICAC law enforcement agencies, and training to more than 25,000 law enforcement officers and prosecutors. In addition, the ICAC program results in:
 - An increase in traveler cases handled from 482 in 2003 to 1,530 in 2007.
 - An increase in enticement cases handled from 448 in 2003 to 5,362 in 2007.
 - An increase in cases involving obscenity directed to children handled from 154 in 2004 to 2,183 in 2007.
 - An increase in prostitution cases handled from 17 in 2004 to 257 in 2007.
 - An increase in child manufacture cases handled from 266 in 2003 to 715 in 2007.
 - An increase in child pornography distribution cases handled from 833 in 2003 to 4,663 in 2007.
 - An increase in child pornography possession cases handled from 1,682 in 2003 to 5,653 in 2007.

- An increase in Federal subpoenas issued from 1,859 in 2005 to 2,500 in 2007.
- An increase in State/local subpoenas issued from 5,663 in 2005 to 10,191 in 2007.
- An increase in Federal search warrants issued from 268 in 2005 to 520 in 2007.
- An increase in State/local search warrants issued from 2,112 in 2005 to 3,545 in 2007.
- The Department of Education hosts an Education Policy Briefing on Cyber Safety (“How Can We Protect Young People?”) in October.
- In December, Attorney General Mukasey addresses the Project Safe Childhood Conference in St. Louis.

2008

- The number of indictments filed by U.S. Attorney’s Offices for child exploitation rose 28 percent from FY 2006 to FY 2007.
- In FY 2007, 332 cases resulted in the forfeiture of 458 assets, the value of which totaled more than \$5.2 million. This represents a 493-percent increase over FY 2006.
- Since the inception of the ICAC program, task forces have reviewed nearly 200,000 complaints, resulting in the arrest of nearly 11,000 individuals.

Partnerships and Resources to Protect Children

2001

- President Bush issues two executive orders to improve participation of faith-based and community organizations in Federal funding supporting the delivery of social services. The first order establishes a White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. The second establishes centers to implement these initiatives at DOJ, along with the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Housing and Urban Development. Additional centers are established at the Department of Agriculture, Corporation for National Community Service, Small Business Administration, U.S. Agency for International Development, Department of Homeland Security, and Veterans Affairs Administration.
- OJJDP releases two guides on international parental kidnapping: a law enforcement guide and a parents’ guide. These are the first guides ever developed on this topic with input from multiple agencies (members of the Federal

Agency Task Force on Missing and Exploited Children).

- The FBI launches the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crimes/Child Abduction and Serial Murder Investigative Resource Center (CASMIRC).

2002

- The first national White House Conference on Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children is held on October 2. The President and First Lady, Director of the FBI, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, Secretary of the Department of Education, Attorney General, and Secretary of State participate in this event.
- OJJDP releases findings from the NISMART 2 study. NISMART (National Incidence Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Thrownaway Children) is a series of several complementary studies designed to provide national estimates of the size and nature of the missing children

problem. NISMART 2 includes a large national survey of more than 16,000 households to interview parents and other primary caretakers about their children's experiences. The household survey also interviews a sample of 5,000 youth ages 10 to 18 to supplement what caretakers provide.

- On January 31, 2002, Michael Scott Bliss becomes the second child predator to be placed on the FBI's Ten Most Wanted Fugitives List.
- The OJJDP Child Prostitution Summit is held in December. The purpose of the summit is to create a forum for networking and information sharing, raise national awareness about child prostitution, build knowledge about good practice, assess the needs and strengths of the field, and develop consensus for action.

2003

- President Bush signs the Prosecutorial Remedies and Tools Against the Exploitation of Children Today Act (PROTECT Act) into law on April 30. The Act provides for coordinated law enforcement information, rapid law enforcement response, and swift and sure penalties to protect children in child exploitation cases. It strengthens law enforcement's ability to prevent, investigate, prosecute, and punish violent crimes committed against children. Some major components of the Act include the following:
 - It establishes the AMBER Alert Program, which is a proven tool to help recover abducted children.
 - It strengthens laws prohibiting the travel abroad of sexual predators who prey on children through sexual tourism.
 - It provides severe penalties for nonfamily-member child abduction and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography, and a "two strikes" provision that requires life imprisonment for offenders

who commit two serious sexual abuse offenses against children.

