



DEPARTMENT OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

News Release

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GOVERNOR

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**LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR PROCLAIMS
MISSING CHILDREN'S DAY IN HAWAII**

HONOLULU – To help raise awareness about the urgent need to return missing children to their families, Governor Linda Lingle and Lieutenant Governor James R. "Duke" Aiona Jr. have proclaimed September 19, 2007, as Missing Children's Day in Hawai'i.

The proclamation, which was presented today to children's advocacy groups by the Lt. Governor, acknowledges the plight of missing children and their families, and focuses on renewed efforts in Hawai'i and nationwide to reunite children with their loved ones.

"More than 3,000 children go missing each year in Hawai'i," said Lt. Governor Aiona. "On Missing Children's Day in Hawai'i, we recognize the plight of missing children and their families, and renew our efforts to secure their safe return."

While many missing children return home safely, others have yet to be found. The families of these children are still waiting and hoping for their children's safe return. On Hawai'i's Missing Children's Day, we remember children like Peter Kema who has been missing for 10 years, Ji Zhao Li missing for 19 years, Therese Vanderheiden-Walsh missing for 17 years, Sarah Elgohary missing for 10 years, and the Santiago brothers missing for 5 years.

"These cases strike fear in the hearts of every parent and have reawakened Hawai'i citizens to the vulnerability of our keiki," said Lt. Governor Aiona. "We will continue an active and aggressive campaign to protect our keiki and reunite missing children with their families."

The Department of the Attorney General Missing Child Center-Hawai'i assists with investigations of missing children; coordinates with and assists other government and nonprofit agencies in locating and recovering missing children; assists in training law enforcement, other professionals, and the public on issues relating to missing children; and operates as a resource center for information about preventing the abduction and

exploitation of children. Some of the center's programs help prevent, locate, and recover missing children. A few of these programs will be highlighted in recognition of Hawai'i's Missing Children's Day.

"The Department of the Attorney General would like to remind the people of Hawai'i not to forget the children who are still missing, not to falter in the effort to reunite them with their families, and to rejoice for those who have made it home," said Attorney General Mark Bennett.

MAILE AMBER Alert

In coordination with Missing Children's Day, the Hawai'i County Police Department will initiate a statewide test of the MAILE AMBER Alert System at 11:45 a.m. Wednesday, September 19, 2007. It will be one of two tests held during the year to ensure equipment and procedures are in place in the event of an actual alert.

The MAILE AMBER Alert Plan is a voluntary partnership among the four county police departments, State Civil Defense, the Department of Transportation, the Department of the Attorney General Missing Child Center-Hawai'i and local broadcasters. The program was established to solicit the public's help when a child has been abducted.

The goal of the MAILE AMBER Alert is to recover abducted children before they meet physical harm. Statistics show that time is critical in finding an abducted child, as most children who are kidnapped and later found murdered die within the first three hours after being taken.

KEIKI ID Kits

In conjunction with Hawai'i's Missing Children's Day, the Department of the Attorney General Missing Child Center-Hawai'i, Friends of the Missing Child Center, and the Ifuku Foundation will offer free child identification kits or "Keiki ID kits" at the Costco Waipio on Tuesday, September 18, from 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Costco Iwilei on Thursday, September 20 from 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., and Children & Youth Day on Sunday, October 7 from 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

A Keiki ID kit contains information on the child, a recent photo and sometimes DNA and dental information. Police say the quicker the photo and information on the child is distributed to the public, the better the chance is of a recovery. All parents should have a Keiki ID kit of their child.

NEWS ON DEMAND POSTER PROGRAM

The Department of the Attorney General Missing Child Center-Hawai'i and Oceanic Time Warner Cable are also helping recover children through the News on Demand Poster Program. This new feature on digital channel 110 enables the public to view posters of Hawai'i's missing children at no charge. One child in six featured in the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children's poster program is recovered as a direct result of someone in the public recognizing the child and notifying authorities. The News on Demand Poster Program will begin on September 17, 2007.

CODE ADAM

Code Adam, one of the country's largest child-safety programs, was created by Wal-Mart® retail stores. The program honors the memory of 6-year-old Adam Walsh, whose abduction from a Florida shopping mall and murder in 1981 brought the horror of child abduction to national attention.

When a customer reports a missing child to a store employee, a "Code Adam" alert is announced over the public-address system. A brief description of the child is obtained and provided to all designated employees who immediately stop their normal work to search for the child and monitor all exits to help prevent the child from leaving the store. As many as 50 retail establishments in Hawai'i, in addition to Walmart, participate in the Code Adam program.

TAKE 25

Take 25 is a program developed by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children and promoted by the Department of the Attorney General Missing Child Center-Hawai'i. With a focus on prevention, the campaign encourages parents, guardians and other role models to spend time teaching kids how to be safer. For more information, visit missingkids.com.

MISSING FOSTER CHILDREN WEB SITE

To enlist the public's help in locating missing foster children and safely returning them to their homes, the Department of Human Services (DHS) established a Web site in 2005 that includes photos and pertinent information about the children. The Web site address is: www.hawaii.gov/missing-children. DHS also issues a news release to media statewide each week listing the names of missing foster children.

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