TELL US YOUR STORY

National Criminal Justice Training Center *of* Fox Valley Technical College

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

MEET Greg and Missey Smith

Founders of the Kelsey Smith Foundation and Parents of Kelsey Smith



Greg and Missey Smith

On June 2, 2007, Greg and Missey's life changed forever when their 18-year-old daughter, Kelsey, was abducted from an Overland Park, Kansas parking lot after purchasing a gift for her boyfriend. Kelsey's family took immediate action following her disappearance, working tirelessly to answer the only questions that mattered: "Where is she and what happened to her?" As they searched for answers, helpful clues like video surveillance footage and Kelsey's cell phone data were not immediately available to investigators, ultimately taking several days to receive and analyze. Ultimately, thanks to the initial video footage, investigators were able to answer the "What happened?" question: Kelsey was abducted. Over the next four days, extensive search efforts were launched, and as they intensified, the community rallied, forming what became known as "Kelsey's Army."

As Greg and Missey sat down with us for this interview, Greg reflected on the agony those four days brought—both as a worried father and an active-duty police officer, fully aware of how crucial time is in missing persons cases. "We had no idea what had happened or why she wasn't responding," he shares. They also didn't know there might have been a way to find Kelsey sooner, an answer to the question they were desperately searching for: "Where is she?"



Kelsey Smith

"Kelsey's boyfriend told me, 'My uncle says we can ping her phone,'" Missey recalls. This phrase began their mission to push their cell phone provider to release crucial location data to law enforcement (which was not a requirement in 2007). After days of resistance, the company eventually agreed to send an engineer up a tower to help detectives narrow down Kelsey's last-known location based on mobile device data. And, on June 6, 2007, after just 45 minutes of this information being shared, Kelsey's body was recovered, with forensic evidence revealing that she was sexually assaulted and strangled to death. Her killer was later sentenced to life in prison.

Determined to turn tragedy into meaningful action, the Smiths founded **Kelsey's Army (The Kelsey Smith Foundation)** to support families, communities, and law enforcement in protecting children and young adults. The foundation also advocates for legislative changes to improve response times in missing persons cases.

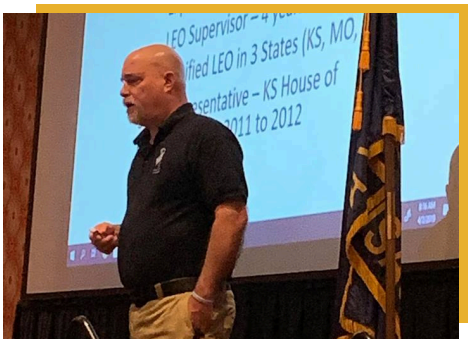
TRAINING Addressing the Questions That Often Go Unasked

Leveraging their advocacy work with **Kelsey's Army**, Greg's 27 years in law enforcement, and their personal experience as family survivors, they looked for training that would not only build their own knowledge but also create opportunities to learn that would empower the communities they serve through the foundation. This is where NCJTC's relationship with Greg and Missey first began.

In 2017, Greg signed up to take our new *Mobile Device Investigations* training course to build his investigative skills, while also staying current on the most pressing threats, trends, and technologies used by law enforcement. Throughout the three-day classroom training, Greg connected with fellow criminal justice professionals and built strong relationships with our Associate Instructors, who are subject-matter experts in digital forensics. He reflected on his experience, sharing that the *Mobile Device Investigations* training provided him with critical expertise in analyzing mobile data, working with cellular providers, and securing the digital evidence necessary to locate missing persons faster. All of which was imperative for his work as an officer and as a child protection advocate.

*"I just had a really good relationship with the **NCJTC instructors** and learned so much in the Mobile Device Investigations course. It was the grounding I needed to take me in the other areas where we needed to go - it's probably one of the best courses I've taken."*

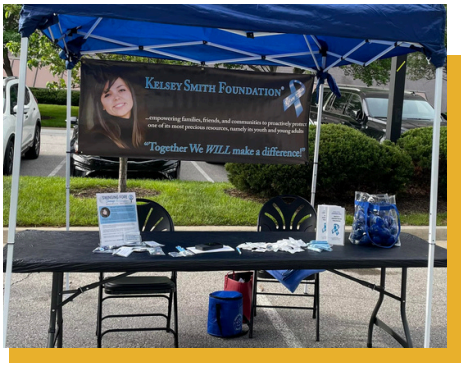
-Greg Smith on the Mobile Device Investigations training



Greg Smith presenting at a criminal justice conference

As a career police officer, Greg already understood the correlation between effective training and improved outcomes, but for him, it was more than that. It simply wasn't enough for cell phone companies to have to release this information — **agencies also needed to know how to use it in order to improve investigative response.** For law enforcement professionals, this training is invaluable. It offers real-world techniques to track mobile devices, obtain crucial records, and streamline investigative processes that can mean the difference between life and death in abduction cases.

> *"Before I took the course, I was looking stuff up online, and trying to teach myself, so for me, this course was foundational. It really gave me the tools I needed to understand the technology and use it effectively in real investigations."* Greg, on NCJTC training



Kelsey's Army "in action" within the community

Missey also immersed herself in learning, participating in both our *Child Abduction Response Team (CART)* training course and leveraging resources and support from our AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance team. Missey shared, "During the AMBER Alert tabletop exercises, I was sitting with law enforcement and shared the things to be cautious of that may interrupt the investigation, things that we experienced with Kelsey from the family perspective."

