

FROM CAPTIVE TO ADVOCATE

PAGE 3

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

RETHINKING RUNAWAYS AND MISSING
CHILDREN

PAGE 8

ON THE FRONT LINES: NEW YORK

PAGE 14



AMBER[®]
ALERT

IN THIS ISSUE:

FROM CAPTIVE TO ADVOCATE PAGE 3
COMBATTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING PAGE 6
RETHINKING RUNAWAYS & MISSING CHILDREN PAGE 8
FACES OF THE AMBER ALERT: NORA BEST PAGE 10
FACES OF THE AMBER ALERT: PATRICK BEUMLER PAGE 12
ON THE FRONT LINES: NEW YORK PAGE 14
AMBER ALERT INTERNATIONAL PAGE 16
AMBER ALERT IN INDIAN COUNTRY PAGE 17
AMBER ALERT BRIEFS PAGE 18

.....

This publication was prepared under Cooperative Agreement number 2017-MC-FX-K003 from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice. Points of view or opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of OJJDP or the U.S. Department of Justice.

.....

Your story ideas and pictures are welcome.

AMBER ALERT INFO:
For AMBER Alert Training
& Technical Assistance,
contact:

Jim Walters, Program Administrator
AMBER Alert Training &
Technical Assistance Program

877-71-AMBER
askamber@fvtc.edu

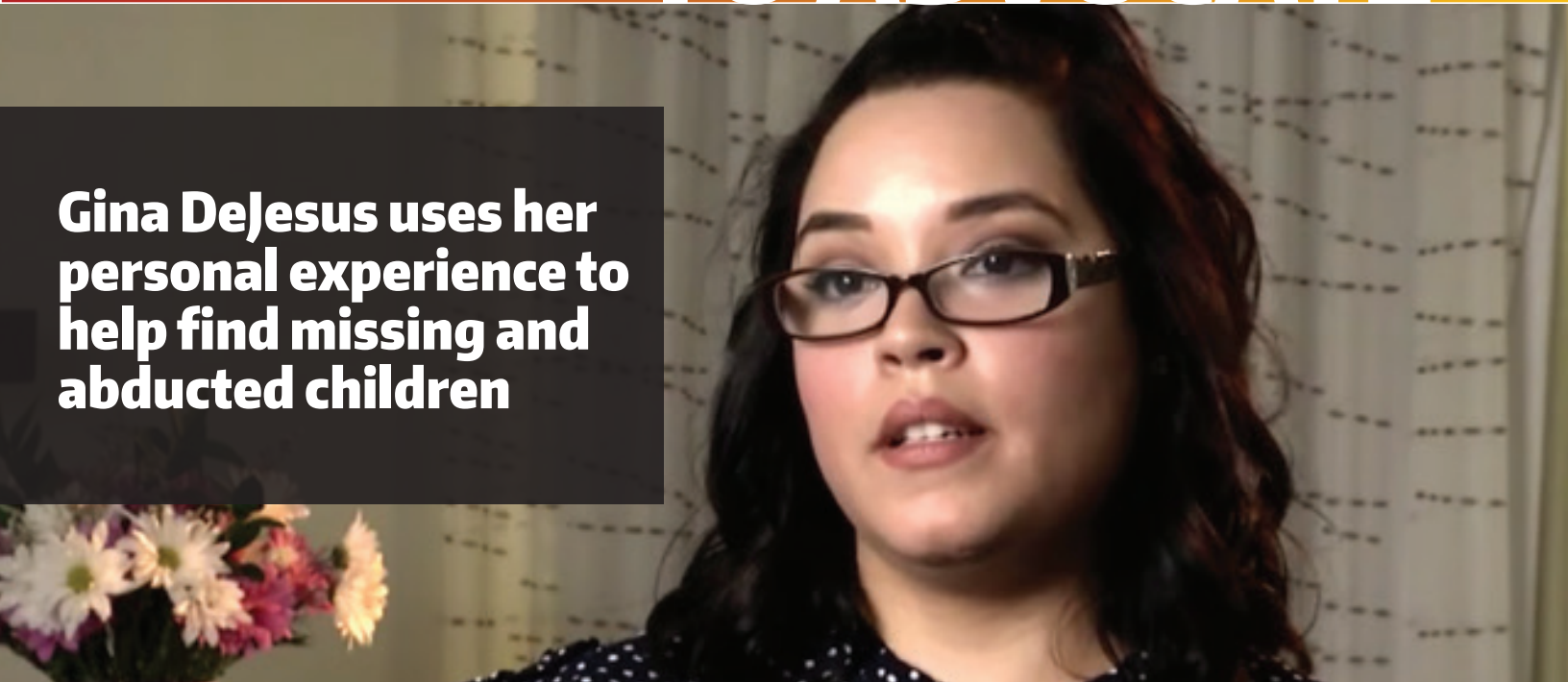
Training & Technical Assistance Information:
<https://amberadvocate.org>
<https://amber-ic.org>

EDITORS:
Bonnie Ferenbach, ferenbac@fvtc.edu
Paul Murphy, murphyp@fvtc.edu

GRAPHIC LAYOUT:
Whitecap Interactive
whitecap.io
info@whitecap.io

FROM CAPTIVE TO ADVOCATE

Gina DeJesus uses her personal experience to help find missing and abducted children



Gina DeJesus had been locked away in a sealed-off portion of her captor's house since she was 14. During the nine years she was captive, she was confident she would one day be free.

