

JUSTICE FOR ASHLYNNE

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Your story ideas and pictures are welcome.

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JUSTICE FOR ASHLYNNE

NATIVE AMERICAN GIRL'S DEATH MAY SAVE COUNTLESS LIVES



All eleven-year-old Ashlynnne Mike and her nine-year-old brother Ian did was accept a ride home from their school's bus stop in Lower Fruitlands, Arizona. When it was over, Ashlynnne had been raped and murdered and her brother Ian was left wandering in the desert.

On October 27, 2017, 27-year-old Tom Begay Jr. was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for the brutal crimes that are prompting massive changes in the way child abductions are handled in Indian Country.

At the sentencing hearing, Ashlynnne's mother, Pamela Foster, spoke about the heartbreak she felt when she found out her two children were missing.

"My world spun so fast I fell to my knees and cried," she said in court. "I prayed like I have never done before and I cried for my children and for their safety, and for some kind of clue that they would both be found unharmed and alive, and my tears have never stopped flowing since. Anger, worry and fear set in immediately, and to my heartache I watched the minutes turn into hours. We went into a panic, wondering and being frightened for the children."

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She learned that evening her son Ian was alive but Ashlynnne was still missing. "Where could my precious baby be? We were full of questions that no one had answers," said Foster. "The next afternoon our precious daughter Ashlynnne's lifeless body was found. I was devastated. How could my sweet baby be gone?"

"We are grateful he admitted to doing what he did so that we can have closure in this chapter," said Gary Mike, Ashlynnne's father. "Tell your children you love them."

Jim Walters, Program Administrator for the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program and the original Liaison for the AMBER Alert in Indian Country initiative, attended the hearing.

"With everyone else in the courtroom, I cried as she spoke of the two children reaching

out and touching hands; afraid and helpless," said Walters. "The family will never be whole and the pain will never end."

The tragedy began on May 2, 2016, when Begaye drove 45 minutes from his home to a remote area of the Navajo Reservation to watch children getting off the school bus.

After offering Ashlynnne and Ian a ride home, Begaye stated that he took the children to a remote spot near Shiprock Peak; raping, beating and strangling Ashlynnne, and then leaving her, still breathing, in the desert.

Begaye released Ashlynnne's brother, who walked for miles before a motorist picked him up. However the driver could not get cell phone reception in order to call 911. An AMBER Alert was not issued until the following morning.

Immediately following the abduction, the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) partnered with the Navajo Nation to provide technology support, and additional training and technical assistance to support the full development of an AMBER Alert Plan for the Navajo Nation. This plan includes agreements between New Mexico, Arizona and Utah, with all of the states committing their assistance to the Navajo Nation in issuing and managing AMBER Alerts.

Senators John McCain of Arizona and Tom Udall of New Mexico also introduced the AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act of 2017 which would expand the AMBER Alert child abduction warning system on Native American reservations by clarifying that Indian tribes are eligible for Department of Justice (DOJ) grants that help assemble AMBER Alert systems for tribal law enforcement

agencies. Under current law, that funding is only available to states. This bill would provide America's 567 federally recognized tribes with the ability to develop AMBER Alert programs with their state and regional partners.

"This tragedy reminds us that we need to do more to protect our children from predators," said Udall. "We need to use every tool available to ensure that these appalling events do not repeat themselves."

In 2018, the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program will hold a series of regional training programs for tribal communities to assist in developing AMBER Alert programs and improving their ability to respond to endangered missing and abducted children.

The AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program will also work with NC-MEC, state AMBER Alert Coordinators and Missing Persons Clearinghouse Managers to provide training, technical assistance and policy development to increase the number of AMBER Alert plans in tribal communities.

"The tragedy of Ashlynn's case highlights the need for comprehensive child abduction recovery plans on tribal lands," added Walters. "No community is immune from the predators who would take a child and commit such a terrible crime. Our tribal, state, local and federal partners must work together to insure that Native American children enjoy the same protections, resources and efforts as those in the cities and counties around the country."

Walters said what happened to Ashlynn sends a call to action to anyone involved in the AMBER Alert program, especially to those who work with Native American communities.

"We should be dedicated to making sure that communities are prepared to respond to the unimaginable and that they are equipped with the very best training and resources," said Walters. "We should all be committed advocates for these families and their lost children; and to doing our part to help bring home the missing."

Ashlynn's mother also has hope her daughter's death will prevent other parents from sharing the same experience.

