

# KLAAS ACTION REVIEW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MARC KLAAS FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN

## A MESSAGE FROM MARC

**S**ilver linings are the best one can hope to achieve out of tragedy. My wife Violet and I recently spent a day touring the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC. We left feeling uplifted, knowing that out of the unimaginable horrors inflicted upon the Jews in World War II, a phoenix arose: the birth of Israel. For the first time in 2,000 years, a nomadic people finally had a homeland.

So it was with the abduction and murder of my daughter, Polly. The nation was outraged and changes were forthcoming. A twice-convicted molester murdered little Megan Kanka, but now families all over America can access information on molesters released into their neighborhoods. Adam Walsh was murdered, and his father, John, launched America's Most Wanted, becoming America's foremost victim's advocate.

So it is with the murder of little JonBenet Ramsey. A very important debate has been joined that affects all families visited by violent crime. What exactly are our rights when dealing with law enforcement? We do not have to cooperate with law enforcement, but are we morally obliged to? Or, should we hire the attorneys many of us cannot afford and expect them to work as liaisons with law enforcement?

John and Patsy Ramsey's conduct in the aftermath of JonBenet's murder vividly illustrates that no citizen is compelled by anything

more than a sense of justice to cooperate with law enforcement. Defense lawyers are perfectly correct in suggesting that we all have the right to obtain and confer with counsel prior to involving ourselves in criminal investigations. Unless charged with a crime, citizens need not submit to interrogation or polygraph examinations.

However, such behavior stalls the investigative process. Law enforcement agencies dispassionately conduct criminal investigations along parallel lines. They inspect and categorize case evidence as dictated until the various possibilities and scenarios are eliminated. This allows law enforcement to narrowly focus investigative resources until there is only one direction left to explore. At this point, the full resources focus on the final solution and case resolution.

On January 1, Patsy Ramsey told CNN's Brian Cabell and national

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# THE WILD ONES RIDE AGAIN

By Joe Klaas

**A**n estimated 100,000 “Bikers for Polly” roared their Harleys into Hollister, California, on July 4 for a Klaas Foundation for Children fundraiser. The event also marked the 50th anniversary of the 1947 biker takeover of the small town which inspired Marlon Brando’s movie classic, *The Wild One*.

The gigantic gathering of custom Harley owners, some with bikes costing as much as \$50,000 each, was the brainchild of master Harley-Davidson customizer Bill Enders, and has grown into one of the largest annual motorcycle events in the world.

“I first organized a Harley ride for Polly from my Monterey custom motorcycle shop—from Seaside to Laguna Seca Raceway—in 1994, right after the body of Polly Klaas was found and the kidnapper who murdered her started through the justice system,” Enders said. “By last year, it had grown into a ride to Hollister, which accidentally made headlines by frightening town fathers into closing down, locking up, and turning out their entire police force to quell a riot like the one that tore their town up in 1947.

*“It was the biggest event in Hollister’s history. The town made a lot of money, we had a lot of fun, and we raised a lot of dough for our country’s greatest cause ... our children!”*

“It didn’t happen, though. Harley drivers today are a different breed. Folks on bikes costing ten to forty thousand dollars just aren’t the kind who wreck towns,” Enders added. Participants included lawyers, doctors, professors, and big-hearted “just plain folks” who buzzed in to have a grand time, watch 4th of July fireworks, and help Marc Klaas in his crusade

for America’s children.

“It was the biggest event in Hollister’s history,” Enders beamed. “The town made a lot of money, we had a lot of fun, and we raised a lot of dough for our country’s greatest cause ... our children!”

The three-day celebration became too big for Hollister’s city limits, taking over the airport for Tom Corbin’s motorcycle trade show, Bolado Park Fairgrounds (for the Motorcycle Classics Gypsy Tour), and downtown Hollister, where the Kiwanis, Elks Lodge, Rotary, Lions



*Harley-Davidson event organizer Bill Enders (on the Harley) with author Joe Klaas.*

Club, and National Exchange raised money for local youth services. High-powered motorcycle races and events of all kinds roared all over Hollister.

