

# KLAAS ACTION REVIEW

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MARC KLAAS FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN

## A MESSAGE FROM MARC

If we are going to break the powerful cycles of crime that plague our society, we must enter the millennium with new ideas as well as continue on the path of proven solutions. In this edition of the *Klaas Action Review*, we explore two new ideas born of tragedy, as well as revisit a unique perspective on prevention as a major crime fighting theme.

We all have dreams. One of my dreams is to stop the predatory kidnapping of children before the crime is even committed. Through a partnership with Marin County Internet entrepreneur Michael Eagan, the KlaasKids Foundation has just taken an important step in that direction by creating BeyondMissing.com, the world's first proactive missing children's website.

The world's first successful Internet transmission of a missing child flier occurred when Polly's flyer was successfully posted in the aftermath of her kidnapping. Now, numerous websites post easily downloaded fliers of missing children. However, BeyondMissing.com goes beyond the warehousing of haunting images by using the speed of the Internet to regain precious lost minutes, hours, or days by offering a powerful suite of virtual crime fighting tools.

I completely understand the hurdles faced by parents of missing children. Polly disappeared on

October 1, 1993. On October 2 we made fliers, on October 3 we labeled and stuffed envelopes, on October 4 we realized that \$50,000.00 was needed for stamps, and on Oct. 5 Bill Rhodes mortgaged his home to raise the needed funds. On October 6 we stamped and posted the fliers; and by October 8 they began to arrive at their destinations.

Well, that was then and this is now. With BeyondMissing.com, that week of time is reduced to minutes and the cost factor is eliminated completely. Phase One of BeyondMissing.com provides America's law enforcement agencies with a secure website that allows authorized personnel to instantaneously create and distribute photo flyers of missing children and other persons of interest to law enforcement and the communities they serve. By leveraging Internet, email, and fax technology, law enforcement professionals utilize a universal platform with confidence that the critical first

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## SAILOR HELPS BUILD MISSING KIDS' WEBSITE

**V**olunteer Mike Eagan began working with the KlaasKids Foundation in 1996 when he was asked to repair its ailing, makeshift computer system. Instead of making the expected simple adjustments, he spent the day troubleshooting, reconfiguring, tweaking, and maximizing the Foundation's resources. The result was an efficient network that maximized and expanded communication and databasing capabilities.

Since that time, Eagan has become an integral part of the KlaasKids high-tech team. He has consulted on projects, advised on computing and Internet issues, and offered solutions to the inevitable problems that plague those of us who are technologically challenged.

When BeyondMissing.com went into the research and development phase, Eagan's deep knowledge of computer and Internet technologies, combined with his history of benevolence, made him an invaluable asset and welcome partner. Without his financial and in-kind intervention, this revolutionary

Internet project would not have been able to move forward.

*"BeyondMissing.com is an extension of my desire to do something positive and useful. I look upon it as a great challenge... it is an opportunity to delve into the unknown."*

### A Background in Business

Mike Eagan is a Marin County high tech entrepreneur with two successful companies. As the president of Shoreline Computers since 1982, he and his team create, install, and maintain local and wide area network systems, primarily for the

financial industry. In the mid-1990s, Eagan expanded his business interests by founding the Computer Connection of Marin, a top retail computer store.

Eagan, whose past experience also includes software development and teaching, races sailboats competitively. The owner of a one-design racing boat, he pursued his passion for racing in local events on the San Francisco Bay. However, in 2000, his natural curiosity and restlessness drove him to compete in and



Volunteer Mike Eagan on his sailboat

complete the 2,074-nautical-mile Pacific Cup race between San Francisco and Hawaii. "I am exhilarated by the ocean, I love competition, and am always up for a new challenge, so this is a natural outlet," said Eagan. "It also gives me an opportunity to organize complex concepts in a pristine and uncluttered environment."

### Helping Kids Get Their Start

The 38-year-old Marin County resident also has a long history of helping children get the right start in life. Although no longer actively involved, for many years he served on the Dominican College business advisory council, advising students on real world business experience. He also donates computer equipment to needy children.

"When Marc asked me to help develop BeyondMissing.com, I became very excited because it is a natural extension of my desire to do something positive and useful," Eagan said. "I look upon BeyondMissing.com as a great challenge, not unlike the Pacific Cup. It is

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## LEGAL WINS AND GAINS AROUND THE U.S.

