



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

News Release

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Free Child Identification Kits for National Missing Children's Day

HONOLULU – To commemorate the 23rd annual National Missing Children's Day, free Child Identification Kits will be processed on Sunday, May 22, 2005, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Ward Warehouse stage area.

Funding for this event is provided by the Department of the Attorney General's Missing Child Center-Hawaii, the Friends of the Missing Child Center-Hawaii, and AAA Bail Bonds.

Volunteers from these organizations will weigh, measure, photograph, and fingerprint children up to age 18, and dentists will be available to help complete an optional dental chart. Each child's identifying information will be compiled in a Child Identification Kit -- a single document that parents can take home and keep for use in an emergency.

Personnel from the Attorney General's Crime Prevention and Justice Assistance Division and Internet Crimes Against Children Unit will provide information on crime prevention and safety tips. McGruff the Crime Dog will meet and greet the children.

Dentists Roy Alan Chinn, Carla Fukumoto, Garrett Uehara, and Nina Yonemura-Hayashi will donate their time for this event, and Ron Nishiki will donate dental supplies.

National Missing Children's Day is commemorated every year on May 25. President Ronald Regan proclaimed the first National Missing Children's Day in 1983. Since then, every administration has honored this annual reminder to the nation to renew efforts to reunite missing children with their families, and to make child protection a national priority.

(more)

Governor Linda Lingle is proclaiming May 25, 2005, as Missing Children's Day in Hawaii.

"National Missing Children's Day is an important reminder that parents and guardians need up-to-date records and high-quality photographs of their children for use in an emergency, and that everyone needs to pay close attention to posters and photographs of missing children," said Attorney General Mark Bennett. "It is also a day to remember the efforts of the law enforcement professionals who work to bring children home safely."

Between 1979 and 1981 a series of high-profile missing child cases brought attention to the seriousness of child victimization. On May 25, 1979, Etan Patz disappeared from a New York City street on his way to school. Etan's father, a professional photographer, disseminated black-and-white photographs of Etan in an effort to find him. In Atlanta, Georgia, the bodies of 29 young boys and girls were discovered in lakes, marshes, and ponds along roadside trails. A suspect was arrested in 1981 and is now serving a life sentence for these crimes. And on July 27, 1981, six-year-old Adam Walsh disappeared from a Florida shopping mall.

These tragedies focused nationwide attention on the problem of child abduction and led to more coordinated efforts between federal, state, and local law enforcement. They also spurred the development of national response systems, such as the photographs of missing children on milk cartons, and central resources and clearinghouses to help searching families, including the Missing Child Center-Hawaii.

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