The Victor McLaglen Motor Corps and Seattle Cossacks Stunt and Drill Team performed three shows per day. Live entertainers included Blues Smuggler’s Backyard Blues Band, the Cruisin’ Deuces, Broken Vessel, Riguez Band, Crossroads, John Kay and Steppenwolf, Blue Oyster Cult, Pat Travers, the Greg Kihn Band, Cosmo’s Factory, the original members of Creedence Clearwater Revival, Stu Cook, Doug “Cosmo” Clifford, Elliot Buston, Steve Gunner, and John Tristao.

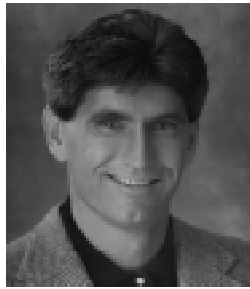
What happened in 1947’s Hollister made a movie star out of Marlon Brando in 1953. Last year’s rerun in Bill Enders’ Ride for Polly—which scared the beejeepers out of citizens who remember their town getting torn up by rowdy bikers 50 years ago—has in 1997 become Hollister’s and Harleyworld’s biggest annual event.

Riding into town on the backs of two Harleys were Marc and Violet Klaas, grateful to have Polly’s memory associated with such a warm-hearted big time for town and bikers alike. ■

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## CHAMPION RUNS FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

**U**ltramarathon champion Ed Kelley of Newport Beach, California, is currently running in the Sri Chinmoy 3,100-mile footrace as a benefit for the Klaas Foundation for Children. Starting on June 13, Kelley is circling a track in Jamaica, New York, for 51 consecutive days, averaging more than 61 miles per day. Kelley hopes to exceed the world record pace he established in last year's 2,700-mile race.



Runner Ed Kelley

Kelley's long-standing commitment to children's issues led him to pick the Klaas Foundation for Children for the second year in a row as his designated charity for the record-setting attempt.

Race sponsors are contributing either a outright gift or pledging one to ten cents per mile. Donations are still being accepted, and can be sent to The Klaas Foundation for Children, P. O. Box 925, Sausalito, CA 94966. All donations are tax deductible.

Kelley's progress can be monitored on the World Wide Web at [www.fox.nstn.ca/dblaikie](http://www.fox.nstn.ca/dblaikie), and on the ESPN sports channel. ■

Kelley, a native Californian, is the only person to have raced across America four times. The Sri Chinmoy 3,100-mile race is the first time such a distance has been attempted on a calibrated closed course.

## A MESSAGE FROM MARC (CONT.)

(cont. from page 1)

television audiences, "If anyone knows anything, please, please help us. For the safety of all the children, we have to find out who did this. Hold your babies tight, because there is a monster on the loose." Yet, because of her refusal to eliminate herself as a suspect, she helps prevent law enforcement from moving on and assuring the safety of children throughout America.

In cases involving children, statistics say that family members are usually involved. Therefore, the police and other investigating agencies focus the most attention on those closest to the victim: family, friends, and associates. They then look at individuals with occasional contact with the victim, such as delivery personnel, day care

providers, meter readers, and postal workers. Finally, law enforcement investigates the possibility of strangers, easily the most elusive and difficult scenario to solve.

Defense attorneys argue that the police cannot be trusted. However, the majority of law enforcement officers are dedicated preserving the peace, protecting the innocent, and finding the truth. The best way to assist them in finding the truth is to cooperate, clear yourself, and allow them to explore other avenues of investigation. Utilizing a lawyer as a liaison stalls the process, as the Ramsey case continues to prove.

Defense attorney, after all, are motivated out of a sense of economics, not justice. The meter begins when they enter a case. This conflict of interest must be weighed when a victim's family considers its options.