### Aimee's Law Signed: States Now Accountable

Aimee's Law—which makes states accountable for crimes committed by released murderers, rapists, or child molesters who commit similar crimes in another state—was signed into law by President Clinton prior to the end of his administration. Newly appointed Attorney General John Ashcroft voted for Aimee's Law when he was a member of the United States Senate.

### Metromail Settles "Kids Off Lists" Suit

In 1996, the KlaasKids Foundation launched the "Kids Off Lists" campaign against Metromail Corporation, for years a leading database marketing company, for its indiscriminate practice of selling children's privacy information and using convicted violent offenders to process

this vital personal data. Metromail has finally settled a class-action lawsuit that challenged its use of Texas prisoners to process consumer surveys.

The three goals in the litigation were: to protect consumer safety, to promote consumer privacy, and to compensate injured consumers. The final settlement addressed these goals.

### Sex Offender Registration Update

The KlaasKids Foundation recently studied the results of the Megan's Law sex offender registration and publication program in 26 states. Based on its findings, the United States so far has more than 322,000 registered sex offenders. Twenty-nine states have official websites that offer full access to information on registered sex offenders, five states offer limited access to information on registered sex offenders, and 13 states offer no Internet access. Three states—Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Massachusetts—do not allow the public to access any information on registered sex offenders. For more information, visit the KlaasKids Foundation at [www.klaaskids.org](http://www.klaaskids.org).

### More States Study Memorabilia Law

California's landmark law that extends "Son Of Sam" restrictions to Internet commerce has been filed in the Texas State Legislature. Senator Rodney Ellis and Representative Robert Talton have introduced HB 909, which, if enacted into law, will seize the profits of a sale when a representative of the felon or a third party sells any memorabilia or other item of a convicted felon, where the item's value has been enhanced by the notoriety of the crime. Similar

legislation has also been introduced in Massachusetts and is being considered in Pennsylvania and Kansas.

### Emergency Programs Launched

KlaasKids' Marc Klaas is assisting with the implementation of both the Child Abduction Regional Emergency (C.A.R.E.) Alert and California's groundbreaking Missing Persons DNA Database.

The C.A.R.E. Alert, based on Dallas' very successful Amber Plan, formalizes a partnership between law enforcement and media. When law enforcement determines that a child has been kidnapped and that child is at risk of bodily injury, relevant television and radio stations are immediately alerted. Those stations then break into their regularly scheduled broadcasting to notify the public of the emergency.

California will also become the first state to establish a Missing Persons DNA Database for all cases involving the report of an unidentified deceased person or a high-risk missing person. DNA samples from these remains will be compared with DNA from families of missing persons with the goal of resolving and closing unsolved cases. Both programs are due to go into effect by the middle of 2001.

### Recent Missing Child Cases

As a result of KlaasKids' participation in Team H.O.P.E. and BeyondMissing.com, five families of missing children have been assisted since December 2000. Situations included locating a kidnap victim, two runaways, and two teenagers who had connections with boyfriends in Mexico. ■

## VOLUNTEER

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an opportunity to delve into the unknown: to do something that has not been done before."

Mike thinks that BeyondMissing.com can greatly impact the way missing child cases are pursued. "This is a great opportunity to do something positive for kids through the Internet. Right now we are refining BeyondMissing.com by beta testing in certain areas of Northern California."

However, he cautioned, "We know the parent program works, but the law enforcement section is much more complex, time consuming, and expensive to facilitate. We hope to establish a national presence within the next few months, but it really depends on our ability to raise the necessary funding." ■

# GIVING OUR KIDS THE RIGHT START

By Gil Kerlikowske, Chief of Police, Seattle, WA

**A**s Chief of Police in Seattle, Washington, I've spent years helping put dangerous criminals behind bars, but by the time that happens, people have already gotten hurt. Anyone who has spent time with the families of crime victims knows that no amount of punishment of criminals will undo the agony of the victims and their families. To protect children from abduction and abuse and to reduce crime and violence across America, we have to start at the front end. That means investing in quality programs that are proven to prevent crime.

The most powerful weapons in the fight against crime are programs that help kids get the right start in life, such as school readiness child care and after-school programs. What do these have to do with cutting crime? Plenty.

## Running the Numbers

One study after another shows that investment in kids dramatically reduces crime. For example, a program in Michigan randomly assigned half of a group of low-income three- and four-year-olds to the High/Scope Foundation's educational preschool program until they started kindergarten. By age 27, those not in the program as toddlers were five times more likely to be chronic offenders than those who participated.