"I would hear my parents on TV say they would never give up until someone can prove something happened to me," she said. "My mom would say, 'Until you bring me a body, then my daughter is still out there.' It would give me hope and strength to keep fighting."

On April 2, 2004, Gina was walking home from school in Cleveland, Ohio, when she was offered a ride from her friend's father. Instead of taking her home, Ariel Castro made Gina a prisoner in his home with two other women he had abducted when they were teens, Michelle Knight and Amanda Berry.

Police thought Gina was a runaway and did not issue an AMBER Alert. Gina's family did not think she ran away and did everything they could to get the public to help find her. The family made numerous televised appeals for help, held vigils and handed out flyers.

Ariel Castro brought a flyer home with Gina's picture and gave it to her. "He said 'I talked to your mom today and she gave me this flyer,'" said Gina. "I wanted to have the flyer since it was the last thing my mom touched."

Gina said her captivity seemed to last forever. "I definitely did pray and I drew a lot about whatever I was feeling. I would write down what I was thinking in a journal. I hoped I could one day share the journal with my mom and dad and brothers and sisters."

On May 6, 2013, Amanda Berry discovered Castro had failed to lock the door and she started screaming for help through a screen door. Neighbors called police and all three young women escaped. Castro was sentenced to life in prison, plus 1,000 years. He died a month later by hanging himself with a bed sheet.

Continued on page 4

FROM CAPTIVE TO ADVOCATE

Continued from page 3

A NEW CHAPTER

On October 26, 2018, Gina began using her experience as an abduction survivor to start The Cleveland Center for Missing, Abducted, and Exploited Children and Adults. She is partnering with her cousin Sylvia Colon who worked feverishly with other family members to find Gina. They are sharing their experiences and resources with families looking for a loved one.

"We want to help families when they are stressed," said Gina. "I know what it is like to be sitting for years and not be found. I know what it is like to be missing."

Gina said her parents encouraged her to start the center.

"It was a struggle for my mom to find me. She needed help handing out flyers, dealing with the media and keeping my story out in the public. She was also mad the police did not issue an AMBER Alert."

The center's mission statement has four goals:

- Eradicate and deter the abduction, exploitation and trafficking of children and adults;
- Establish a place for families and survivors to come for support and resources;
- Provide prevention training to the community at large; and
- Raise awareness to create a community of safety and security for all of our citizens.

Colleen Nick believes Gina offers invaluable advice for victims and their families.

Colleen has been a passionate advocate for missing children since her six-year-old daughter Morgan was kidnapped in 1995 while playing with friends in Alma, Arkansas. Morgan remains missing.

"Gina brings to the table all the misconceptions we have when we are trying to respond to a child abduction," said Colleen. "Those assumptions that children didn't survive or left willingly can hold a search back and cost a child valuable time in being recovered."

"She brings life and her heart and she is making a tremendous difference for families and law enforcement."

Colleen started the Morgan Nick Foundation in 1996 to support families of missing children. She is excited to collaborate with Gina and her new center.

"It is so powerful to hear firsthand perspective from a child who saw her parents fighting for her," said Colleen. "It inspires me for what I am doing for my daughter. I want Morgan and others to be brave. Be courageous. We are coming to get you."

Colleen fought back tears as she listened to Gina talk about seeing her mom on television while she was missing. She hopes Morgan has seen her on TV and learned about all of the efforts to find her.

"I always have hope for Morgan and I will always search for her," she said. "When children are missing a long time there is a sense that parents should just go home and the child will probably never be found."

AMBER ALERT EFFORTS

Gina is also a member of the Northeast Ohio AMBER Alert Committee (NOAAC). She has been training police departments and taking part in law enforcement conferences.

The committee created what is believed to be the first AMBER Alert Family Response Plan. The program gathers information from victims and their families after an AMBER Alert has been used.

Cleveland Center Board Member Christopher Minek said Gina has already made a huge difference to the Ohio AMBER Alert program.