"This is a nightmare we can never wake from and it pangs my very soul in knowing he gratified himself in brutally assaulting my daughter," said Foster. "This monster terrorized my angel and caused a paramount of pain upon her and it breaks my heart and angers me that the last living thing she saw was him and looking into his evil eyes.

"This monster desecrated our traditions and cares not of others and knows nothing of the value of life," she said. "We just lost a future leader and a great one and she was to carry on our traditions."

With resolve, Ashlynn's mother emphasized for the judge and everyone in the court that she will still keep the traditions of beauty, balance, order and harmony practiced by the Navajo, holding life to be precious and sacred.

"Although she is no longer physically with us we thank God that a piece of her lives in all of her siblings and my hugs are just a little bit longer. As survivors no amount of justice, restitution and praying will ever bring our daughter back. Our baby is now in the spirit world never to be hurt again and by the grace of God this monster has finally admitted to his crime." 🌸

FACES OF THE AMBER ALERT NETWORK



LOUISIANA AMBER ALERT COORDINATOR SETS HIGH GOALS TO FIND ABDUCTED CHILDREN

HOW HAVE YOUR CAREER AND LIFE EXPERIENCES, INCLUDING YOUR WORK AS AN AMBER ALERT COORDINATOR AND CLEARINGHOUSE MANAGER, STRENGTHENED YOUR COMMITMENT TO HELPING ENDANGERED, MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN?

My work on the Jeff Davis 8 case and my duties as Clearinghouse Manager and AMBER Alert Coordinator are instrumental in my commitment to help children. It is my goal to continue to develop and provide training in Louisiana and nationally to move this good work forward.

Stacey Pearson has been with the Louisiana State Police for 18 years and works out of Lafayette. She has been the manager of the Louisiana Clearinghouse for Missing and Exploited Children (LACMEC) since 2012 and the state AMBER Alert Coordinator since January 2015.

Pearson is a third generation law enforcement officer, and has served as a uniform trooper, narcotics agent, and criminal investigator. She was also the supervisor on a task force investigating the deaths of the "Jeff Davis 8," the unsolved murders of eight women in Jefferson Davis Parish.

Pearson conducts and coordinates crimes against children investigations and works as a police composite sketch artist. In 2016, she founded The Pelican Project, a charitable foundation working with families of missing, abducted and exploited children who are in need of reunification assistance.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT YOUR AMBER ALERT AND CLEARINGHOUSE PROGRAM, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK HELPS MAKE YOUR PROGRAMS SUCCESSFUL?

Our Clearinghouse and AMBER Alert programs are not unique; however, we do strive to provide any and all assistance needed to law enforcement agencies conducting missing child/person investigations. Through a vast network of contacts, the LACMEC and the Louisiana Fusion Center are able to communicate and coordinate the response to critical missing children as well as child trafficking investigations.

WHAT IS YOUR VISION AND WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN WITH YOUR AMBER ALERT AND CLEARINGHOUSE PROGRAMS IN THE FUTURE?

My vision for the future is to have a website dedicated to the LACMEC and the Louisiana AMBER Alert programs with photographs of missing children available to the public for viewing, searching and sharing. I would also like to provide links to National Center

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"I never want to face a parent and say we did not do everything possible to find their child. We will turn over every rock, knock on every door in our state if we have to do it. I have seen miracles happen so I know AMBER Alerts make a difference."

Jennifer Viets, Montana AMBER Alert Coordinator

MONTANA AMBER ALERT COORDINATOR URGES EVERYONE TO NEVER GIVE UP WHEN A CHILD IS ABDUCTED

Jennifer Viets has been the Montana AMBER Alert Coordinator since 2012. She has been the state's Missing Persons Clearinghouse Manager since 2009. Viets started as a training officer for Montana's Criminal Justice Information Network in 1994. She also worked as a 911 public safety dispatcher and supervisor for five years.



WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT YOUR AMBER ALERT AND CLEARINGHOUSE PROGRAM, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK HELPS MAKE YOUR PROGRAMS SUCCESSFUL?

I am not sure I would use the word unique, but I think there are two keys to our successful programs: 1) the relationships we have built with Montana's law enforcement agencies and Montana's AMBER Alert partners; and 2) the passion and dedication of our staff.

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE IN MAINTAINING THE EFFECTIVENESS AND STRENGTH OF YOUR AMBER ALERT AND CLEARINGHOUSE PROGRAMS?