Research shows that investment in older children and teens also dramatically reduces crime. The peak hours for violent juvenile crime are between the end of school and 6 p.m. Quality after-school programs are not only proven to cut crime, but help kids learn values such as respect for others and responsibility.

Half of a group of high school freshman boys from poverty-level households in four cities were randomly selected to participate in the Quantum Opportunities after-school program. Those not in the program were six times more likely to be convicted of a crime during high school, and half as likely to graduate on time.

Despite the proven benefits, however, school readiness child care and after-school enrichment programs are not available to many working families. Adequate child care for two children can easily cost more than \$12,000 a year, about \$2,000 more than a minimum wage worker earns in total. And government programs serve only a fraction of the eligible children. Too many families are forced to settle for child care that not only fails to give children the right start in life, but actually damages their

development.

Every day when the school bell rings, millions of children lack access to the constructive after-school programs that connect kids with caring adults during the peak hours of juvenile crime. An estimated eleven million school-age children and teens are without adult supervision part of the time after school.

## What Contribution is the Government Making?

Government is dropping the ball on school readiness child care and after-school programs. Quality early childhood programs like Early Head Start are available only to only three out of ten of the infants who need them. Regular Head Start, the principal federal child development program for children in poverty, is so under-funded that it serves only six out of ten of the eligible children, and most of them for only part of the time parents are working.

Government funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, designed to help low-income parents pay for child care, serves only one out of ten eligible children, and provides funds too meager for parents to purchase adequate care.

The federal government's principal program to help communities provide after-school programs, the Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers grants program, serves only about one-tenth of the children and teens who are unsupervised after school.

After-school and school readiness child care programs not only reduce crime and save lives, they also save money in crime costs. When policy-makers fail to invest in making sure kids have access to programs like these, they are squandering millions of tax dollars.

## These Programs Save Money

Economist Steven Barnett found that the High/Scope Preschool program produced a net saving of \$7.16 for every dollar invested. The Quantum Opportunities program returned \$3.04 for every dollar spent, without even taking into account the drop in crime it produced. Vanderbilt University economist Mark Cohen estimated that every kid steered away from crime saves \$1.5 million in taxpayer dollars.

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# VICTIMS' FAMILIES TURN PAIN INTO HOPE

By Kim Peterson

**O**n February 15, 1999, the lives of the Sund, Carrington, and Pelosso families were changed forever when Carole Sund, her 16-year-old daughter Juli, and their 15-year-old friend Silvina Pelosso were thrust into America's living rooms as television news broadcasts and law enforcement declared that they were missing. An intense investigation combining the resources of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies searched in and around Yosemite National Park for the whereabouts of the vacationing women and their rented car.

Francis and Carole Carrington, Carole Sund's parents and Juli's grandparents, offered a \$250,000 reward for information leading to the safe return of the three women and a separate \$50,000 reward for information leading to the whereabouts of the rental car. They believed and hoped that the rewards would help solve the increasingly frustrating mystery of the baffling disappearance.

The Carringtons believe that posting those rewards and the media attention they received on the case helped in locating the car, which gave them the first break in the case. It was for that reason they started the Carole Sund/Carrington Memorial Reward Foundation, with the goal of returning loved ones to their families and securing the arrest and conviction of violent criminals.

## The Sund/Carrington Foundation

The Foundation provides resources to families without the economic means to offer rewards for information to help law enforcement officials locate missing loved ones and to bring violent criminals to justice. The Foundation is determined to raise public awareness surrounding the problem of missing persons and violent crime in America.

The Foundation acts as a liaison between law enforcement, the victim's family, and the media to bring attention to abductions or homicides by offering substantial rewards for information leading to the safe return of missing persons or bringing their offenders to justice. Rewards encourage those who might otherwise keep silent to come forth with useful and vital case information.

Since it was founded in April 1999, the Foundation has posted rewards in 82 cases in 23 states, totaling over \$550,000. Requests continue to pour into the office. The Foundation has already assisted in the apprehension of three murder suspects in California, one in Washington,

and one in Missouri. It also played a critical role in apprehending a suspect in Oregon who kidnapped, molested, and attempted (but failed) to murder a young child. The detective assigned to the case, desperate to stop the suspect before he struck again and knowing full well that he would kill his next young victim, contacted the Foundation requesting reward assistance. Shortly thereafter, a newspaper article featuring the reward and a composite portrait resulted in the arrest of the suspect. He is currently in custody awaiting trial.