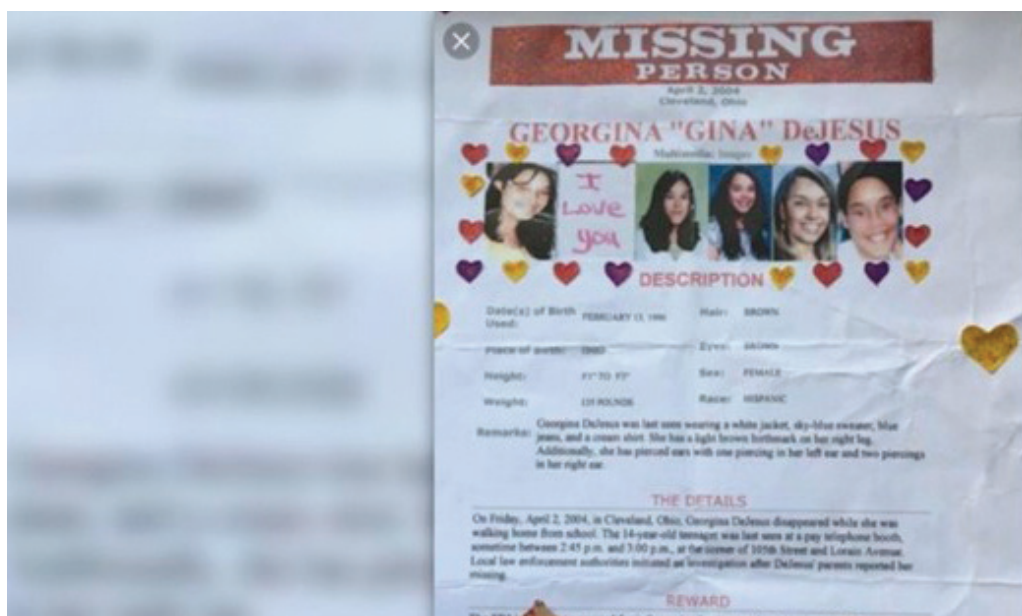
"We didn't have a good plan for families and she glued this program together. She is bringing exposure to an audience we were not able to reach," said Christopher. "She gives life and motivation so that if a person is missing or abducted we will move mountains to bring that person home."

Some committee members closely followed what happened to Gina when she went missing and when she was found.

"I will never forget when she was found. I will tell my grandchildren about it," said one NOAAC member. "I used to pray for Gina and now it is such an amazing opportunity to work with her and know her as a friend."

Gina said she is surprised by how people react when they see her and hear her speak. She considers herself "just a regular girl." She said helping others has helped her become more confident when she writes and speaks. "I like that I can help find more children and bring them home."

She also hopes her efforts will inspire those who are still missing. "Never give up and one day you will come back home." 🍷



COMBATTING

HUMAN TRAFFICKING & CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

AMBER ALERT AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING: SEMINAR ADDRESSES “HIDDEN CRIMES” IN LOUISIANA

Those on the front lines helping vulnerable children in Ruston, Louisiana, knew human trafficking was a real problem in the area and wanted to address it. To accomplish this, they hosted the **Community Response to High Risk Victims of Child Sex Trafficking** training provided by the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program (AATTAP) February 5-7, 2019. The training's focus is to teach community and system stakeholders how to detect human trafficking activities, work to respond and help trafficking victims, and expand their prevention efforts.

“It really is a specialized field,” said Byron Fassett, AATTAP Program Manager. “To understand human trafficking and peel the layers back takes a tremendous amount of training.”

Fassett said community members participated in the AMBER Alert Community

Focus Group on Child Sex Trafficking the year prior and asked for additional help in identifying their needs and resources. “This shows our training is not ‘once and done’; rather, we invest in the success of each community, helping them to establish an effective response for their most vulnerable victims.”

Close to 150 police officers, child protective services agents, attorneys, mental health therapists and other community stakeholders participated in the training.

“It is a hidden crime as most of these victims don’t self-report,” said Cathy De La Paz, a detective with the Dallas Police Department who also serves as an AATTAP associate to coordinate child sex trafficking training with the program. “We know if you have prostitution, you have trafficking. If you have prostitution, you have kids being exploited and victimized.” 🍷



WASHINGTON DETECTIVES FIND NO SHORTAGE OF PREDATORS TRYING TO HURT CHILDREN ONLINE

For five days in February 2018, Washington state detectives posed as underage boys and girls online and received more than 100 responses from persons soliciting sexual activity with them. The 15th "Net Nanny" operation conducted by the Missing and Exploited Children Task Force led to the arrests of 25 people.

"We always think no one will show up but they always do," said Washington State Sergeant Carlos Rodriguez. "I'm glad we can remove them from society but it is also hurtful to know people are showing up to have sex with children."

The multi-agency task force has made more than 246 arrests and rescued more than 30 children since the operations began in 2015. The alleged perpetrators are arrested after they arrive at the location the task force

arranged for meeting the child. Some arrive with child pornography on their mobile devices.

Washington AMBER Alert Coordinator and Missing and Unidentified Persons Unit Program Manager Carri Gordon was also involved in the operation. "We feel this operation was very successful," said Gordon. "We removed some really bad people who cannot victimize any more kids."

Detectives say some of the recovered children have come from homes of the perpetrators or homes where they have access. Many of the people who were arrested are already on the sex offender registry. "What does a sex offender look like? They look like you, me and everyone else," added Rodriguez. 🍌



RETHINKING RUNAWAYS AND MISSING CHILDREN

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM JIM WALTERS, AMBER ALERT TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

It seems like almost daily we hear stories about teens who go missing, found as victims of trafficking and exploitation or assaulted and even murdered by a predator. While those cases may generate headlines or brief flurries of media interest, what is sometimes missed is how their cases began and how we as first responders, call takers and investigators approached their case from the onset.