No budget, very small staff, duties and "other duties as assigned" affect our ability to have the time to practice and stay as sharp and current as we would like. Also managing contact lists for media, high turnover, getting timely information when we have an alert, and delay in reporting parties contacting us; these are all challenges we face and work to improve.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN WITH YOUR AMBER ALERT AND CLEARINGHOUSE PROGRAMS IN THE FUTURE?

It would be great to use a national AMBER Alert program so states could more quickly share alerts.

PLEASE SHARE DETAILS ABOUT YOUR MOST MEMORABLE SUCCESS STORY IN WORKING A MISSING CHILD CASE.

It was amazing to be a part of the February 2016 AMBER Alert for four-year-old Maci Lilley. She was abducted from a playground by John Lieba. The whole community responded to the AMBER Alert. A citizen, aware of the alert, saw Lieba and gave him a ride to the nearest law enforcement officer.

The suspect initially refused to cooperate, but later told investigators he had strangled Maci. He drew a map to where he left her body in an abandoned vehicle parked within an old grain silo. Officers found the vehicle and were relieved to discover she was alive. Lesson learned—never give up!

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AMBER ALERT ON THE FRONT LINES:



FLORIDA AMBER ALERT HELPS TRACK DOWN SUSPECT CAUGHT IN THE ACT

In the early morning hours of September 3, 2017, the Orange County Sheriff's Office in Florida received a call about an abduction. A convicted felon kidnapped an 11-year-old female relative and then dragged her into the woods.

The child's grandmother woke in the middle of the night and discovered the girl's room was locked. She picked the lock and discovered a 50-year-old man sexually abusing the girl. The man grabbed the child, who was screaming hysterically and naked from the waist down. He ran into the woods, continuing to sexually assault her.

The suspect had been incarcerated at least eight times since 1989 and was released from prison in 2014. He then married a relative of the victim.

Deputies arrived at the home in Apopka, Florida, within minutes after the 911 call was

placed. Search dogs were brought in and a command post was set up. A BOLO (Be on the Lookout) message was sent to all law enforcement in the area.

When the suspect and the child could not be found, Orange County Corporal Benjamin Thorpe decided an AMBER Alert was needed to give the child the best chance of survival.

"The decision to move forward with an AMBER Alert was based off the manner in which the suspect abducted the victim into the woods and his past history of sex abuse," said Thorpe. "I was concerned, based on training and statistics, that the victim may have been deceased."

Detectives gathered information about the child, suspect and significant events surrounding the investigation to support the alert. At approximately 7:00 a.m., the Orange County Sheriff's Office had a

conference call with the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) Assistant Special Agent in Charge, the Regional Special Agent Supervisor and the AMBER Alert Coordinator to discuss issuing the alert.

“The case clearly met the AMBER Alert criteria,” said Florida AMBER Alert Coordinator Lyndsey Pitts. “We believed the child was at risk of great bodily harm or death and there was a clear indication of an abduction.”

The AMBER Alert was issued by the FDLE at 7:23 a.m. and notifications were sent to the Florida Department of Transportation, Florida Highway Patrol, Florida Department of Lottery and all law enforcement agencies in the state. The Wireless Emergency Alert (WEA) system deployed an alert text message to all cell phones in Florida.

The AMBER Alert was broadcast on television and radio, posted on social media and sent to everyone in Florida who signed up to receive AMBER Alerts by email. The FDLE Child Abduction Response Team (CART) was also activated to assist the Orange County Sheriff’s Office with a door-to-door search. More than 100 law enforcement officers from several agencies took part in searching for the child.

About three hours after the alert was issued, a member of the public who saw the alert on TV discovered the victim. “The victim was banging on the windshield of an abandoned vehicle,” said Thorpe. “I am very thankful and proud that a member of the community intervened and notified law enforcement.”

“Everyone at FDLE and all law enforcement involved were pleased with the child’s safe return,” added Pitts.

Florida has issued 217 AMBER Alerts since 2000. Thorpe has investigated several missing child cases, but this was his first AMBER Alert request. He said the investigation did have some challenges, which included tracking all of the law enforcement officers from different agencies needed for the investigation and managing the numerous tips received to protect against duplication or loss of important leads.



Orange County Corporal Benjamin Thorpe



Florida AMBER Alert Coordinator Lyndsey Pitts

Thorpe offered this advice for other AMBER Alert partners. “Use resources effectively. Manage the information as it comes in and delegate responsibilities to trustworthy sources. Do not be afraid to push forward with the AMBER Alert once you have the appropriate information and meet the criteria.”