The Foundation also assisted in two other cases that resulted in payment of \$10,000 rewards for information leading to the whereabouts of missing persons. One concerned the safe return of a woman and her critically ill one-year-old son. The other was a man who had been missing for two weeks; he turned out to be the unfortunate victim of an automobile accident.

Not knowing where your loved ones are or whether or not they are alive is possibly the most profoundly painful situation a family could ever endure. Carole Carrington has said many times that the most difficult time of their whole ordeal were the weeks the women were missing. They did not know whether they were dead, alive, injured, or abused. They spent sleepless nights running every possible scenario through their minds. While the end result was difficult to handle, at least they knew where they were and that their loved ones were not in any pain. They could then begin the grieving process.

Helping other families find their loved ones and helping to provide them with the answers they are so desperately seeking is a high priority for the Foundation. As requests for assistance continue to pour into the office, we are grateful that we have already had a positive impact and hope that we can continue to reunite missing persons with their families and loved ones. No greater tribute could be paid to the memories of Carole Sund, Juli Sund, and Silvina Pelosso. ■

*Kim Petersen is the executive director of the Carole Sund/Carrington Memorial Reward Foundation ([www.carolesundfoundation.com](http://www.carolesundfoundation.com)). The Foundation is located in Modesto, California, and can be reached by calling 1-888-813-8389.*

# MOM USES BEYONDMISSING.COM TO LOCATE MISSING CHILD

By Kim Pendergast

For a parent, few things are scarier than a missing child. Just ask Victorville, California, resident Cindi Stone, whose runaway daughter turned up Friday, about two weeks after she disappeared. Julie “Jewels” Ann Baker, 16, doesn’t like to say much about her disappearance, but her mother does.

Had it not been for a new Web site called BeyondMissing.com, her daughter might still be missing, Stone said Tuesday. The site, established by the father of murder victim Polly Klaas, enables parents to create missing-person fliers by scanning in a photo and filling in preset fields with appropriate information about height, weight, coloring, etc.

“It’s a wonderful tool,” Stone said, “and people need to know about it because when your child is

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*“When your child is missing, as a parent you feel helpless. It only took two minutes to create a flier, and that’s precious time when you’re trying to find a child.”*

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missing, as a parent you feel helpless, and this enables you to do something. It literally only took two minutes to create (a flier), and that’s precious time when you’re trying to find a child.”

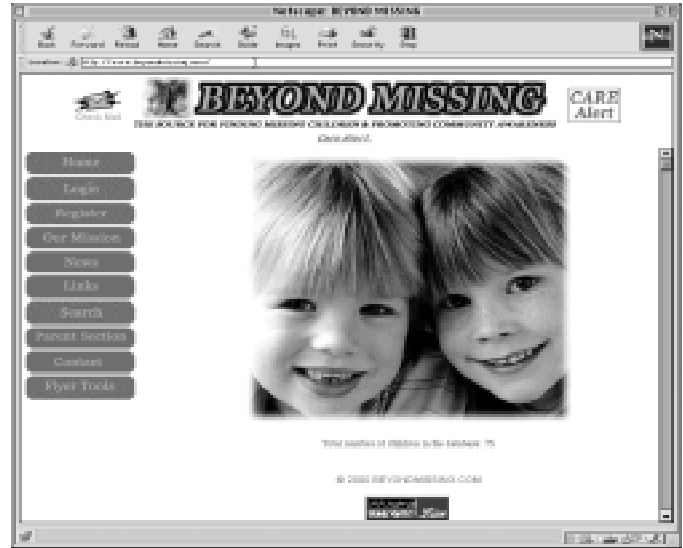
Marc Klaas, who devised the site, underwent his own terrifying ordeal when his 12-year-old daughter disappeared for months in 1993. She was taken from her home in Petaluma by a felon who later was convicted of murdering her.

“When kids disappear, they’re disappearing at about a mile a minute,” Klaas said. “As you start losing time, your chances of recovering the child start rapidly diminishing.”

That’s why she contacted Klaas, Stone said, and became the first person to use his site. Although she was also working with the National Center for Missing Children, it takes them too long to make up fliers, she said. She still has not seen the missing-person fliers the center was making for her.

After creating the flier from the Web site, Stone made 500 copies that she and friends distributed from Los Angeles to Las Vegas. “I was a basket case, but I’m not the kind of person to sit around and do nothing,” Stone said. “Creating the flier myself gave me hope that I would find her. It made me feel like I was doing something and it kept me busy.”