All too often those cases began as a report of a missing child who was either characterized by the family from the start as voluntarily missing or whose case was approached as a probable runaway by law enforcement. Sadly, many of those we “thought” were runaways or were voluntarily missing were actually abducted, lured away or were not allowed to return by a predator. Regardless of how they went missing, the bottom line is that their cases did not receive the same degree of attention or investigative resources that a reported abduction or endangered missing classification might have prompted.

CREATING A CULTURAL CHANGE

In order to properly address the issue of runaways and voluntary missing in terms of how we respond and investigate, we have to create a cultural change in law enforcement. It's a fact that most officers respond to dozens or even hundreds of reports of runaways each year. In the vast majority of these cases the child is reunited with their family or comes home on his or her

own. It is easy to see how we can become complacent to the fact that there are children in that group that will never come home without our help.

When I was a young police officer, I remember how we handled domestic disturbances. The police officer was called on to be both a protector and a counselor. I still remember my first “DV” call and watching my supervisor handle the situation by driving the husband (who was in my mind at least, clearly the aggressor) to a local motel and telling him that if he came back to the house that night, he was going to go to jail. Of course, he came back, of course he assaulted his wife and of course he went to jail. It took an outcry from the public and media, litigation in the courts and finally case law to make us rethink how we dealt with family violence.

Fortunately, it's now second nature to young recruits to identify the primary aggressors, make arrests, seek protective orders and provide referrals to victim services. We had a cultural change and it was for the better. The same thing happened with seat belts, open containers and child safety seats.

It is time that we had the same cultural shift in regards to runaways. Instead of approaching the report of a voluntary missing young person as a delinquency matter, let's teach recruits and veterans alike to approach these cases from the standpoint of protecting the child. The actions taken by first responders and

call takers are the most important factors in protecting the missing child regardless of how they went missing. We know from over 100 case reviews conducted by the AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program that in cases where first responders failed to properly assess the circumstances, secure crime scenes, missed evidence or suspect information; the success rate in terms of successfully recovering the missing child plummeted.

An estimated 71 percent of runaways are thought to have been endangered during their runaway episode. Factors such as substance dependency, use of hard drugs, sexual or physical abuse, presence in a place where criminal activity was occurring, or because of their extremely young age (13 years old or younger) place even the voluntary runaway at risk.¹

Every runaway case should be considered in terms of potential threats facing the child, not the acts of the child. First responders and call takers need to determine if there are elements present that suggest the child is running from abuse in the

¹ Runaway/Throwaway Children: National Estimates and Characteristics (2002) Heather Hammer, David Finkelhor, and Andrea J. Sedlak <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/196469.pdf>

“IT IS TIME THAT WE HAD THE SAME CULTURAL SHIFT IN REGARDS TO RUNAWAYS. INSTEAD OF APPROACHING THE REPORT OF A VOLUNTARY MISSING YOUNG PERSON AS A DELINQUENCY MATTER, LET’S TEACH RECRUITS AND VETERANS ALIKE TO APPROACH THESE CASES FROM THE STANDPOINT OF PROTECTING THE CHILD.”

home, or if they have been lured away by a predator through use of technology or grooming. Were they abducted or are they voluntarily missing but at risk to the many dangers that threaten the runaway child? If we looked at it from the perspective of threats to the child, rather than delinquency by the child, we would see an improvement in how we approach these cases from the onset.

Some key takeaways have come forth from more than 15 roundtables and listening sessions conducted by the AATTAP with surviving

family members of missing, abducted and murdered children. These mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters and others are sharing what they learned when their child went missing.

- **Listen to the parents.** They know their child and if they tell you the child is not a runaway, is at risk, or that their missing episode is out of character; listen to them and investigate, analyze and assess as though a crime has occurred; or until you know for a fact the child is safe.
- **Always dispatch an officer.** This is especially relevant to a first responder’s mindset in cases where the family or child are known to law enforcement. It may seem like the report from a family member or other party can be taken over the phone, but this is a dangerous

Continued on page 19

FACES OF THE AMBER ALERT NETWORK



NONA BEST TREATS MISSING CHILDREN AS IF THEY WERE HER OWN

Nona Best is the Director of the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons. She has been with the center under purview of the North Carolina State Highway Patrol since 2009. Her state career began in 2003 as a corrections officer, also serving as a processing assistant for the State Bureau of Investigation, and as a lottery supervisor for the Alcohol Law Enforcement branch. Best became interested in missing juvenile cases as her office while supervising the lottery was juxtaposed closely to the Center for Missing Persons. Astounded at the number of missing juvenile cases, she wanted to pursue work with the center. Best now trains law enforcement officers on how to handle missing persons, sex trafficking and international abduction cases. She also works as an advocate for abused and neglected children with the Guardian Ad Litem program.

WHAT IS UNIQUE TO YOUR MISSING PERSONS PROGRAM, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK HELPS MAKE YOUR PROGRAM SUCCESSFUL?