### JOIN US AT THESE UPCOMING CHILD SAFETY EVENTS:

- JULY 11-12: WILLS MOTOR CO., TWIN FALLS, ID
- JULY 13: BEND RIVER MALL, BEND, OR
- JULY 15-16: BEARDMORE CHEVROLET, BELLEVUE, NB
- JULY 18-19: BLOUNT STRANGE FORD, MONTGOMERY, AL
- JULY 22-23: GERMAIN AUTO GROUP, NAPLES, FL
- JULY 24: EDISON MALL, FORT MYERS, FL
- JULY 25-26: KOON FORD, HOLLYWOOD, FL
- AUG. 1-2: SPARKS TOYOTA, MYRTLE BEACH, SC
- AUG. 5-6: QUALITY CHEVROLET, YUKON, OK
- AUG. 8-9: SPRINGHILL MALL, CARPENTERSVILLE, IL
- AUG. 19-20: STENGERS FORD, DAYTON, OH
- AUG. 22-24: YORKTOWN MALL, LOMBARD, IL
- AUG. 29-31: NORTHBROOK COURT, NORTHBROOK, IL

THIS SERIES OF KLAAS FOUNDATION CHILD SAFETY EVENTS IS SPONSORED BY DISCOVER CARD AND THE EVENT SITE HOSTS.

An attorney may protect your rights, but as the Ramsey case illustrates, their tactics can backfire and refocus attention back on their clients—particularly if all other avenues of investigation seem stalled. It is difficult to see the silver lining on this storm cloud.

When Polly disappeared, I did not understand my rights. I thought I had to talk to the police. I now know better, but it would not have made any difference. I reacted as do most innocent victim family members. I walked into the police station ready to turn in family members if necessary to bring Polly home. My advice to Mr. and Mrs. Ramsey is to go the Boulder Police Department, do whatever they ask, and give JonBenet final peace by assisting in the capture of the "monster on the loose." ■

## STRIKING AT THE SOURCE OF CRIME: FEDS AND COMMUNITIES TRY OUT MAJOR SYSTEM REFORMS

**A** new community-based, interdisciplinary program to help reduce child abuse and teen violence is currently being tested by the U.S. Department of Justice. Five sites in the east and midwestern United States—Huntsville, Alabama; the Sault Sainte Marie Tribe of the Chippewa Indians in Sault Sainte Marie, Michigan; Kansas City, Missouri; Toledo, Ohio; and Chittenden County, Vermont—are sharing almost \$2.7 million in a comprehensive attempt to reform current methods for dealing with abused children and adolescents.

“A child who has suffered abuse or neglect is much more likely to commit a violent crime than a child who has grown up in a caring environment,” said Attorney General Janet Reno. “Addressing the cycle of violence is a critical underpinning of this effort to combat youth violence and protect our nation’s children.”

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*“Change needs to come at the grassroots level, and it needs to involve the whole community, including families.”*

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The Justice Department’s Office of Justice Programs (OJP) developed the demonstration project, called “Safe Kids–Safe Streets,” in cooperation with law enforcement, prosecutors, judges, victims’ and children’s advocates, and mental health practitioners. “These

experts told us that change needs to come at the grassroots level, and that it needs to involve the whole community, including families,” said OJP Assistant Attorney General Laurie Robinson. “OJP is committed to working as a partner with these five communities to help this change happen.”

### Taking A Grassroots Approach

The Safe Kids–Safe Streets program is currently scheduled to be funded over five years. Each site will work to restructure the criminal and juvenile justice systems to improve the handling of child abuse cases; coordinate parenting programs and support services to protect at-risk youth; improve data collection through information-sharing across systems and agencies; and launch campaigns to teach community residents how to detect, report, and prevent child abuse.

Each site has designed strategy to meet its own community’s needs. The Sault Sainte Marie Tribe will establish a computer tracking system and database to monitor child abuse cases. Kansas City will hold classes to teach basic parenting skills and help parents resolve disputes with their children without resorting to violence. Toledo will create a children’s advocacy center to treat child abuse victims and prevent further abuse.

The programs will also work with less typical community resources, including grassroots organizations, local bar associations, religious institutions, and local chapters of national organizations such as the National Parent-Teachers Association, the Congress of National Black Churches, 4-H Clubs, and the National Coalition of Hispanic Health and Human Services, among others.

### Sharing Project Results Nationwide

“These five communities have already made progress in bringing together many different elements to form a more coordinated and effective response to child abuse and neglect,” said Shay Bilchik, Administrator of OJP’s Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), which oversees Safe Kids–Safe Streets. “This program will help these communities expand their efforts, with the expectation that they can serve as a model.”