NCJTC's three-day CART tabletop exercises bring together a multidisciplinary team including law enforcement, justice professionals, first responders, and more, with the goal of building the knowledge, skills, and abilities required in child abduction cases. Although our training courses are primarily aimed at professionals in the field, we feel it's crucial for participants to grasp the effects of child abduction on families. This understanding is essential for enhancing investigations and improving outcomes.

IMPACT & RESULTS When Training Goes Beyond "Learning"

Armed with their personal experiences, collaborative partnerships and training, the Smith's are effecting meaningful change within communities across the United States. They share that the impact of NCJTC's training and technical assistance have provided them new ways to elevate their mission, including:

While there is no one definition of "impact" when it comes to fulfilling our mission, the Smith's story reminds us that meaningful change extends beyond just the number of training sessions we hold, or the number of people we train. It's a moving representation showing what can *start* with a training class to build tactical skills and knowledge can actually become the foundation for longstanding relationships, and an opportunity to make new connections where they may not have otherwise been.

Missey shared "You have individuals at your trainings, and they say 'we need that [Kelsey Smith Act] in our state' after we share the importance of it - it's been helpful as we work to get it passed" adding, "your training has also provided us lifelong friends. I am still in connection with several families and people I met at your roundtables."

NCJTC Impact

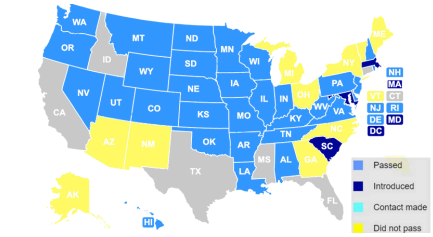
- **Learn** from NCJTC's subject-matter experts, actively working in the field
- **Access specialized training** to better understand how law enforcement can be best equipped to handle missing persons cases
- **Build relationships and network** with many industry decision-makers, as they build awareness and expand The Kelsey Smith Act across the U.S.

Training is Just the Beginning

Greg participating in Mobile Device Investigations

Missey attending & contributing to AMBER Alert Training exercises

Longstanding relationship - shared goals to protect communities





Greg (right), and Missey with WI Governor, Tony Evers upon the passing of the Kelsey Smith Act in 2024.

The Kelsey Smith Act and Kelsey's Army

We started the interview for this episode of our Tell Us Your Story series with what happened to Kelsey, and it feels fitting to wrap it up with what's happened because of Kelsey. Since her death, Greg and Missey have applied their training, personal experiences, connections, and knowledge as they work to pass the Kelsey Smith Act in all 50 states. This act requires cell phone providers to share phone location information with law enforcement in emergency situations and has been passed in 31 states thus far.

When asked by our NCJTC team, "What would Kelsey say?" Greg shared, "Knowing Kelsey and her attitude, her question would be, 'Why don't you have all 50 states?'" as Missey smiles in agreement. Beyond legislation, the *Kelsey Smith Foundation* also works with law enforcement to improve investigative techniques and real-time tracking methods; these efforts ensure that even in states without the law, officers are better equipped to act swiftly. Visit kelseysarmy.org to learn more about the Kelsey Smith Act.

The Smiths share Kelsey's story and mission by providing resources and training at several criminal justice conferences each year, including speaking at our 2023 *National Missing and Unidentified Persons Conference (MUPC)*. "When he speaks as the father of a homicide victim as well as a police officer, there's a different connection there," says Missey, as Greg nods in agreement. "There are viewpoints that I never thought of as a law enforcement officer until this happened."

Greg adds that speaking at conferences like MUPC open the doors for great conversations with others in law enforcement - both with agencies who've had improved outcomes because of the *Kelsey Smith Act,* and with those who may not know about it...*yet.* "Being able to take those conversations that we've had, and relay it to other officers through the avenues NCJTC provides helps us be able to get the word out about our mission and work. To be able to work with others in law enforcement and say 'hey have you tried this or that?' and vice versa is valuable."



Missey presenting at NCJTC's 2023 National Missing and Unidentified Persons Conference

View the **full video** interview in Ep. 02 of the *Tell Us Your Story* series at **ncjtc.org/episodes**

LEARN MORE **About NCJTC Training**

By now its clear that the Smith's have embraced a holistic approach to their learning, having leveraged a mix of courses from NCJTC (linked on the right), including the Mobile Device Investigations course. This program was developed in 2017 so law enforcement could learn essential cell phone investigation techniques, including how to work with network providers, execute tech-focused search warrants, analyze call data, and apply those findings to cases with effective reporting strategies. Our focus at NCJTC is to provide cutting-edge and interactive training so law enforcement can stay ahead of the most critical public safety threats, and this course is one example of our commitment to those we serve!

"I highly recommend NCJTC training - the actual connections you get to make with other classmates is the best. It helps get the information out there so officers have what the tools they need."

- Mobile Device Investigations
- National Missing and Unidentified Persons Conference
- Child Abduction Response Team (CART)
- AMBER Alert 20-Hour Technical Assistance

View more upcoming training opportunities at ncjtc.org/training!

ABOUT THE SERIES

NCJTC's Tell Us Your Story series highlights the inspiring successes of our customers and the positive impact of their work within the communities they serve. Watching their video interviews offers you a glimpse into how they've leveraged training to not only improve case outcomes but to save more lives.

Each story highlights real-world challenges and innovative solutions, allowing criminal justice professionals to not only celebrate each other's successes but also learn from each other as you work to solve similar public safety concerns.

Highlight Success **Inspire Others** **Foster Change** **Earn Perks**

We want to hear your story of **impact.**

Scan the QR code or visit
ncjtc.org/tellusyourstory
to submit your story.

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