I think what is unique about the North Carolina Center for Missing Persons is it is a one-stop shop. I handle all missing persons, adults and children for the state. All three of the state's alert systems (AMBER, SILVER, EAS and BLUE) are housed and activated from the Center, which is manned 24/7 through our nationally known number, 800-522-KIDS (5437).

We are successful because we try to keep our training levels up. I get training and go out and train every chance I get. Once I receive training, I share it with my chain of command and through the communication line with troopers so we can grow strong together. Everyone understands why any request from the center is needed and why it is a priority.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO FIND MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN?

First and foremost I think it's because I'm a mother and a foster parent. I can't imagine not knowing where my child is. I worry about the children out there and their safety. I know the average person doesn't understand how people can go missing without a clue or reason. It's hard when you have a parent or grandparent on the phone crying, to not cry with them. I sometimes have to start praying and trying to keep the parent encouraged with hope. What I love about my job is helping left-behind parents and siblings at their most vulnerable time and being able to assist them in a way that gives them understanding about the process of finding their missing loved ones.

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

I work with a great group of people. For the most part I get to work the programs and make changes as I see fit. I have such great support from above that I'm able to get our needs met without delays.

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

I would love to see all my alert programs automated with no paper trail. The Blue alert is the only alert that is automated in a way that law enforcement can go in and create their request online and we approve it online. We are working to get the Silver and AMBER Alert programs set up that way.

Also, I continue to advocate for stricter criteria for our Silver Alert program. The current language states the alert is for a person “believed to be” suffering from dementia, Alzheimer’s disease or a disability that requires them to be protected from abuse or harm. I would like the criteria to say that the person is “diagnosed” rather than “believed to be” suffering.

I would also like to have more annual statewide training sessions and a stronger relationship with our Indian Country partners.

PLEASE SHARE DETAILS ABOUT YOUR MOST MEMORABLE SUCCESS STORY IN WORKING A MISSING CHILD CASE. HOW DID THE AMBER ALERT AND CENTER FOR MISSING PERSONS SUPPORT THE OUTCOME?

During the past 10 years there are many good ones, and sad ones, to remember. We were really blessed in one case from 2016 in New Hanover County. A six-year-old girl was abducted from her yard while playing with her siblings.

A convicted sex offender was riding by on a moped and just stopped, scooped her up and took off. Thankfully the kids ran in and told their parents immediately. The public also started calling 911 saying there was a small child on a moped without a helmet. Although it was 18 hours before the child

was located, the suspect was identified fairly quickly. The victim was found the next day chained to a tree in the woods about eight miles from her home.

Sheriff McMahon said it best, “I think you can say we beat the odds today.” We are all amazed and grateful she was alive; but at the same time we were hurt that this child and her family had to experience this.

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

The job and training really keep you on your toes. You think about it everywhere you go. If I’m in public and I see a child wandering or running around alone, I automatically go into alert mode. I start looking for parents, watching the child and sometimes getting upset that parents could be so careless.

My commitment to training and talking to youth has increased now more than ever due to sex trafficking. It is so prevalent and growing so fast but it’s like a shadow. No one is paying attention except law enforcement. Teens, even runaways, still don’t seem to be aware of or worry about sex trafficking.

State laws need to be tightened and changed to provide the left-behind parents with more protection and rights. An absent parent should be held accountable and not allowed to pick up and leave with a child. The trauma to the child and left-behind parent is tremendous. The left-behind parent also has to come up with money to start the proceedings to get the child back. I just feel that is so wrong.

Continued on page 20

FACES OF THE AMBER ALERT NETWORK



ARIZONA DETECTIVE RELIES ON RELATIONSHIPS TO FIND ABDUCTED CHILDREN

Detective
Sergeant Patrick
Beumler is the
Family Violence/
Missing Persons
Supervisor for the
Glendale, Arizona,
Police Department's

Criminal Investigations

Division Special Victim's Unit. He has served with the Glendale Police Department for more than 19 years. Beumler is an Arizona POST Domestic Violence Investigations Trainer and recipient of the Maricopa County Attorney's Office Distinguished Service Award for his assistance implementing the Domestic Violence Strangulation Program in 2013. In 2014, he received the International Association of Chiefs of Police Leadership Award for First-Line Supervisor Training on Violence Against Women.

Sgt. Beumler was one of the original founding members of the Arizona Child Abduction Response Team (AZCART) in 2011. He has been deployed across the state of Arizona on various abduction and at-risk missing child investigations as an AZCART investigator. In 2018 he became the State Coordinator for AZCART where he currently serves until the end of his term on July 1, 2019.

WHAT IS UNIQUE TO YOUR CART AND MISSING PERSONS PROGRAM, AND WHAT DO YOU THINK HELPS MAKE YOUR PROGRAMS SUCCESSFUL?

Having a single overarching state coordinating agency for AZCART, with one Southern Branch coordinating agency and hopefully soon a Northern Branch coordinating agency. They are all under the same certification, which helps ensure training, investigative practices, forms and other protocols are uniform and consistent. This also helps large-scale deployments succeed because any certified employee can be assigned to any role needed. Each member is familiar with the documents, investigative techniques, software and other best practices being utilized so we are able to efficiently assist the jurisdictional agency requesting our help. Having branches allows for a quick response of personnel and resources for critical investigations.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO FIND MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN?