- It strengthens laws against child pornography in ways that can survive constitutional review.
- Under Section 322, Congress amends the U.S. Secret Service statutory authority, Title 18, United States Code 3056, as follows: "(f) Under the direction of the Secretary of Homeland Security, officers and agents of the Secret Service are authorized, at the request of any State or local law enforcement agency, or at the request of NCMEC, to provide forensic and investigative assistance in support of any investigation involving missing or exploited children."
- The Department of Homeland Security/U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) develops Operation Predator to identify, investigate, and arrest child predators. Operation Predator draws on ICE's investigative and enforcement authorities to safeguard children from foreign national pedophiles, human traffickers, international sex tourists, and other predatory criminals. As part of the effort, ICE establishes a single Web portal to access all publicly available State Megan's Law databases.
 - ICE creates a National Child Victim Identification System in partnership with NCMEC, the FBI, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, U.S. Secret Service, DOJ, Internet Crimes Against Children Task Forces, and other agencies.
 - ICE agents stationed internationally work with foreign governments and their foreign law enforcement counterparts to enhance coordination and cooperation on crimes that cross borders.
 - ICE works with INTERPOL to enhance foreign government intelligence on criminal child predators.
- In June, the FBI's Crimes Against Children Unit, DOJ's Child Exploitation and Obscenity

Section, and NCMEC introduce the Innocence Lost National Initiative, which addresses the domestic trafficking of children for the purposes of prostitution.

- NCMEC creates the Child Victim Identification Program (CVIP). Using this system, CVIP analysts, in cooperation with Federal law enforcement partners, help prosecutors determine the full range of crimes committed in each case, maximize sentences available for each charge, and attempt to identify the location of child sexual exploitation victims.

2004

- In September, the FBI launches its Innocent Images International Task Force, which partners FBI agents with international investigators to combat global child exploitation. Law enforcement officials from foreign countries travel to the FBI's Innocent Images Unit in Calverton, MD, where they share tactics and information and cooperate in international investigations.

2005

- Attorney General Gonzales announces the creation of the national registry of sex offenders to allow Internet users and the public to check all state databases in a single search.
- Congress passes and President Bush signs the Justice for All Act of 2004, providing substantive rights for crime victims. For the first time, the law provides mechanisms at the Federal level to enforce the rights of crime victims, giving victims and prosecutors legal standing to assert victims' rights, authorizing the filing of writs of mandamus to assert a victim's right, and requiring the Attorney General to establish a victims' rights compliance program within DOJ. This omnibus crime legislation also provides funding for DNA testing, crime labs, sexual

assault forensic examiners, and programs for postconviction DNA testing.

- The Obscenity Prosecution Task Force is created. The task force is dedicated exclusively to the protection of America's children and families through the enforcement of the Nation's obscenity laws.
- As of December 16, Federal agents and local law enforcement officials identify more than 30 child victims through the FBI's Innocence Lost National Initiative. Since the FBI launched the Initiative in June 2003, officials have identified more than 200 victims. Overall, the initiative has led to more than 500 arrests, 100 indictments, and 67 convictions.
- As of August 1, Operation Predator brings about the arrest of 6,085 child predators, 85 percent of whom are in the United States illegally. As a result of the operation, 2,100 of these foreign-born predators are deported. Operation Predator arrests are made in every State. The most arrests occur in California (1,578), Texas (545), New Jersey (423), New York (367), Illinois (282), Florida (255), Arizona (207), Minnesota (190), Michigan (153), and Oregon (148).
- On July 25, DOJ announces the activation of its National Sex Offender Public Registry Web site, which provides real-time access to public sex offender data nationwide with a single Internet search. The Web site allows parents and concerned citizens to search existing public sex offender registries beyond their own States.

2006

- President Bush signs the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act on July 27. It strengthens Federal laws to protect children from sexual and other violent crimes, prevent child pornography, and make the Internet safer for children. It creates a new comprehensive

national system and new minimum standards for sex offender registration and notification.

- The SMART Office (Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking) is authorized under the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006. The SMART Office provides guidance regarding the implementation of the Adam Walsh Act and technical assistance to the States, territories, Indian tribes, local governments, and public and private organizations. The SMART Office also tracks important legislative and legal developments related to sex offenders and administers grant programs related to the registration, notification, tracking, and monitoring of sex offenders.

2008

- As of January 11, the AMBER Alert program is credited with the successful recovery of 397 children since its inception. Almost 90 percent of these recoveries have occurred since October 2002, when President Bush called for a nationally coordinated AMBER Alert program at

the first White House Conference on Missing, Exploited, and Runaway Children.

- There have been 583,000 reports to the CyberTipline, and more than 5 million child pornography images and/or videos removed from the Internet by electronic service providers as reported to the CyberTipline.
- The CyberTipline has registered 388 U.S.-based electronic service providers to report child pornography being transmitted through their systems.
- NCMEC's Child Victim Identification Program, launched in September 2003, has reviewed more than 13.4 million child pornography images/videos, processed 13,202 cases for law enforcement, and identified 1,340 child victims in the system.

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is a component of the Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Assistance; the Bureau of Justice Statistics; the Community Capacity Development Office; the National Institute of Justice; the Office for Victims of Crime; and the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking (SMART).