“We hope to elicit the core elements of an effective, long-term community-wide response, which can then be shared with communities around the country,” said OJJDP’s Robin Delany-Shabazz. OJJDP routinely coordinates with state advisory groups and national organizations on child health and juvenile delinquency.

“I’m sure that we’ll publish a report and share information through our Web site,” Delany-Shabazz said. “We may also fund training sessions for representatives from multiple communities, and sponsor satellite teleconferences.” The department also oversees mini-networks of organizations concerned with children and families, which are linking up over the Internet to share information and resources. As the program evolves, long-distance learning over the Web may be an option.

While Delany-Shabazz does not anticipate funding more demonstration sites, “Our department focuses on helping communities learn how to organize, find funding, and allocate resources. Current systems have been in

place for so long that changing them can't be done in a year or two. As we grow to understand the importance of a sustained effort, we have to change to a mindset of 'What progress have we made?' rather than 'Did you solve it?'"

She added, "If initial prevention programs seem

*"This program will help these communities expand their efforts, with the expectation that they can serve as a model for other communities."*

expensive, look at the long-term cost, not only for the children, but for all the people around them. We can either intervene when they're young, when they can integrate the experience and live useful, productive lives. Or we can ignore the problem and wait till they are juvenile delinquents, when they're harder to rehabilitate; or

wait until they're violent criminals, costing us \$40,000–\$60,000 annually to keep in prison.

"The results of our previous inattention to these issues are now obviously a problem for everyone."

### Fixing a Broken System

The Safe Kids–Safe Streets focus group has recommended finding comprehensive, interdisciplinary solutions that are developed from the ground up, with federal and state assistance. Partnerships among law enforcement, prosecution, the courts, victim advocates and service providers, schools, corrections, hospitals, and especially families are thought to be essential. Their recommendations include:

- Streamlining and expediting case processing and improving exchange of information among the dependency, juvenile, and criminal justice systems. This will help ensure that legal efforts are not duplicated, that health and mental health services are available to victims, and that family members and offenders complete court-ordered rehab or treatment.
- Keeping children and families informed of case events, establishing prosecution units dedicated to child abuse and child fatality, and promoting training for police and

social workers in child abuse issues. Training should emphasize cultural relevancy and sensitivity.

- Quality services for children, adolescents, and families must remain available, with an emphasis on preventive, family-focused, community-based initiatives. Succeeding with at-risk children and adolescents requires catching the problem early, and intervention should continue for much longer than it does under the current system.
- Communities need to do a better job of gathering and analyzing information on abuse. Simply knowing how many abuse victims there are, and what happens to them as they are handed from one system to the next, is beyond the capability of many jurisdictions. It is critical to improve and standardize data collection and distribution.
- The media should play an important role in child abuse prevention by raising community awareness and educating current and prospective parents.
- In many communities, informal networks and support systems exist (extended families, storefront churches, and grassroots and ad hoc programs) that are valuable mechanisms for assisting families and abuse victims. Formal community institutions should learn more about and partner with these groups to extend their outreach.

### Feds Work Together for First Time

Safe Kids–Safe Streets represents the first time that so many of OJP's bureaus and offices have pooled their resources to support a single program. OJJDP and OJP's Violence Against Women Grants Office will each fund two sites, while the Executive Office for Weed and Seed will fund the remaining one. The five sites will receive assistance from these offices as well as OJP's Bureau of Justice Assistance, Bureau of Justice Statistics, and Office for Victims of Crime. The program will be evaluated by Westat, Inc., of Rockville, MD.

"We received more than 175 applications [to take part in the program], which shows us there is a growing national commitment to protect children from abuse and neglect," said Bilchik. "These communities show the greatest promise to keep kids safe." ■

*Mary Freeman is the editor of Klaas Action Review.*

# CALIFORNIA PASSES “MEGAN’S LAW”

By Assistant Chief Randy Rossi, California Department of Justice

As of July 1, 1997, Californians will gain access to photographs and physical descriptions of over 62,000 previously convicted sex registrants. This new program results from the passage of California’s version of “Megan’s Law,” the federal sex offender registration legislation. The Klaas Foundation for Children played an active role in passing California’s version of this law, which resulted from the murder of little Megan Kanka by a previously convicted child molester.