I have three young children myself and that makes it easy for me to put myself into a parent's shoes; I would want to know everything possible is being done to recover my child safely and quickly. I am also driven in abduction cases to see that offenders are held accountable. It is also key to ensure we are conducting lawful and efficient investigations that collect and preserve evidence.

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

Deployments rarely happen at an opportune time, so the location, time of day and the number of responders may be less than ideal for the investigation. Members belong to the team on a voluntary basis, so their primary duty can sometimes hinder the number of responders or the timing of the response.

We rotate the coordinating agency for the program on a yearly basis, so a new agency may find it challenging in getting organized internally for taking on the responsibility of preparing equipment and personnel. Another challenge can be maintaining an emphasis on training and skill building so current members remain ready for a deployment. It can also be difficult for the coordinating agency to balance its primary duties with the responsibility of growing the program and attracting new member agencies.

Turnover can also be a challenge as AZCART trained personnel transfer positions or promote out of a position. Trying to replace that knowledge base can be difficult at times.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN WITH YOUR PROGRAMS IN THE FUTURE? WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE PROGRAMS?

I would like to see our Northern Branch get established and off the ground. We do have some interested agencies, so I see it as an attainable opportunity. My vision for the program is that eventually we will have a state or federal funding source to facilitate dedicated equipment, training and other resources for certified child abduction response teams and their members.

PLEASE SHARE DETAILS ABOUT YOUR MOST MEMORABLE SUCCESS STORY IN WORKING A MISSING CHILD CASE. HOW DID THE AMBER ALERT AND OTHER OPERATIONS SUPPORT THE OUTCOME? WHAT WERE THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS LEARNED?

Every safe recovery of a child is a success story for us. Unfortunately, one of the most memorable missing child cases we had is one where there never was a recovery. The Jhessye Shockley investigation started as a reported abduction which resulted in an AMBER Alert being activated; however, it soon transitioned into a FACA (false allegation of child abduction) case to cover up the homicide of Jhessye.

AZCART, Team ADAM from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the FBI and other partners assisted with various aspects of the investigation that included a landfill search lasting several months. This investigation was a great accomplishment because of the team work between agencies and in the end a successful “no body” homicide investigation which resulted in a life sentence plus 20 years for Jhessye’s mother. Many lessons were learned which led to the formulation of timeline/checklists and standardizing the information we now use on any at-risk missing or abduction case.

HOW HAVE YOUR CAREER AND LIFE EXPERIENCES STRENGTHENED YOUR COMMITMENT TO HELPING ENDANGERED, MISSING AND ABDUCTED CHILDREN?

My commitment to helping endangered, missing and abducted children has been strengthened by the connections I have made with the people I met in this position. I have a strong network of people I can count on for assistance and information. I

Continued on page 20

AMBER ALERT ON THE FRONT LINES:



NEW YORK ISSUES AMBER ALERT FOR TEEN WHO INITIALLY WENT WILLINGLY WITH HER CAPTOR

What began as a runaway case changed after Ogdensburg, New York, police learned a missing 15-year-old girl may have been threatened and held captive by her boyfriend. The threat prompted officers to ask the New York State Police (NYSP) to issue an AMBER Alert for Olivia Roberts.

Roberts was reported missing on December 12, 2018, after meeting with her 27-year-old boyfriend, Kenneth Snyder. A month earlier, Snyder was charged with unlawful imprisonment for forcefully restraining her during a domestic violence incident. But Snyder fled from police as he was about to be transported from court to a secure facility.

On December 19, Roberts didn't show up after she asked a friend to pick her up. The same friend was then blocked from Roberts'

Facebook account. He told police he was concerned Snyder may have taken control over Roberts' Facebook account. That same day Ogdensburg police asked the public on social media to help them find Roberts. At 6:51 p.m. on December 20, a family member told police that Roberts made a call using Facebook and was screaming frantically for someone to come get her. The family member then heard a male voice asking what she was doing and the call suddenly went dead.

"There in fact was a particular incident and that's what led to the criteria change that led to the AMBER Alert," said Ogdensburg Police Detective Mark Kearns.

NYSP received the request for an AMBER Alert; agents first made sure the child and suspect had been entered into the National

Crime Information Center (NCIC). They also started gathering information and photos of the child and suspect for the state's web-based public notification system for AMBER Alerts.

"We always have concern for the victim in every case we receive," said NYSP Investigator Michael O'Connell. "We felt this child was being held against her will and in danger of serious bodily harm or death, thus meeting our criteria."

The AMBER Alert was disseminated at 8:16 p.m. through faxes, emails, text messages, phone calls, highway signs, lotto terminals, broadcasters and social media. New York residents can also sign up to get the alerts at <https://alert.ny.gov/>.

The NYSP Computer Crimes Unit contacted Facebook and learned the device Roberts used to make a call may have been in Massena, New York. Massena police officers arrived at an apartment and two adults claimed Roberts wasn't there.