The father of the victim posted his thanks on Facebook for everyone who helped find his daughter. “I want to thank the community for [coming] together to help find her but most of all I want to thank the police officer[s] who [were] out there helping to find my baby.” 🙏

AMBER ALERT TRAINING

PUERTO RICO GETS MISSING CHILDREN TRAINING BEFORE HURRICANES HIT

Just a month before Hurricanes Maria and Irma brought massive devastation in Puerto Rico, law enforcement officers in the U.S. territory had fortunately received training on how to find missing and abducted children.

The AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program's event held August 23-24, 2017, had more than 450 participants representing all 13 regions of Puerto Rico. The event included presentations from a family member of an abducted child, lessons on how to interview high-risk victims and how to handle long-term missing person cases.

"The participants were engaged and they were eager to learn," said Jesi Leon-Baron, regional liaison and project coordinator with the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program. "They were asking lots of questions. They wanted to know about the different scenarios and different tools to help them with their investigations, especially with high risk victims."

This was the first AMBER Alert training in Puerto Rico in more than a decade. Participants discussed how to organize their resources and find funding to strengthen the territory's AMBER Alert program and

how to develop a Child Abduction Response Team.

"They really want to mimic the same systems we have here in the continental U.S. to find abducted children," added Leon-Baron. "They know the need is there."

Kay Vazquez, a criminal analyst for the Special Investigations Bureau and Clearinghouse for Missing Children for Puerto Rico said the training was highly useful.

"I especially enjoyed the presentations regarding long-term missing children cases and hope to implement some of the ideas in our investigations," said Vazquez. "The presentations on high risk victims and trafficking also changed my perception of runaways and how our jurisdiction deals with this type of investigation. It was very gratifying to see other individuals who are committed in fighting child related crimes." ☺



U.S. AND MEXICO LEARN TOGETHER ABOUT CROSS BORDER ABDUCTIONS

Law enforcement representatives from the U.S. and Mexico participated in a Cross-Border Abduction Response training July 20-21, 2017, in Tucson, Arizona. The presentation was part of the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program's Southern Border Initiative (SBI), and focused on the southern border state AMBER Alert pro-

grams and how those states can work cooperatively with the Alerta AMBER in Mexico system. Participants engaged in challenging cross-border abduction scenario tabletop exercises to work through the process of identifying and understanding these resources and critically important coordination points. ☺

PROTECTING OUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS COMMUNITY WORKSHOP: COMMUNITY AND LAW ENFORCEMENT COME TOGETHER IN DALLAS

Community members, law enforcement and others working in prevention and response to the problems of sex trafficking came together for a community workshop offered by the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program and the National Criminal Justice Training Center (NCJTC) September 14, 2017. Throughout the event, participants listened and learned from a panel of survivors of sex trafficking, discussing important questions and dynamics which must be understood in order to carry out effective prevention and recovery work. Cindy McCain of the McCain Institute's Human Trafficking Program also addressed law enforcement officers through a video

conference during the workshop. "It was an honor to have Cindy McCain join us," said Jason Sterling, AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program Manager. "Her program educates, raises awareness and implements innovative, action-based solutions to end modern slavery."



"AWESOME OTTO" SHOWS HOW K9S CAN HELP CHILD ABUSE VICTIMS

His full name is Ottimo, but this lab and retriever mix canine is often called "Awesome Otto." He is a professionally trained companion that assists crime victims, witnesses and others in need during child forensic interviews, forensic medical exams and legal proceedings.

Otto was also a star guest at the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program's June 2017 Multi-Disciplinary Response to High Risk Victims training in Columbus, Ohio.

Laura Romans is the Crime Victims Service Manager for the Harcum House Child Advocacy Center in Lancaster, Ohio. She takes Otto to trainings and when she works as a forensic interviewer of child abuse victims.

"Everyone loves him," said Romans. "He is an emotional support for the children. When he is calm then the children are calm. They think it is amazing he will curl up with him."

The dog was specifically bred and trained for two years by Canine Companions for Independence, an accredited organization of Assistance Dogs International. He has been present during more than 500 child interviews.