## Photos, Descriptions Now Available to Public

Individuals who have previously been convicted for a felony sex crime or child molest offense are currently required under California law to register with local law enforcement agencies on at least an annual basis. As of

*Virtually every zip code will list scores of individuals—California currently has more than one sex registrant for every 180 adult males.*

July, however, Californians may visit their county sheriff’s department or municipal police department to view photographs and physical descriptions by accessing a CD-ROM. They may search the entire state for registrants of concern. Information is segregated by name, county, and zip code, though an exact home

address is not disclosed. Virtually every zip code will list scores of individuals—California currently has more than one sex registrant for every 180 adult males.

The California Megan’s Law also provides law enforcement officers with the ability to notify the public when they encounter sex registrants who pose a danger to the community. In such instances, officers can provide detailed descriptive information, enabling families and individuals to better protect themselves. These disclosures may be made thousands of times daily as law enforcement officials encounter field situations involving registrants.

## Notification on Sex Offenders

Additionally, Megan’s law allows law enforcement to proactively notify groups that may be at risk from these sex registrants, including licensed day care facilities,

schools, youth organizations, etc. Law enforcement agencies will track and identify when these individuals are within close proximity to at-risk populations and make the appropriate disclosures.

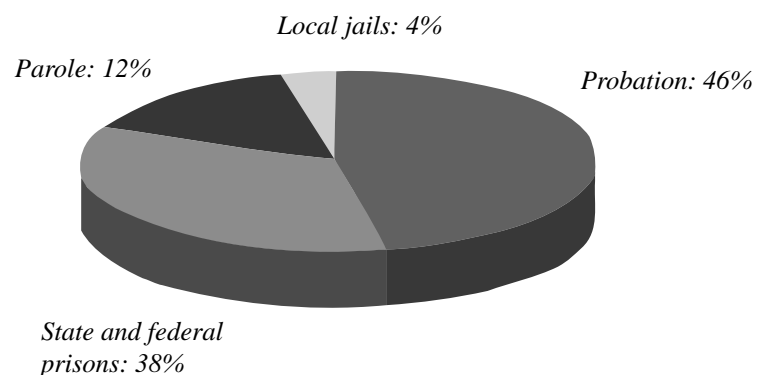
Finally, the California Department of Justice will continue to staff the highly successful Sex Offender Identification Line, allowing the public to access information on sex registrants from the privacy of home. Such information can be obtained by calling 1/900-463-0400, Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

## Most Comprehensive Law in the Nation

With these new provisions, California now has the most comprehensive sex offender notification law in the nation. However, steps have been taken to discourage vigilantes. Should an individual commit a crime based on information disclosed pursuant to Megan’s Law, they will be subject to, in addition to any other penalty imposed, a fine of not less than \$500 and not more than \$1,000.

With the enactment of Megan’s Law, California law enforcement is now able to further its primary role of protecting the public, providing critical information to better protect children from child molesters and adults from felony sex offenders. ■

## Sex Offenders: Where are They?



Nationwide, about 234,000 convicted sex offenders are in custody or under the control of corrections agencies on an average day. Nearly 60% are under conditional supervision (parole or probation) in the community. (US Bureau of Justice)