Both adults were arrested after police discovered they told Roberts to go out a window and hide on the roof. Snyder was later found and taken into custody. The AMBER Alert was canceled at 9:30 p.m., a little more than an hour after it was issued.

"We were relieved to learn the child was recovered safe and unharmed," said O'Connell. "It was a challenge to have people helping the suspect and child avoid the police."

New York has issued 89 AMBER Alerts since the program began in 2002. O'Connell has been involved with 20 alerts since 2016. He said lessons are learned with every alert.

"This case reiterates a need for continual communication with requesting agencies as new information develops," he said. "We train often and try to prepare as best as we can." 🍷



NYSP Investigator Michael O'Connell

AMBER ALERT INTERNATIONAL



ARGENTINA LAUNCHES CHILD ABDUCTION ALERT “ALERTA SOFIA”

The Argentina government started a child abduction alert program on March 22 called “Alerta Sofia.” The system uses Facebook to disseminate alerts on cellphones for children under the age of 18 who are believed to be in imminent danger. The alert is named after Sofia Herrera, who was last seen on September 28, 2008. “I’m excited the alert has my daughter’s name,” said Maria Elena Delgado, Sofia’s mother. “It is a very important tool for the country.” The International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children provided support for developing Sofia Alerta. Argentinians can push one button to share the alert and another button to receive more information. 🇨🇦



CANADIAN AUTHORITIES URGE RESIDENTS TO STOP CALLING 911 TO COMPLAIN ABOUT AMBER ALERTS

One AMBER Alert in Ottawa and another in Toronto prompted hundreds of 911 calls from residents angry about being disturbed by the alerts. Police in both cities urged citizens to stop tying up the emergency lines to make complaints. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau even issued a statement supporting AMBER Alerts to protect the safety of children.

Police in Ottawa sent an AMBER Alert at 11:30 p.m. on February 14 for an 11-year-old girl who was later found murdered. Residents called 911 and posted on social media how upset they were because the alert disturbed their sleep. A citizen tip helped police to capture the suspect. Most of the complaints were deleted from social media after numerous residents said they should be ashamed of themselves. “Losing a few minutes of sleep is nothing compared to the hell this family and those trying to help had to go through,” wrote one person. 🇨🇦

AMBER ALERT IN INDIAN COUNTRY

2019 INDIAN COUNTRY SYMPOSIUM WILL FOCUS ON IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS

The 2019 National AMBER Alert in Indian Country Symposium will focus on the Ashlynnne Mike AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act to support states and tribes in work to integrate AMBER Alert plans. The symposium, to be held July 30-August 1 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, will include tribal public safety and emergency management leaders, state AMBER Alert coordinators and federal officials.

The AMBER Alert Training and Technical Assistance Program (AATTAP) is responsible for implementing the 2018 legislation. The act requires AATTAP to provide resources and policies to develop AMBER Alert plans in tribal communities. At this year's symposium, participants will:

- Learn about the Ashlynnne Mike AMBER Alert in Indian Country Act of 2018;
- Discuss methods for improving the process of integration between state or regional AMBER Alert communication plans with federally recognized tribes from across the nation;
- Examine current resources, tools, and technologies to enhance the AMBER Alert network within Indian Country; and
- Increase collaboration with OJJDP, NCMEC, AATTAP, state AMBER Alert coordinators and other federal and state officials. 🍷



Ashlynnne Mike

PROPOSED LAW SEEKS ACCOUNTABILITY FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

The U.S. Senate is considering legislation that would commission a study on missing and murdered indigenous people. The bill was initiated after a Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Committee held a hearing on the epidemic of missing persons in Indian Country, including Ashley Loring Heavyrunner, a woman from the Blackfeet Tribe in Montana.

"In dealing with this tragedy of missing and murdered women, we must do better," said Montana Senator Steve Daines, the bill's cosponsor. "This legislation would hold federal agencies accountable and would help get the families and communities of these victims the answers they deserve." 🍷



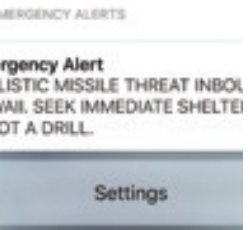
Ashley Loring Heavyrunner

AMBER ALERT BRIEFS



PRESIDENT SIGNS LAW CREATING THE “ASHANTI ALERT” FOR MISSING ADULTS

President Trump signed the “Ashanti Alert” Act on December 31, 2018, that allows alerts for missing adults between the ages of 18 and 64. Police will be able to send the Ashanti Alert to notify broadcasters and activate electronic road signs. The alert instructs the U.S. Attorney General to appoint a national Ashanti Alert Coordinator to establish alert systems and develop voluntary guidelines. The alert is named after Ashanti Billie, who was 19 when she disappeared in December 2017. She was too old for an AMBER Alert and too young for a Silver Alert. Her body was found two weeks after she went missing. 🍷