Julie ran away from her father’s Las Vegas home February 15. Auth-



The BeyondMissing.com website

orities thought she might be in Victorville, where her mother lives, said San Bernardino County sheriff’s Detective Gina Perez.

An anonymous caller tipped the Sheriff’s Department to Julie’s whereabouts at about the same time the girl called home, said Stone, who believes the caller had seen one of her fliers. The teen said a friend drove her from Nevada to Victorville, where she stayed with friends until Friday, when deputies showed up.

Since Julie has been home, Stone and her daughter have been spending time getting reacquainted. “I still don’t know why she was gone so long without calling,” Stone said. “But no words can tell you how happy I feel that she’s safe.” ■

*This article first appeared in the San Bernardino Sun on March 7, 2001. It is reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.*

## MESSAGE FROM MARC (CONT.)

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hours following a predatory kidnapping are being maximized via targeted distribution lists.

Since most law enforcement agencies and consumers use computers, a few keystrokes are all that separates them from BeyondMissing.com's powerful tools. Mayberry PD can create and distribute via BeyondMissing.com as easily as NYPD.

As parents, our ability to contain kidnapers is restricted by two factors: We lack training and we are driven to the edge of madness by paralyzing fear. Kidnappers disappear with our kids at a mile per minute, while we are encouraged to wait by a telephone for a ransom call or a call from law enforcement or child locator service. Our driving

passion becomes somebody else's job, and the profound sense of urgency that overwhelms us just doesn't apply to the other players.

That is why a separate community component of BeyondMissing.com enables parents to create fliers of their own missing children. From now on, the parents of missing children are empowered to utilize their own resources as well. The website has already been used successfully by one anxious parent of a missing teenager in California (see story, facing page).

BeyondMissing.com is the solution for the new millennium. Its centralized integrated solution accommodates existing hardware, eliminating the need to purchase additional equipment or software. If a law enforcement agency is in need

of an email account, BeyondMissing.com will provide one. Since it uses the Internet as a distribution platform, retrieval and software upgrade costs are minimized and onsite hardware support is eliminated.

BeyondMissing.com is being given to America's law enforcement agencies and parents at no cost. Individual agencies will not be charged for this powerful suite of tools. Instead, we will seek outside funding sources, including government grants and private donations, to secure future revenues.

Consider this our gift to America's children, who will always remain our number one priority. The bottom line is that lives will be saved, criminals will be stopped, and Polly's death will not be in vain. ■

## GIVING KIDS THE RIGHT START (CONT.)

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These studies, and many others, reinforce what law enforcement has known for a long time: We'll never be able to win the fight against crime with just more arrests, tougher sentences, and bigger prisons. Or, to quote Marc Klaas, "Trying to cure the diseases of crime and violence by building more prisons is like trying to cure cancer by building more cemeteries."

### Support from Law Enforcement

A survey of the nation's police chiefs found that nine out of ten believe investment in after-school and educational child care will greatly reduce youth violence. The 1,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors, and crime victims who form Fight Crime: Invest in Kids have produced

a School and Youth Violence Prevention Plan that calls on government to invest in school readiness child care and after-school programs. The plan has been endorsed by National Organization for Victim Assistance, the Fraternal Order of Police, the National Sheriffs' Association, the Major Cities Chiefs Organization, and many state law enforcement organizations.

Every concerned citizen should join those of us in law enforcement to call on government to do more. The Fight Crime: Invest in Kids website ([www.fightcrime.org](http://www.fightcrime.org)) offers information on how you can join in, either nationally or within your state. For regular email updates on research and advocacy, subscribe to Fight Crime: Invest in Kids' free list-serve ([www.fightcrime.org/email.html](http://www.fightcrime.org/email.html)).

It is time for our elected leaders at both the state and federal level to lay out plans to make these proven crime-fighting measures available to all families. If we want our own loved ones to be safe, we must make sure that every working family has access to the quality child care and after-school programs that help kids get the right start in life.

There is no greater governmental responsibility than protecting the public safety. To do so we must be as willing to guarantee our kids a place in a school readiness child care or after-school program as we are to guarantee criminals a place in a jail cell. ■

*Gil Kerlikowske is Chief of Police, Seattle Police Department, and chairman of the board of Fight Crime: Invest in Kids.*

# JOIN THE FOUNDATION AND HELP FIGHT CRIME!

To join the KlaasKids Foundation, 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.

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.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Enclosed please find my tax-deductible donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

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*Be sure to check out our website at <http://www.klaaskids.org> for regular updates and information on child safety. Give us your feedback!*



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