# POLLY'S GUIDE TO A SAFE SUMMER

- \* Young children should always be supervised when you are near any body of water, whether it's a river, lake, pond, pool, spa, or bath. An adult or lifeguard should be on the premises or in the water with the child.
- \* Be sure all pool and spa drains are properly secured. Keep your children away from the drains.
- \* Teach your children not to run around the pool. When not using the pool, be sure to remove all toys and secure the pool. Teach your children to swim.
- \* Life jackets should be worn at all times when on a boat.
- \* When bicycling, make sure your child has protective gear, including a helmet, pads, gloves, and proper shoes. Rollerblade in skating arenas, rollerblading parks, or in areas away from cars and pedestrians.
- \* Avoid heatstroke by drinking lots of fluids. Use spray bottle water to cool off. Wear a sun visor, sunblock, and dark glasses to avoid too much exposure.
- \* Always pack a first aid kit when going on trips or camping.
- \* When hiking, always go with a group and stay on the trail. When building a campfire, don't get too close to the fire. Don't feed or play with the wild animals. Beware of ticks, and serve healthy foods.
- \* Make sure that children do not play in or near the street.
- \* Don't let your kids play with fireworks.
- \* Children traveling alone on airplanes should be assigned aisle seats. This enables flight attendants to keep an eye on them and ensures that they arrive at their destination safely.

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To join the Klaas Foundation for Children, please fill out this form and return it to the address below. Your tax-deductible membership costs just \$15.00 per year, and includes a subscription to the quarterly *Klaas Action Review*, with news and information, practical tips, events, and more.

For no charge, members may also receive:

- Information on starting a National Community Empowerment program.
- Safety information for your children.
- Information about how to support legislation against crime in your state.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

As a personal gift, you will also receive the Children's Identification Packet and a beautiful "Polly, We Love You" pin, in memory of our inspiration, Polly Klaas.

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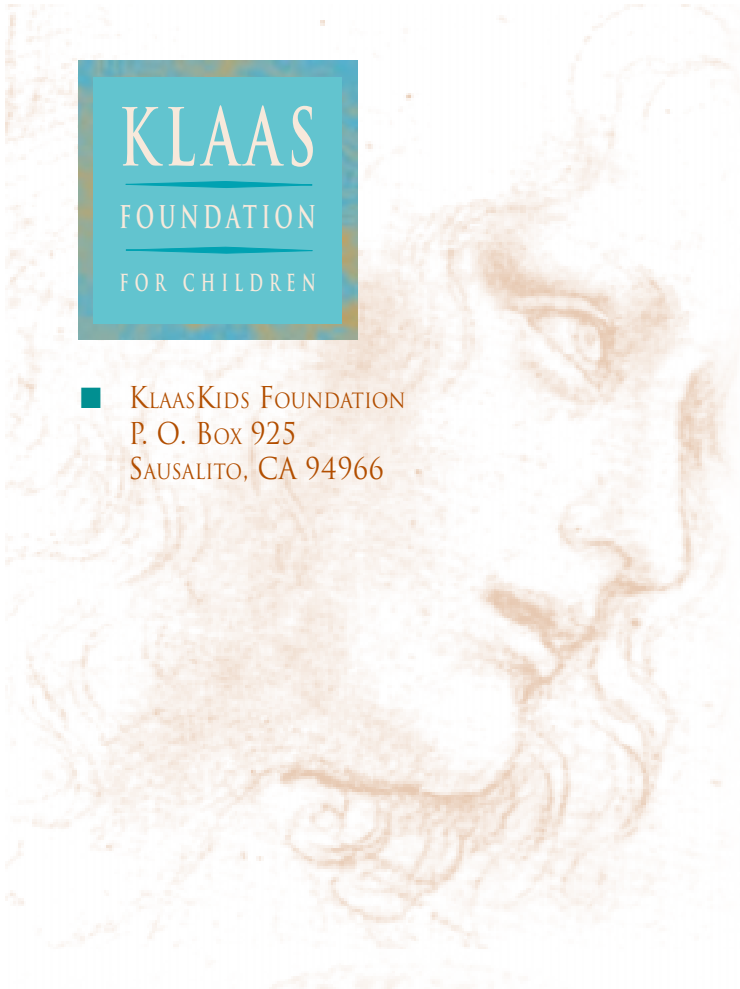
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You may also call "The Klaas Foundation Easy Donation Line" at **1-900-484-5555, ext. 130**. A flat rate charge of \$10.00 will appear on your long distance carrier bill.

*(Message not updated. Length of call is 1 minute. You must be 18 years old or have parental permission. A touch tone phone is required. Technical support provided by Creative Communications, Manhattan Beach, CA, 310/318-1056.)*



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