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AMBER ALERT INTERNATIONAL



LITHUANIA HOSTS AMBER ALERT TRAINING FOR TEN EUROPEAN NATIONS

Forty police officers as well as politicians from ten European countries met for an AMBER Alert training on October 24, 2017. Charlie Hedges, AMBER Alert Europe's Police Network Coordinator, shared best practices on handling missing children cases at the meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania. "A quick risk assessment is crucial to identify the correct response to save a child whose life is in immediate danger," said Hedges. 🍷

EUROPEAN AMBER ALERT OFFICIALS WANT BETTER NOTIFICATIONS FOR MISSING CHILDREN



Members of AMBER Alert Europe are asking the European Parliament to list all missing children on the continent's notification system. Currently the notices only go out if the person has been placed under protection or to prevent threats. The Schengen Information System (SIS) is used to send messages in 29 countries throughout Europe. "At least 250,000 children are reported missing every year in the European Union," said Frank Hoen, President of AMBER Alert Europe. "We urge MEPs (Members of the European Parliament) to adopt a position that ensures that all missing children at risk may be entered in SIS at the request of the competent authorities." 🍷



AUSTRIAN SEARCH ORGANIZATION SIGNS ON AS AMBER ALERT PARTNER

An Austrian search organization signed an agreement to become the 29th partner with AMBER Alert Europe. "Österreich Findet Euch" originally began in 1944 to help children find their fathers who served in World War II. In 2015 the organization started using the same principles used by be AMBER Alert Europe. The September 14, 2017, document formalizes that the group will now take part in all of the communication methods used by AMBER Alert Europe. 🍷

AMBER ALERT IN INDIAN COUNTRY

NEW EARNING FOR TRIBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COMMUNITY CHILD PROTECTION EFFORTS

The AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program added two new online training opportunities to its array of eLearning courses in September 2017. These two one-hour trainings are uniquely designed for tribal law enforcement and others working in child protection efforts in tribal communities. For complete information, and to register, visit the Tribal Database Website's training page: <https://www.tribaldatabase.org/resources/training-2/>, or email us at tribaldatabase@ncjtc.org.



LAW ENFORCEMENT AND COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO CHILD SEX TRAFFICKING AND EXPLOITATION IN INDIAN COUNTRY

This one-hour self-directed course is designed provide child protection personnel working in or with Native American and Alaskan Native communities with an understanding of both historical and ongoing problems of child sex trafficking and exploitation in Indian Country, and to offer careful consideration of important strategies to build awareness of the problem, and support tribal communities in identifying and reporting suspected or known trafficking and exploitation. The course provides important considerations for law enforcement in working with the community on these awareness and identification efforts, as well as for preparing for effective response to safely recover victims, interdict these crimes, and prosecute offenders.



BUILDING AMBER ALERT IN INDIAN COUNTRY

This one-hour self-directed course is designed provide child protection personnel working in or with Native American and Alaskan Native communities with an understanding of both historical and ongoing efforts to establish AMBER Alert systems in Indian Country, and to offer careful consideration of the key components needed to implement a successful child abduction recovery strategy in those communities. ☺

AMBER ALERT BRIEFS



HUMAN TRAFFICKING PANEL DISCUSSES POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS IN NORTH DAKOTA

North Dakota Senator Heidi Heitkamp and representatives from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) spoke at a panel on child trafficking October 20, 2017, in Grand Forks, North Dakota.

"I think it is critically important that this not just be a social worker's problem, a cop's problem, a legislator's problem; that this be all of our problem because these are all of our kids," said Heitkamp.

NCMEC received reports of 113 children missing in North Dakota during the last three years. NCMEC said the average of a trafficking victim is 15 and there has been an increase in the number of male trafficking victims.

The panel suggested more training for social workers and nurses and more legislation to stop websites known for sex trafficking. ↪



GEORGIA MARKS ANNIVERSARY OF VICTIM WHO IS THE NAMESAKE OF THE STATE'S CHILD ABDUCTION ALERT

Georgia marked the 20th anniversary of discovering the body of Levi Frady, the namesake of Levi's Calls, the state's child abduction alert system. On October 22, 1997, eleven-year-old Levi Frady was abducted as he was heading to his home. His bike was found the day before his body was discovered. Shortly after the incident, local law enforcement and Georgia broadcasters teamed up to create Georgia's version of the AMBER Alert, naming it after Frady. ↪



IDAHO CAR DEALERSHIP OFFERS CHILD ID KITS

A Chevrolet dealership in Twin Falls, Idaho, is working with Idaho AMBER Alert partners to provide child identification kits. On October 21, 2017, they held an event to create printouts that include a child's photo and fingerprints in case the child ever becomes missing or is abducted. The information can also be uploaded for police investigations. ↪