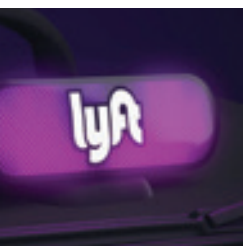
RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO SAFEGUARD NATIONAL EMERGENCY ALERTS

The false missile alert in Hawaii in 2018 has prompted federal officials to take steps to make sure a similar mistake doesn't happen again. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and Department of Homeland Security is recommending two changes in the Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS): 1) require state and local alerting authorities to implement new emergency alert software; and 2) mandate new training requirements for state, tribal and territorial alerting authorities. Both requirements are to be put in place by October 31, 2019. 🍷



HOUSTON AMBER ALERT COORDINATOR HONORED BY THE FBI

The FBI honored Houston Regional AMBER Alert Coordinator Beth Alberts with the FBI Director's Community Leadership Award in May. Alberts is also the CEO of the Texas Center for the Missing. “Ms. Alberts is an invaluable partner to those of us in law enforcement, and to the families for whom she brings closure,” said Perrye K. Turner, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Houston Field Office. 🍷



LYFT DRIVER RETURNS TWO CHILDREN AFTER BEING THREATENED WITH AN AMBER ALERT

An Oakland, California, Lyft driver allegedly left a mother stranded at a car dealership and drove off with her five- and six-year-old daughters. The driver was gone for 15 minutes and didn't return until the dealership manager called him and threatened to request an AMBER Alert. The mother is now suing Lyft for the 2017 incident. 🍷

RETHINKING RUNAWAYS AND MISSING CHILDREN

Continued from page 9

practice because it prevents the officer from putting eyes on the location where the child lives or was last seen. It is impossible to conduct a true assessment of the risk to the child without knowing what clues or warning signs you are missing if not there in person.

- **Always ask to search the home.** Even if the reporting party indicates the child went missing from another location or didn't return home on time, we always ask permission to search the home for clues that might show how or when the child left the home and under what circumstances.

» In one case, officers responding to a "routine" runaway report asked to search the missing teenager's room and found information that showed she had left the home to meet an individual who was determined to be a registered sex offender. Officers were able to intercept the child and take the child predator into custody before she was harmed. Had they not searched her room, there is no telling what may have befallen that child.

- **Know how to access, analyze and utilize digital evidence and social networking.** More and more we see cases where children are lured from home by an individual they meet on line. Often the true identity of this person is unknown by the child before they are in the grasp of a predator. Social networking, cell technology and other digital evidence techniques can often prove the difference between victimization and a safe recovery.
- **Err on the side of protecting the child.** When in doubt about whether the child is endangered or is in the midst of a voluntary runaway episode, go with protecting the child first.

Yes, there will be cases where we put a lot of work into recovering a child who is simply angry with a parent, hanging with friends after hours or even engaged in delinquent behavior. All that extra work is nothing in comparison to the pain and trauma that comes with that one child we miss, that one time we don't issue the alert, call out additional resources or put our best efforts into the investigation, only to find out later that we failed them by using old thinking and old approaches. ☹

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO IMPROVE RESPONSE TO REPORTS OF RUNAWAYS AND VOLUNTARY MISSING CHILDREN, DOWNLOAD RESOURCES AND ATTEND TRAINING.

- AATTAP's Investigative Checklists: <https://www.amberadvocate.org/investigative-checklists/>
- Classroom and online training in investigative strategies provided free of charge by AATTAP and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention <https://www.amberadvocate.org/training-resources/>
- The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's Investigative Guide: <http://www.missingkids.com/content/dam/pdfs/publications/nc74.pdf>

IT'S TIME TO RETHINK HOW WE HANDLE RUNAWAYS AND MISSING CHILDREN; IT STARTS WITH YOU.

BEST PROFILE

Continued from page 11

HOW HAS TRAINING HELPED YOU IN AMBER ALERT CASES?

AMBER Alert trainings like the annual symposiums are priceless. The networking and classes open your mind to new ideas and always make me rededicate myself to do all I can. I always come home with a long to-do list. The training helps me be the state's expert on missing and abducted persons and supports me in keeping all our programs running with progress.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER AMBER ALERT PARTNERS?

Get training, and always feel free to call on your AMBER Alert partners. Everyone I have

ever called with a question, a request for assistance, a program information sheet or anything else has been more than happy to help. It is a wonderful world to be in when people doing the same work as you, have the same passion for the work as you are willing to offer assistance.

I love that you also get to go put faces with the names at the national level. I would also suggest they share their training opportunities with others who are interested in or work missing person's cases. ☺

BEUMLER PROFILE

Continued from page 13

also know the people I have trained are ready to do the job when called upon.

HOW HAS TRAINING HELPED YOU IN AMBER ALERT CASES?

Uniform training has helped keep responders on the same page with protocols, practices and expectations for an AMBER Alert case all across the state.

WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO OTHER AMBER ALERT PARTNERS?

Ensure training and oversight committee meetings occur at least quarterly so you see each other's faces, practice working through issues together and so that everyone stays up-to-date on what's going on elsewhere in the state. This allows you to take that information back to your agency and improve your responses. ☺