PENNSYLVANIA CONSIDERS ADDING HIT-AND-RUNS TO AMBER ALERT PLAN

Pennsylvania Representative Tina Pickett has introduced legislation that would expand the state's AMBER Alert program to include notifications after hit-and-run incidents. The alerts would be distributed by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation to vehicle repair shops after a hit-and-run accidents resulting in the serious bodily injury or death of victims. 🍷



MISSOURI LEGISLATORS REINTRODUCE "HAILEY'S LAW"

Two Missouri lawmakers are again trying to pass "Hailey's Law," a bill that would require the state's AMBER Alert Oversight Committee to meet at least annually. The law is named for 10-year old Hailey Owens, who was abducted and murdered in Springfield, Missouri in 2014. The trial for her alleged killer was scheduled to begin October 30, 2017. 🍷



PHILADELPHIA POLICE SAY ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE CAN HELP DURING AMBER ALERTS

Philadelphia police officers are now using cameras with Artificial Intelligence (AI) to solve crimes, and they believe this same technology could be very effective during an AMBER Alert. The dash-mounted cameras can identify a specific vehicle and license plate number. The AI technology can also be used to identify faces, weapons or certain behaviors on surveillance videos. 🍷



"AWESOME OTTO" Continued from page 11

Otto is Ohio's first state-certified courthouse dog which allows him to sit in the witness box when a child or victim of crime is called to testify in court.

"He will give that unconditional love that kids sometimes never get," added Romans. "It helps for better testimony or an interview. He will help kids who don't want to be interviewed or do not feel comfortable enough to be interviewed."

She remembers one child who did not want to be interviewed until Otto jumped on his lap. "He just started crying and then let go and told us what happened," she said. "[Otto] works his magic."

Romans urges more organizations to get a facilities dog, especially if they work with abduction, human trafficking and other abuse victims. 🍷

STACEY PEARSON, Continued from page 6

for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) training resources on this website as well as safety tips. I also have a goal to create a Louisiana Missing Persons Day.

PLEASE SHARE DETAILS ABOUT YOUR MOST MEMORABLE SUCCESS STORY IN WORKING A MISSING CHILD CASE.

Two cases stand out the most:

- An alleged California sex offender and a woman were found in Louisiana with four missing children, ages four, six, seven and eight. The suspects were arrested at a convenience store and the children were found inside his car dirty and hungry. The couple fled California to help prevent the man from being arrested for sexual acts

involving a minor.

- A couple from Shreveport, Louisiana, were arrested in Arizona after allegedly abducting two boys, ages seven and two. The couple allegedly committed a bank robbery after they took the children.

Sometimes our “successes” on the surface are in reality very tragic. The elation that is felt when a child is recovered can quickly be replaced with anger, grief and disgust at the circumstances the children were taken; how they lived and the circumstances they were rescued from. The reality that no one person can “fix” the situation takes its toll. There is no magic wand. ☹

JENNIFER VIETS, Continued from page 7

PLEASE DESCRIBE ANY WORK WITH TRIBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AND TRIBAL CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAMS IN YOUR STATE.

Every child is important to us. We do not treat tribal children any differently. The same applies to tribal law enforcement agencies. They are treated with the same respect as any other law enforcement agency in Montana. If a tribal agency requests an AMBER Alert or Missing Endangered Person Advisory, and the circumstances meet the alert criteria, the alert is issued.

Our strongest relationships with tribal law enforcement agencies occur when that agency has a Criminal Justice Information Network (CJIN) terminal. Tribal agencies without a CJIN terminal often work with us through a local sheriff's office, but we will take the call from any of them at any time.

We are very fortunate because some of our tribal law enforcement agencies cross-deputize with the sheriff's office and have strong partnerships.

We have found it is important to visit tribal agencies in person when you can. One of the challenges we face is staff turnover at tribal agencies and changes in management control (Bureau of Indian Affairs vs. tribal). It can be hard to keep current contacts.

My goal would be for tribal agencies to know the state AMBER Alert program is here to serve them and all they need to do is call if they need us.

HOW HAVE YOUR CAREER AND LIFE EXPERIENCES, INCLUDING YOUR WORK AS AN AMBER ALERT COORDINATOR AND CLEARINGHOUSE MANAGER, STRENGTHENED YOUR COMMITMENT TO HELPING ENDANGERED, MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN?

I have been very fortunate that every missing child I have done an alert for has been located, although sadly four of them were deceased. I am driven to ensure when we issue an alert that the public gets it quickly and it has the most accurate and complete information possible. ☹

askamber@fvtc.edu

